



ASSUMPTION PARISH • DURBAN • PASCHAL SUPPER

FOREWORD

This booklet contains a ritual for a Paschal Meal, suitable for use by a Group or Family. The text and ritual are a blend of the traditional Jewish Seder, or Passover Meal, and of Christian faith. This meal is intended to be a Christian celebration of our faith in Jesus. We will recall how God has saved his people in history and how Jesus has saved all men through his cross and resurrection. We will praise and thank God for these marvellous acts and reaffirm our commitment to him and the way of life to which he calls us.

The ritual is divided into eleven parts. You might decide to leave out one or two if you wish, considering the time available or the needs of the people attending. You should complete the ritual first, and then have supper.

For this ritual, you will need the following people:

- A Leader
- Up to four readers
- A mother
- Two people to lead prayers
- A Food Leader
- Up to four children
- A father
- A cantor
- Someone to lead the singing

And the following items:

- Song sheets for all present
- A piece of bread hidden somewhere in the house or garden
- A prize of a packet of sweets
- A seven-branch candle-stick or 7 candles
- Some bowls of bitter herbs, matzos and haroset
- Wine glasses for all present
- A Pitcher of water, bowl for the ritual of washing of hands (near the father's place)

We hope your meal will be meaningful and happy for all of you.

Elements of the Meal

Lamb The word 'pesach' (pasch, passover) applies to the Lamb of sacrifice as well as to the deliverance from Egypt and to the feast itself.

Unleavened bread (Matzoh) called "bread of affliction" because it recalls the unleavened bread prepared for the hasty flight by night from Egypt. Three large matzohs are broken and consumed during the ceremony.

Bitter herbs (Moror) is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery and suffering in Egypt.

Green herbs to be dipped in salt water. Salt water represents tears of sorrow shed during the captivity of the Lord's people.

Haroseth (or 'haroses') represents the mortar used by Jews in building palaces and pyramids of Egypt during their slavery. **(It is a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine.)**

RECIPES

HAROSET

Make a mixture of:

½ to 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Dash of lemon juice

1 fresh grated apple

Unsalted cashew nuts

1 small tin fig jam

Blend ingredients to achieve a sweet and pleasant taste

BITTER HERBS

Make a dry, undressed salad of the following vegetables diced into small pieces and served raw:

Celery or Parsley,

Radish, Spring onion,

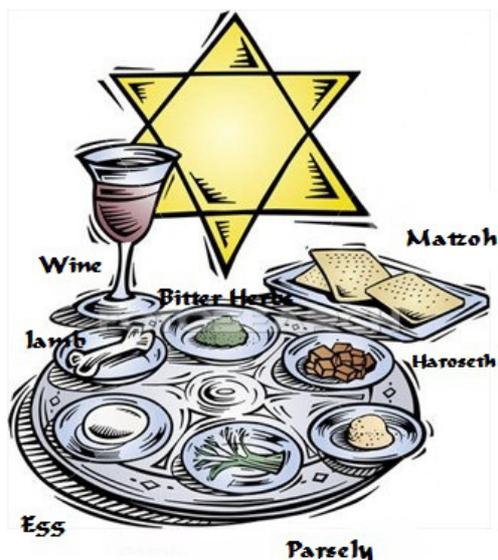
Lettuce or rocket

MATZOS

Matzos are unleavened crisp wafers available at all supermarkets. Matzos flour may be purchased with instructions on making the biscuits oneself.

NOTE

Matzos, bitter herbs and haroset should be prepared in several small bowls (or on platters) and passed around the gathering at the appropriate time during the Paschal Meal ritual.



PART ONE - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

LEADER

We would like to welcome you today to this Paschal Meal. We hope that this meal will be a joyful and meaningful event for you.

The first part of this meal will be a ritual, during which we shall perform some of the acts of the traditional Jewish Seder meal, and also re-enact some of the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. Then we shall informally enjoy our supper together.

