

GAMES & TIPS FOR THE SEDER



Spice up your Passover Seder!

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The Seder night is one of the most memorable of the Jewish calendar. Many of us have fond memories of our family Seders. Others just remember the grown-ups reading the Haggadah round the table, as our tummies rumbled and we wondered if dinner was ever going to be served.

But the Seder shouldn't be dull. Long before the days of multimedia, in the times of the Mishna, the Seder was an audio-visual re-enactment of the going out of Egypt for the children. In some communities the father would dress up in white robes, holding a stick with an attached cloth and walk around the table chanting the passage, "We were slave to Pharaoh in Egypt..."

The whole aim was – and continues to be – to stimulate the kids to ask questions and get involved in the Seder. The "props" – be it the Seder plate, or the cushions for leaning – are all there in order to arouse curiosity in our kids and get them asking questions.

Here are a number of ideas to make the Seder fun and meaningful for everyone. All the games are suitable for all ages and are a lot of fun.



Get your kids to prepare activities ahead of time to increase their anticipation and involvement. (See below for specific ideas.)

If you are inviting friends, let them know ahead of time that they have to prepare a fun activity or explanation on a specific section of the Haggadah. This way everyone is involved and is waiting for their turn to share an explanation, play the game, or act something out.

Important: Remember to have a bag of small prizes or treats as incentives for good questions and involvement.



The Why Game

Three stylized question marks in purple, green, and orange are scattered around the title.

You will need a basket full of questions and answers about Passover on individual index cards or paper. Get your kids ahead of time to prepare as many questions and answers as they can from the Haggadah and write the questions and answers down. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

- Why do we eat Matzah on Passover? *To remind us of the dough that didn't have time to rise as our forefathers were rushed out of Egypt.*
- Name the Four Sons? *The wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who doesn't know how to ask.*
- How many cups of wine do we drink at the Seder? *Four.*
- What things connected with Seder night are associated with the number four? *Four sons, four cups of wine, four questions.*
- Why four cups of wine? *To celebrate our freedom.*
- What is the second plague? *Frogs.*
- Why do we dip in the Charoset? *The Charoset represents the cement that the Jews used to cement the bricks together in their slavery. Today we dip as a sign of freedom.*
- What does the shank bone remind us of? *The Passover lamb which our forefathers sacrificed to God when they came out of Egypt.*
- Can you say all ten plagues in order? *Blood, frogs, lice, wild beasts, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, killing of the firstborns.*
- Can you say the ten plagues backwards? *Killing of the firstborn, darkness, locusts, hail, boils, pestilence, wild beasts, lice, frogs, blood.*

The Story Bag Game



This humorous game reveals how creative and clever participants can be in connecting random items found around the house to the Passover story. The game can be played at different intervals throughout the Seder, in between reading the text. It requires very little preparation.

Get your kids to collect a bag full of small items from around a house – almost anything will do. For example: duplo man, plastic animals, a plastic crown, a toy car, an envelope, a cup, a jar of red colored water, pyjama trousers, a kiddush cup, lice shampoo, any stuffed animals, etc.

Pass the bag filled with the items around the table and get people to pick out an object without looking. Now each person has to connect the item in his hand to the story.

Here's an example of what someone might say who selected duplo man from the bag: "You are probably very curious who I am? Well, many years ago, our people were enslaved in Egypt by a very powerful King called Pharaoh. One day God appeared to me at the burning bush and told me to remove my shoes. That's why I don't have any shoes on. God then told me that I was going to lead the Jews out of Egypt."

This game gets young and old involved and is a lot of fun.

Pharaoh's Telephone



You could use a simple plastic toy telephone that doesn't make noise, or any object that you can pretend is a phone, and lots of blocks on the floor next to the Seder table.

At any time during the Seder, you make a pretend ringing noise. There is a hushed silence and you pick up the phone. It is Pharaoh on the other end.

According to your improvised one-sided conversation, it becomes clear that all children under 8 have to get down from the table and start building a pyramid.

You can get one or two of the older children to be the task masters and shout out orders to work faster, etc. Children love doing this.

If you have several children at the Seder, you can do a competition who can build the tallest tower/pyramid.



Ahead of time get the older kids to prepare a news report about the Ten Plagues and the Crossing of the Red Sea.

As part of the "broadcast" they can interview some of the guests as Pharaoh, Moses, Aaron, etc.

These characters can be totally improvised or described on an index card that you hand to the guests. For example: "You are Pharaoh. You have just been woken up in the middle of the night by your adviser who has told you that there is no water to drink in the whole of Egypt, only blood. The radio reporter wants to hear your statement about what you're going to do."

Who Or What Am I ?



In advance of Seder night write out on separate pieces of paper the names of characters or objects associated with Seder night. For example: Pharaoh, Elijah the Prophet, The Wise Son, Maror, Charoset, Matzah, Chametz, Frog, Wild Beast, etc.

During the Seder choose a volunteer. Tie a scarf around his forehead and stick a name on the scarf so that everyone can see it but him. Now he has to ask questions about himself, to which everyone answers Yes/No until he figures out who he is.

If he guesses in five or less questions, he gets a prize.



This game is for a more advanced or slightly older age group. It works like charades.

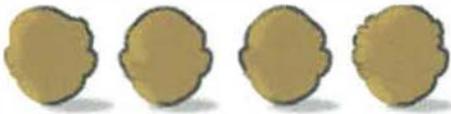
Prepare different verses from the Haggadah ahead of time, and write them on paper.

Each participant randomly chose a card. He then has to mime the sentence and the rest of the guests and family have to guess the passage.

The participant is not allowed to talk, but he may indicate how many words are in the passage with his fingers. He can show that a word rhymes with another word by touching his ear.

This game can be adapted for younger kids to act out the Ten Plagues or simpler words connected to the Passover story.

The Four Sons



To get children excited in advance of the Seder, have them prepare plastecine or clay models of the four sons.

These can be placed on the Seder table and held up when that section of the Haggadah is read. They can also be used to stimulate a discussion as to what the Haggadah means by wicked, simple etc. (To get the conversation going, you might ask: Is it a bad thing to be simple? Why doesn't the fourth son know what to ask?)

Passover Bingo Board

Our family used to love to play this and create it. There are two ways of playing this. The simplest way is to draw (or today you can print images from the internet) or write different ideas connected to the story of the Exodus. E.g. the ten plagues, Pharoah, Korban Pesach, 4 sons etc. Everyone has a Bingo board and pieces of paper to cover the Bingo items. At different intervals, someone calls out 3 or 4 Bingo pictures. The first one to fill his whole board wins. With younger kids, they could match the word to the picture.

The more sophisticated version is to ask questions and the bingo board has the answers e.g **What is the third plague?** And on the board will be **Lice**. This is particularly good with older kids and the questions can be quite challenging.

(*tools for lasting change)