

# Faith Quest - Way of the Cross

St. Mary's Anglican Church, Regina

## Passages

**Workshop:** Oasis, Daily Bread Bistro

**Concept:** Remembering God's acts for the people of God.

## Purpose

In this lesson, we want the children to 1) hear the story of the Passover, 2) partake of the food, and 3) learn something about the feelings and experience of the Hebrew people by hearing the story and experiencing the meal. It is very important to create a sacred and ceremonial atmosphere during the telling of the story and during the meal itself. The purpose of the meal is not to feed the children, but to have them be part of the Hebrew experience and learn the symbolic nature of the meal.

## Preparation

### Materials List

For setup:

- Candles
- Mats or blankets
- Tablecloths
- Togas or robes for the children and adults involved
- Beard for teacher.

For place settings:

- Plate (paper or unbreakable plates)
- Napkins
- 4 small paper cups for EACH participant
- Fork
- Spoon.

Food elements:

- Celery or parsley (1 piece per participant)
- Unleavened bread (preferably Matzoh)
- Small bowl of salt water
- Horseradish
- Charoset (a mixture of chopped walnuts, wine, cinnamon and apples – it represents the mortar the Hebrew slaves used to assemble the Pharaoh's bricks. (You may use applesauce for a simple substitution)
- A hard boiled egg
- Shank bone (traditionally a lamb bone, but any substitution will do)

- Grape juice (several small pitchers)
- Basket of fruit and cheese slices (have enough for each child to have just a few bites of fruit and one piece of cheese).

Note: The Seder plate contains foods that have special meaning for this meal.

Other elements:

- Wet wipes
- Bag of candy
- Basket for 3 pieces of Matzoh
- Cloth napkins to cover basket
- Safe lighter for candles
- Pillows around a low table
- Copy of the haggadah for each participant.
- Response words/questions on white board for all to see.

### **Teacher Preparation:**

Passover is the oldest and most important religious festival in Judaism, commemorating God's deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and God's creation of the Israelite people. The focal point of Passover is a communal meal, called the "Seder" (meaning "order" because of the fixed order of service) which is a time of rejoicing and celebration at the deliverance for the Hebrews that God accomplished in the exodus. Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Seder meal at the Last Supper.

### **Preparation:**

Basic table setting for each child, which should include individual bowls of salt water in which to dip the parsley or celery and small baskets beside each plate with three pieces of bread in each basket separated by napkins; flowers or other special decoration, small pitchers on table.

## Presentation

### **Open - Introduction**

Greet the children and introduce yourself.

Invite the children to dress up in a toga and then sit down around the table on a pillow.

Explain that today we will be celebrating the Passover, the time when God rescued the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Remind the children that they must participate as instructed or they will be removed from the area. This is a long ceremony and we do not have time to stop and discipline anyone. Shepherds lead the children in their questions and responses.

### **Lesson Plan:**

Note: All words to be spoken by the leader (teacher or other adult) are in bold type. The responses (not appropriate for the youngest group) are in italics and will be read by the students, OR a youth leader or other adult.

#### 1. Lighting of the Candles

**Leader:** The word Seder means order. We will be sharing this meal in an orderly way. The Seder meal has been celebrated for over 2000 years. We are going to be telling the story of the Exodus. This is the traditional way Jewish families teach this story (As candles are lit, the response is given).

*All: Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all. You have brought us life, you have provided for us, and helped us to reach this season of joy.*

**Leader:** Will everybody please join hands?

*All: May God bless us and keep us. May God's face shine upon us and be gracious to us. May God's spirit be with us and give us peace. Amen.*

## 2. The First Cup: The Cup of Blessing

**Leader:** Will everybody please fill their cup. Place your cup in your right hand and raise it high.

*All: Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all. You have chosen to love us, and you have given us holidays, and this day of celebration.*

(Everybody will now drink the majority of their first cup)

## 3. Washing of the Hands

**Leader:** Before we eat, let us wash our hands. We do this for cleanliness and to remember that all food is a gift from God and not to be approached ungratefully. Will you take the moist towelette and use it to wash your hands. As we this we remember how on this night God cared for us as we left Egypt.

## 4. Eating a Green Vegetable

**Leader:** A green vegetable is a symbol of springtime. On this night, as we have in the past, let us dip it in the salt water, the small container by your plate. The salt water represents the salty tears our people shed in slavery, and reminds us that people are still in need today.

*All: Blessed are you Lord our God, ruler of all, creator of the fruits and vegetables of the earth.*

(Everyone eats the celery dipped in salt water. Note: It is important that everyone take a bite, even if they do not like it - to experience what happened in Egypt.)

## 5. Break the middle piece of bread.

**Leader:** The three pieces of bread represent the unleavened bread (bread that has not risen) that the Jewish people took with them when they fled Egypt. Will you take the middle piece of bread and break it in half. Will you wrap one-half in the napkin beside the plate. Now, all of you must close your eyes while we hide the bread wrapped in the napkin. (Have adult helpers hide the napkin –wrapped bread around the room.)