Our gathering tonight serves many purposes. We will recall to mind God's work in history of saving his people in many different ways. We will especially remember the saving work of Jesus, God's son. And we will praise and thank God for his care and mercy he has shown us. We will also try to come to a deeper understanding of what God's call is to us today and renew our faith and commitment to him. All this, through the actions, prayers, hymns and ritual which we will now begin.

Let us open our ceremony by singing hymn number..... On the sheets.

PART TWO - A READING FROM EXODUS

LEADER

We will now listen to the story of how God freed his people from slavery in Egypt, the miraculous event which the Jews recall annually at the Passover Meal.

READER

A reading from the book of Exodus: (Chapter 14: Verses 15-31)

The crossing:

Yahweh said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me so? Tell the sons of Israel to march on. For yourself, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and part it for the sons of Israel to walk through the sea on dry ground. I for my part will make the heart of the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow them. So shall I win myself glory at the expense of Pharaoh, of all his army, his chariots, his horsemen? And when I have won glory for myself, at the expense of Pharaoh and his chariots and his army, the Egyptians will learn that I am Yahweh."

Then the angel of God, who marched at the front of the army of Israel, changed station and moved to their rear. The pillar of cloud changed station from the front to the rear of them, and remained there. It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night passed without the armies drawing any closer the whole night long. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. Yahweh drove back the sea with a strong easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted and the sons of Israel went on dry ground right into the sea, walls of water to right and to left of them. The Egyptians gave chase: after them they went, right into the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. In the morning watch, Yahweh looked down on the army of the Egyptians from the pillar of fire and of cloud, and threw the army into confusion. He so clogged their chariot wheels that they could scarcely make headway. "Let us flee from the Israelites," the Egyptians cried "Yahweh is fighting for them against the Egyptians." **"Stretch out your hand over the sea,"** Yahweh said to Moses **"that the waters may flow back on the Egyptians and their chariots and their horsemen."** Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and, as day broke, the sea returned to its bed. The fleeing Egyptians marched right into it, and Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the very middle of the sea. The returning waters overwhelmed the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army, which had followed the Israelites into the sea; not a single one of them was left. But the sons of Israel had marched through the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and to left of them. That day, Yahweh rescued Israel from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. Israel witnessed the great act that Yahweh had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated Yahweh; they put their faith in Yahweh and in Moses, his servant.

PART THREE - SEARCH FOR THE LEAVEN

LEADER

The first part of the Jewish ritual is the search for leaven. The Jews were commanded to eat only unleavened bread over this period in memory of the haste with which they had to leave Egypt - they did not even have time to let the bread rise. So, in each household, there is a search to see that no leaven is left during this time of Passover. We would like the children to search the room/the house/the garden for a piece of unleavened bread which we have hidden.

(The children go off and search for the piece of bread. While they are gone, adults left behind might like to introduce themselves to one another.) When the children have returned:

LEADER

St. Paul gives us the Christian meaning of this action of searching for and clearing out every last piece of leaven

READER

A reading from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians: (Chapter 5: Verses 6-8)

'The pride that you take in yourselves is hardly to your credit. You must know how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough, so get rid of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be. Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed: let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'

LEADER

Let us now sing song number.....on the sheets.

PART FOUR - THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

LEADER

Kindling of the festival lights - Symbolizes the coming of the Messiah, **the Light of the World**
The mother of the house lights seven candles and prays to remind us of this.

MOTHER:

(Lights seven candles or a seven-branch candle-stick), then prays:

**Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who has sanctified us by your commandments,
and commanded us to light the festival lights.
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season.
May our gathering be consecrated, O God,
By the light of your countenance
Shining upon us in blessing
And bringing us peace as followers of your Son Jesus,
We ask this peace in our hearts, in our Homes, in our schools, And in our country.
Amen.**

1st Cup of Wine: The cup of Holiness - *The first cup of Wine or grape juice is poured*

FATHER: *(stands, and holds up the glass and prays)*

Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

ALL

**Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe
You have chosen us from among all people
You have given us joy and gladness
And brought us to this celebration of our freedom**

All drink wine

PART FIVE - THE WASHING OF FEET STORY

LEADER

At this point, after drinking a glass of wine, the head of the household (**Father**) **washes his hands**. It was probably at this point in the ritual that Jesus extended this act to wash his disciples' feet.

