

host a Seder meal

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The *Seder* is the ritual meal those of the Jewish faith observe to commemorate Passover. Although the modern meal is not exactly like the meal Jesus and His disciples shared the night before His death, the rituals and meanings are similar. As followers of Christ, we can observe this meal as a way to better understand the Jewish heritage of our faith, plus we can make Christian application to many of the rituals. We can also use this time to point the way to true salvation in Jesus.

The traditional ceremony involves many complex elements, usually lasts three to four hours, and can feel overwhelming to a beginner. We're boiling the *Seder* down to the basics, so you can host an easy yet meaningful Passover meal.

1. **Plan the evening.** The *Haggadah*, a *Seder* guidebook, will explain the traditional songs, prayers, and schedule of events. But it's OK to include just some of the important elements of *Seder*. Simply choose a few readings and a few of your favorite worship songs. Check the library or find Jewish *Seder* traditions at www.chosenpeople.com/site/how-to-host-a-passover-seder/. There are also lots of resources out there that focus on Christ in the Passover or compare the Passover to the Lord's Supper.
2. **Arrange the room.** Cover a table with a white tablecloth. You will be situating all the *Seder* foods on the table as well as a traditional extra place setting for Elijah, the prophet who announced the Messiah's coming. Also, light two unscented white candlesticks on the table as a symbol of God's presence.
3. **Prepare the place settings.** For each participant, you'll need a dinner plate, a napkin, a glass filled with grape juice (in place of traditional wine), a fork, a spoon, a sprig of parsley, a small bowl of salt water, a hard-boiled egg, and a printout of any unfamiliar songs you plan to sing.

4. **Tell the Passover story.** Explain to your guests that Seder is part of the Passover holiday, one of the most important ancient Jewish festivals, ultimately pointing to the death and resurrection of Christ. Read the Passover story aloud from Exodus 12, then the last supper account from Luke 22:1-20.

5. **Serve the meal.** As the hostess, you'll prepare and then serve the symbolic foods at the heart of the Seder meal. Like other Jewish customs, Seder combines the physical and the spiritual in a multi-sensory experience. Together you'll taste foods that help you relive the Passover story. It's fun to have a Jewish cookbook on hand such as *Let My People Eat! Passover Seders Made Simple*, but you can easily find recipes for lamb and unleavened bread online. As you serve the different foods, explain each one's significance.

- PARSLEY symbolizes the hyssop dipped for sprinkling on the doorposts of Hebrew dwellings in preparation for the exodus. Instruct your guests to dip the parsley in the saltwater, taste it, and remember the tears shed in Egypt as well as the sorrow of Jesus dying on the cross. The green color also reminds us of the new life we have in Christ.
- HORSERADISH symbolizes the bitterness and harshness of Egyptian slavery. Invite guests to taste it, recalling how bitter their lives were when they were slaves to sin.
- HAROSET is a sweet mixture, made by grinding apples, nuts, and honey together that symbolizes the mud and straw the Israelites used in Egyptian construction. As everyone eats it, remember that Jesus is sweeter than honey.
- UNLEAVENED BREAD symbolizes the hurry in which the Israelites left Egypt—there wasn't enough time for the bread to rise. When mentioned in Scripture, yeast almost always represents sin. So as you eat the bread, meditate on Jesus as the Bread of life, our sinless sacrifice.
- GRAPE JUICE symbolizes Jesus' blood shed for us on the cross. Drink it in remembrance of Him.
- LAMB symbolizes the Passover lamb that was killed so its blood could be sprinkled on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses. This assured that the angel of death would pass over them. As you eat it, remember that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- HARD-BOILED EGG symbolizes the cycle of life and endurance for the future.

6. **Close with sharing.** Invite your guests to share their perspectives on what Christ has done for them. Then wrap up singing worship songs together.