

A Very Basic Christian Passover Seder Guide

By Holly Eastburg at HebrewRootsMom.com

So, you've decided to incorporate the celebration of Passover into your Christian home. Now what? Where to begin? What to buy? Whom to ask? What to say? What to eat? I know only a couple of Christians that were raised with Passover as a family tradition. What a great blessing! Unfortunately, the rest of us must figure it out on our own. But recent years have produced a large number of resources for Christians interested in Passover. This is a great time to introduce Passover as a tradition in your family and to get started passing it on to future generations. Here's a simplified, step-by-step guide to help you hold your own Christian Passover Seder. As you continue to learn and grow in this practice, you can involve more of the elements and customs as you see fit for your family.

Pray

Let God know your intentions. Ask Him to help you find the resources you need to observe Passover with your family. You'll be surprised at His response!

Read the story of the Passover

Make sure you know what you're celebrating and why. Even if you know the story, go over it again. You'll find it in Exodus, chapters 3 through 15. Don't miss the supernatural awesomeness of God displayed in this story! The point of all this was to show God's power and proclaim His name throughout the earth (Exodus 9:16). Make sure that gets done through your Passover celebration. Make sure God gets all the glory.

Collect Supplies

Here's a list for a simple Seder.

- A Haggadah – 1 per person (A booklet to lead participants through the Seder)
- Bowl of water and towel for hand washing
- A Seder Plate – 1 for each table or each participant (can be an actual Seder Plate or any large plate)
- Matzah – about 5 pieces per participant
- Cloth (napkin or otherwise to wrap 3 pieces of the matzah in)
- Parsley or celery – 1 piece for each participant
- Salt – enough to make salt water
- Small dishes for salt water – 1 per participant or per every few participants
- Charoset – about 1/2 c. per participant (recipe included at the end of this document)

- Bone – 1 for each Seder plate (usually a roasted lamb shank bone but we use a drumstick)
- Horseradish – about 1 tablespoon per participant
- Wine and/or juice – enough for each participant to have 4 glasses/cups
- Glasses and/or cups – 1 for each participant
- Full meal to eat (other than the Seder elements, usually pork-free and yeast-free)

Set up

- Decide who will lead the Seder. Traditionally the man of the house, it doesn't have to be. This person will be praying, pouring wine, etc. so he or she may have to brush up on how to do a Seder ahead of time. There are great resources for this at HebrewRootsMom.com.
- Fill hand washing bowl with water and have towel accessible.
- Put Matzah on a plate so that everyone at the table has access to it.
- Wrap 3 pieces of matzah in the cloth and set it at the leader's place.
- Make saltwater in either individual or shared bowls and place on the table.
- Prepare Seder plate(s). Place bone, parsley or celery, charoset, and horseradish on the plate.
- Place glasses/cups on the table.
- Place wine/juice on the table and have more easily accessible.
- Make sure everyone has a Haggadah.

Simplified Summary of the Christian Seder

1. Pour the first glass of wine. Open with a prayer, thanking God for freeing us from slavery, both through the Exodus from Egypt and from sin through our Messiah, Jesus. Optional: say the following HaGafen blessing all together.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

In Hebrew: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Pronunciation: Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam,
bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.

2. Pass the washing bowl around and each participant should wash and dry their hands. This signifies that we must approach God with a clean and pure heart.
3. Dip the parsley in salt water. Tell participants that this reminds us of our tears in slavery. Eat it after the leader has praised God for the vegetables. The

HaAdamah can be said at this time.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

In Hebrew: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Pronunciation: Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam, bo-rei pe-ri ha-ah-dah-mah.

4. The leader removes the middle piece of matzah from the 3 pieces of matzah that have been set aside. It should be broken in 2 and the larger piece wrapped in the cloth. In some homes, it is hidden somewhere in the house for the children to find later. This reminds us that Jesus was broken, wrapped, and buried.
5. Everyone then lifts a piece of matzah. The blessing over the bread, the HaMotzi, can be said at this time.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

In Hebrew: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Pronunciation: Ba-rook ah-tah a-do-nai eh-lo-hay-noo meh-lekh ha-o-lam ha-mo-tzi le-chem meen ha-aretz.