Let us listen to the story of this:

READER

A reading from the Gospel according to John: (Chapter 13: Verses 1-16)

Jesus washes his disciples' feet:

It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were in this world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from the table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "**Lord, are you going to wash my feet?**"

Jesus answered, "**At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.**" "Never" said Peter "**You shall never wash my feet.**" Jesus replied,

"If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me" "Then, Lord" said Simon Peter "not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well." Jesus said, "**No one who has taken a bath needs washing; he is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.**" He knew who was going to betray him that was why he said, "**though not all of you are.**" When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again, he went back to the table. "**Do you understand**" he said "**what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so, I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.**"

"I tell you most solemnly, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the man who sent him."

FIRST PRAYER

Let us pray: **Almighty Father, you have given us in Jesus, an example of selfless and devoted service. Make us mindful of the needs and sufferings of others, and grant that people may devote themselves to the common welfare, not seeking gain for themselves, but placing the needs of others above their own interests. Help us all to give much and demand little, so that we may all know the joy of service, for the sake of him who died for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LEADER

In response to this challenge of Jesus to be people of service, let us sing number on the sheets.

PART SIX - EATING OF THE RITUAL FOODS

LEADER

To commemorate the sufferings of their forefathers in Egypt and the miraculous way in which God freed them from slavery, the Jews developed a ritual of eating certain symbolic foods. Let us re-enact this ritual now.

FOOD LEADER

"We first eat little **bitter herbs**" (**Take some yourself and pass the bowl on – then dip them in salt water**). "These herbs remind us of the suffering of the Jews in Egypt, and also of the bitterness of our own sin and our rejection of God. They symbolise the constant struggle of our life against evil and for good".

MOTHER:

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth

(Wait until everyone has eaten bitter herbs.)

Now we eat a little **matzo**, or unleavened bread. This reminded the Jews of their pilgrimage out of Egypt and through the desert. Eating this bread reminds us that this life is a pilgrimage, a journey to the Kingdom of God.

As we eat, we say together the acclamation numberon the sheets.

Now we eat a little **haroset**, or sweet herb, with some matzos. This reminds us of the great victories God has won for his people in history, and also the victory God has won through his resurrection. It is a further reminder to us that the Kingdom of God will come, it is assured. These sweet foods further remind us of the hope for our lives which Jesus' message gives us, a real hope in this world that a new situation can one day come about where justice, love and peace are not merely distant ideals, but are the norms of everyone's daily living.

PART SEVEN - INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHILDREN

LEADER

The meaning of these ceremonies and ritual sections are explained by the father of the house to his children.

FIRST CHILD: Father, why is this night different from all other nights

FATHER:

My son, this night is different for this reason. You remember the Israelites had been settled in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. The Egyptians ill-treated our fathers; they gave them no peace and inflicted harsh slavery upon them. But they called on God our Father and He heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression and he brought us out of the land of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great signs and wonders. This was a night of vigil as our people waited for the Lord to bring them out of slavery. It is the Lord's night. All Israelites keep their vigil generation after generation. This night is different from all other nights, because the Holy One passed over the houses of the children of Israel, but killed all the first-born of the Egyptians.

SECOND CHILD

On all other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread - but why, on this night, do we eat only unleavened bread?

FATHER

My son, it is because there was no time for the dough of the Israelites in Egypt to become leavened before the Holy One revealed Himself to them and saved them. As it is told in the Bible:

"And the dough which they had brought out from the land of Egypt they baked into cakes of unleavened bread, because they could not tarry, nor had they prepared themselves any provisions."

So, like them, we eat this unleavened bread.

THIRD CHILD:

On all other nights we eat herbs of any kind. On this night why do we eat only bitter herbs?

FATHER

My child, they are eaten to remind us that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our people. As it is written: ***"And they embittered their lives with hard labour; with mortar and bricks and every kind of labour in the fields: all the work which they made them do was rigorous."*** We eat the bitter herbs as a reminder.

FOURTH CHILD

Father, on this night we will eat roasted lamb. Why is this so?

FATHER

My child, this will remind us of the lamb that our fathers ate on the night of their deliverance from the land of Egypt and of the blood of the Lamb with which they painted the doorposts of their houses so that the Holy One might not destroy them.

So, my child, in every generation one must look upon himself, as if he personally had come out of the land of Egypt. As the Bible says: **"And you shall tell your son on that day, saying - it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth from the land of Egypt.**

"For it was not only the Israelites whom the Holy One redeemed, but us too with them. As it is said: **"He brought us out from there that he might lead us to - and give us - the land which he pledged to our forefathers."**

Therefore, it is our duty to thank and praise in song and prayer, to glorify and extol him who performed all these wonders for the people of Israel and us. He brought us from slavery to freedom from anguish to joy, from sorrow to festivity, from darkness to great light.

Let us therefore sing before Him a new song. Let us praise the Eternal One.

PART EIGHT - THE HALLEL PSALM – Thanksgiving for deliverance from Egypt

LEADER

Let us know join together in praising God for his wonderful acts of deliverance in freeing the Jews from slavery and, in Jesus, freeing all men from the slavery of sin and evil.

The cantor will sing/say the verses and we will reply by singing the antiphon

"For His great love is without end" after each verse

CANTOR: For His great love is without end.

PEOPLE: For His great live is without end.

CANTOR

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good
Give thanks to the God of Gods
Give thanks to the Lord of Lords.

Who alone has wrought marvellous works?
Whose wisdom it was made the skies
Who fixed the earth firmly on the seas?

It was He who made the great lights:
The sun to rule in the day
The moon and the stars in the night.

The first-born of the Egyptians He smote
He brought Israel out from their midst
Arm outstretched, with power in His hand.

He divided the Red Sea in two
He made Israel pass through the midst
He flung Pharaoh and his force in the sea.

And He snatched us away from our foes
He gives food to all living things
To the God of Heaven give thanks.

PART NINE - ST PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF THE LAST SUPPER

LEADER

We now read St. Paul's account of Jesus' last Seder Meal, **the Last Supper**, and of how this meal of Jesus became vitally important for us Christians.

READER

A reading from the **First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (Chapter 11: Verses 23-26)**

"For this is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me. In the same way he took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me'. Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death."

PART TEN - A GLASS OF WINE IN TRIUMPH

LEADER

Let us now pour out and drink a glass of wine, in memory of what Jesus did.

This is a triumphant glass, so we stand and drink it. We drink triumphantly because Jesus has triumphed through his death and resurrection, because he has left us himself in the Eucharist, and because through all this he has won the Kingdom of God and offered us a sure hope for the future.

(Wait while wine is drunk)

PART ELEVEN - CONCLUSION

SECOND PRAYER

Let us pray:

0 God and Heavenly Father, you have given to us, your holy people, the bread that comes down from heaven, in your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to rid ourselves of the old yeast of evil and wickedness so that we may welcome the bread of sincerity and truth. Grant that we may continually live in him and he in us, so that, day by day, we may be renewed in spirit by the power of his endless life, He who gave himself for us and now lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. Amen.

LEADER

Now let us conclude our service of worship by singing together song number on the song-sheets.

Supper is now served, during which people meet and get to know each other. You might also like to sing a few more song during or after the meal. When people begin to leave, conclude with a prayer led by someone, and possibly with intentions shared.