## 6. The Passover Story

**All:** *Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat regular bread. Why on this night do we eat matzoh, unleavened bread? On all other nights we eat herbs of any kind. Why on this night do we only eat bitter herbs? On all other nights we do not dip herbs even once. Why on this night do we dip herbs twice? On all other nights we eat without special festivities. Why on this night do we hold the Seder meal?*

**Leader:** I am glad you asked those questions. On this night we celebrate how God set us free from slavery under Pharaoh, and in fact has set us free from every kind of slavery. Why do we eat only unleavened bread tonight? When Pharaoh let us go out of Egypt we had to flee in great haste. We had no time to bake bread. We could not wait for the yeast to rise, and the sun beating down on the dough baked it into flat, unleavened bread. Why do we eat bitter herbs tonight? Because we were slaves in Egypt and our lives were very bitter. Why do we dip the herbs twice tonight? The sweet and the bitter together remind us that we were able to endure the bitterness of slavery only because of the sweetness of hope that our Lord would save us. Why on this night do we hold the Seder service? Even if all of us were wise and well-versed in the Bible, it would still be our duty to tell the story of the deliverance from Egypt. It is the duty of parents to tell their children the story of Passover so that they in turn can tell it to their children. Moses begged the Pharaoh, who stubbornly refused to free the Hebrew slaves. God afflicted Egypt with ten plagues that left the people and the land in terrible condition.

Will you please fill your cups?

We remember the ten plagues by pouring drops of juice as we mention each of them. We do not pour the juice out of joy. According to an ancient Jewish tradition, we express our compassion for the suffering of the Egyptians. Although they were enemies and tormentors, they were also children of God, and fellow human beings. We temper our joy with drops of juice spilled from our cups. As we say together the name of each plague, will you please spill out one little drop of juice onto your plate. (Be very specific about how this is to be done so the children don't make a mess).

**All:** *Blood! Boils! Frog! Hail! Gnats! Locusts! Flies! Darkness! Cattle disease! Slaying of the firstborn!*

## 7. The Passover Symbols

**All:** *What is the meaning of the lamb bone?*

**Leader:** The lamb bone is to remind us of when Moses called all of the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, which is a plant, and using it like a paintbrush, dip it in the blood of the lamb. Then you shall paint some blood on the doorposts of your house. None of you shall go out of your houses until morning. For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when God sees the blood on the doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your children forever.

**All:** *What is the meaning of the bread that we eat?*

**Leader:** It is a reminder of the haste with which the Hebrews left Egypt. The Scripture says, "The

dough they had brought from Egypt they baked into unleavened cakes, because there was no yeast.”

**All:** *What is the meaning of the bitter herbs?*

**Leader:** The bitter herbs remind us that the Egyptians made the lives of God’s people very bitter. They made them work very hard in the fields, and they forced them to make tons of bricks. We remember that although we are now free, we must never rest until every child of God is free.

#### 8. The Second Cup: The Cup of Memory

**Leader:** Please fill your cups and lift them up with your right hand.

**All:** *Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all, creator of the fruit of the vine.*

**Leader:** Let us drink the cup of memory together. (All drink)

#### 9. Blessing over the Bread

**Leader:** Will you break off a piece of bread from the upper piece of bread and join be in the prayer.

**All:** *Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all, who made us a holy people with your commandments and commanded us to eat bread.*

**Leader:** Let us eat the bread. (All eat.)

#### 10. The Herbs, the Charoset (or applesauce), and the Pita Bread

**Leader:** Will you take a tiny amount of the bitter herb (horseradish) and some of the charoset or applesauce and put it between two pieces of pita bread like a sandwich. Rabbi Hillel, at the time that the Temple was still in existence, combined the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the apples, and ate them together to carry out the command, “With unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat.” The applesauce is a symbol of mortar, representing the clay bricks which were made by the Israelites in Egypt. Let us eat Hillel’s sandwich. (all eat.)

#### 11. Enjoy the meal!

Ordinarily, this is where a full meal would be eaten. At this point the children are invited to eat bread, fruit, cheese, etc.

#### 12. Eat the Sweet

When the children have eaten, the leader says: If you can find the hidden bread, I will give everyone a piece of candy! (Share the candy.)

#### 13. The Third Cup: The Cup of Thanksgiving

**Leader:** Please fill your cups with grape juice again, and we shall give thanks for food. Hold the cups in your right hand.

**All:** *Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all. You sustain the world with goodness and give us food of the earth.*

**Leader:** Let us drink the cup of thanksgiving together.

#### 14. The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Hope and Freedom

**Leader:** Will you please fill your cups one more time? Place your cup in your right hand and lift it up high. We will drink the fourth cup of juice, the cup of freedom. It is a reminder of freedom – its hopes, struggles, and dreams for so many enslaved nations and people. As committed children of God, we are called to witness this precious gift and make it known to all peoples of the earth: those who seek justice, those who lack any rights and who fight for freedom.

**All:** *Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of all, Creator of the fruit of the vine.*

**Leader:** Let us drink the cup of hope and freedom. (All drink.)

## Reflect

Ask the children if they have any questions about the meal. Go around the room and ask: what was their favourite part and why?

Write or draw how you think the Hebrew children felt as they took the Passover meal together.

## Closing

### Closing Prayer

You may close with a prayer of your own, or use the following:

Dear God, thank you for this meal through which we can remember the story of your care for your people. Thank you for continuing to care for us – your people – today. Amen

### Dismissal

Have the children help with the cleanup. Dismiss them with instructions about where they are to go. They could share any leftover foods at coffee time explaining the Seder meal they have just celebrated.