The leader then explains that the bread is like the bread that the Israelites had upon leaving Egypt. The absence of yeast represents the absence of sin in our lives due to redemption of that sin through Jesus. Set the matzah down.

6. Pour another glass of wine. At this point, the youngest child in the house able to read should read The Four Questions.
 1. On other nights, we don't dip our food. Why do we dip our food twice tonight?
 2. On other nights, we eat regular bread. Why do we eat only matzah tonight?
 3. On other nights, we eat other vegetables. Why do we eat parsley tonight?
 4. On other nights, we sit in chairs. Why do we recline tonight?
7. The leader then responds that tonight is different because tonight, we remember that God rescued us from slavery and the slavery of our sin. We dip our food to remind us of the tears shed in our slavery and we dip again to remember that we are free. Eating matzah reminds us of the Hebrew people hurriedly leaving

Egypt and the sinlessness of Jesus. Horseradish reminds us of the bitterness of slavery – both in Egypt and to our sin. We recline as if we're royalty because we are free people.

8. The leader tells the Passover story. During the part recalling the plagues, the participants dip their finger in the wine and drop a drop of wine onto a piece of matzah as each plague is recalled (blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn). The leader should emphasize the actual Passover part of the story (lamb's blood on the doorpost saving God's people) and that Jesus's blood allowed our exodus from the slavery of our sin.
9. Each person should hold up a piece of matzah. The leader should again say that we eat matzah because the Israelites left with no time for their bread to rise. The matzah is also like Jesus, who wasn't "leavened" with sin so that he could be a sacrifice for ours.
10. The leader should raise the horseradish and tell everyone that this reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. The leader then puts the horseradish down. The leader should then explain that the charoset reminds us of the mortar used by the Israelite slaves to build brick buildings for the Egyptians.
11. Everyone lifts the second cup of wine. The leader praises God for saving us and for the fruit of the vine. Then everyone should drink and eat the matzah.
12. The leader should praise God for the reminder of the bitter herbs. Then all participants should put horseradish on their matzah and eat.
13. The leader thanks God for the food and for this time to remember the Passover and Jesus, our Passover lamb. The meal is now served.
14. After the meal is the 3rd cup of wine. You'll recognize this part from the Last Supper recorded in the Gospels. If the middle matzah was hidden, now is the time to find it. The leader breaks the once-hidden broken matzah into pieces and gives each believer at the table a piece. Another glass of wine is poured, and everyone should hold the matzah and wine. The leader should summarize the Last Supper and then quote 1 Cor. 11:24 and Mark 14:22, where Jesus said "This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." Then everyone should eat their piece of matzah, then hold their cup of wine up. The leader should then quote 1 Cor. 11:25 and Mark 14:24, where Jesus said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Then all believers should drink the 3rd cup.
15. This is usually the time for a song of praise. Some say a Psalm or sing a hymn. My kids cannot let this moment pass without singing the traditional song *Dayenu* until we eventually have to stop them. Ha ha!

16. The leader now pours the 4th cup of wine, praises God for the fruit of the vine, and everyone drinks it.
17. The leader concludes, reminding everyone that tonight's feast reminds of God's deliverance for us, not only from slavery in Egypt, but also from our sin and the death we deserve. We are redeemed through the blood of Jesus just as the blood of the lamb in the first Passover redeemed the Israelites.

I know there are some out there reading this thinking "A simple overview?!?!". I was there once too! There's more to a full Seder but this post includes just what I consider to be the most important elements. It's difficult to introduce this tradition if it's new to you but if you've been convicted that this is something you should be doing with your family, please do it anyway. My family's first Passover didn't go like we planned, and we stumbled through it, but we all have learned a LOT since then! Expect a challenge as you start and continue this rich tradition and I'm guessing you'll be blessed by your perseverance.

Charoset Recipe

Ingredients

- 6 apples – peeled, cored, and chopped
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon white sugar
- 3 ½ teaspoon honey
- 1/3 cup sweet red wine (I used grape juice when my children were small, and it was delicious also!)

Directions

Place the apples and walnuts into a large bowl.

Mix together the cinnamon and sugar and sprinkle the mixture over the apples.

Stir in the honey and sweet wine.

Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving.