



Seder Meal

Shalom and Welcome

(All are seated)

Narrator: People have celebrated the Passover for the last three thousand years. Probably for much longer. Three thousand years ago is when we first hear about it, when Moses led Israel out of Egypt. But it's probably a much older spring festival, as farmers offered up a sacrifice of bread made from new corn, and shepherds offered up their first spring lambs. But for the Jews, from the Exodus onwards, this spring feast became the celebration of their "passing over" – from slavery to freedom. In that passing over, the Jewish nation was born. They have celebrated it every springtime since. It is one of their most sacred feasts. We join them in celebrating it this evening. The Passover is a mixture of joy and sadness. We might call ourselves a free people, but lots of our brothers and sisters cannot. We keep an empty place at this table to remind ourselves of all those, around the world, who are denied their human rights and their human dignity. Moreover, although all of us here rejoice in the freedom that we have, even the freest of us is still bound by many chains. Who would disagree? There's still a long journey to go for all of us. So, we come together tonight in joy, and in sadness. Let's all stand and sing together:

Song: Christ Be Our Light 6.31 (Celebrate in Song) *or another hymn*

Narrator: The Seder is a mixture of formality and informality but there is an

order to the service and it involves specific experiences. The Hebrew word “Seder” actually means “order”.

Blessing Of The Festival Candles

The Seder begins with the Blessing of the Festival Candles. As we light the candles, we pray for the light of the Spirit of God to bring the special meaning of Passover and Easter to each and every one of us. Normally, the mother of the family opens the ceremony by lighting the candle at the Head Table. _____, would you do us the honour of lighting our Head Table candle?

As the light for the celebration of redemption is lit by a woman, we remember that Jesus, our Redeemer, the promised Light of the World, came into the world through the obedience of a woman, too, who has become the Blessed Mother of us all.

Starting with the front, we would ask a person at each table to go up to the Head Table candle and light your candle. When you go back to your table, turn to the person at your side and light theirs. They will in turn light the candle of the person beside them and continue until all the candles are lit.

Instrumental Music: _____ **Continue playing Christ Be Our Light** or another hymn

Minister: Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation. Through Your goodness, You have given us light to lighten our darkness. Let Your face shine on us, as we celebrate this feast in Your honour.

All: Our God and God of our fathers and mothers, may the rays of these festival candles cast their glow upon the earth and bring the radiance of your divine light to all who still dwell in darkness and in slavery of sin. May this season, marking the deliverance of our ancestors from Pharaoh, arouse us against any despot who keeps us bowed in slavery. In gratitude for the freedom which is ours, may we strive to bring about the liberation of all. Bless our homes and our dear ones with the light of your Spirit. Amen.

Narrator: Since we plan to eat a meal together, let us fill our glasses with wine.
(Pause)

We will now raise them up and say together.

All: Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation. Through Your goodness, we have this wine, Fruit of the vine and work of human hands. Blessed are You for choosing us to be Your holy people. Blessed are You for letting us live to celebrate this feast. Blessed be God forever. Blessed be God forever.

(All drink)

URCHATZ

Narrator: The next experience of the seder is known as “Urchatz”, which means “the washing of the hands”. This is a symbolic act of purification, which precedes our participation in this religious service. The Scripture says that only the person who has clean hands and a pure heart can stand in God’s presence (Ps. 24:3-4). When we wash each others’ hands, we remember how Jesus, on the night of his last Passover supper, poured water from a bowl and washed the disciples’ feet for them, like a servant. He asked them, “Do you understand what I, your Lord and Teacher, have done for you? Now in your hearts, you should be willing to do the same kinds of things for each other.” (Jn 13: 12-14) Both sides of the room have a table with bowls of water and towels. The last two members from each side are asked to be the servers – one server will pour the water, twice on the right hand and twice on the left hand. The other server will wipe the hands of each person.

We will sing **Ubi Caritas** (*or another song*) as we experience the Washing of the Hands. Remain standing until all are washed and the song is finished ... then sit down.

Narrator: Our Seder meal starts with a piece of parsley and a piece of bread.

KARPAS

Narrator: The next experience is called “Karpas”.

Minister: Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation. You make us holy through being obedient to Your commands. Blessed be God forever. Blessed be God forever.

Narrator: The Karpas, the piece of parsley, is dipped in salt water and eaten. The vegetable is said to symbolize the lowly origins of the Jewish people; the salt water symbolizes the tears shed as a result of our slavery. Before partaking of the Karpas by dipping this green fruit of the earth into the salt water, we recite together:

All: In partaking of this fruit of the earth, we give thanks to God for all His bounties. We also recall that our forefathers were tillers of the soil, who were ever grateful for the earth's produce. In tasting of the salt water, we remember the tears which our ancestors shed while suffering the tortures of slavery. May our gratitude for the blessings which we enjoy help to soften the pain of sorrow, and convert tears to joy and appreciation. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who created the fruits of the earth.

(All present take a piece of parsley, dip it in salt water and eat it)

MATZAH

Narrator: The next Seder experience is the Matzah. We eat matzah on Passover night to fulfill God's commandment. Unleavened bread is used to commemorate the first Passover for in the flight from Egypt, there had been no time to make leavened bread. Now, take some unleavened bread from your plate, lift it up high for all to see, and say together:

All: This is the bread of affliction, which the people of Israel ate in the land of Egypt. It is a symbol of days of slavery and pain, endured by the Jewish people for centuries. It is a symbol also of the slavery and pain of so many in the world today. This year, many are still deprived of total freedom; may next year see them truly free. *(Eat a piece of the bread and drink from your wine to celebrate)*

Narrator: An empty goblet is now placed in the centre of the Head Table and the door is opened. *(Pause while _____ sets the goblet at the Head Table and goes to open the door)*

Reader 1: We place an extra cup on the table. If a stranger should come and ask to eat with us, we would give to him or her this cup of honour. The Jewish people call it the "Elijah cup" because Elijah was known to have helped the poor. We also call this "the cup of the second coming" which is set apart for any

stranger who should happen to come in. Jesus will return and ask us if we have cared for the hungry, the thirsty, the least of our brothers and sisters. This cup at our meal tonight reminds us of Jesus' command.

Reader 2: We open the door to welcome every person who may stand outside our lives. We pray for the hungry, the poor and the oppressed everywhere and we promise to provide them with food and support whenever we can. We celebrate with them this friendship meal. (*We now stand to sing*)

Song: We Shall Go Out (*or another song*) 6.25 Celebrate in Song

The Four Questions

Narrator:

Next comes the Seder experience of "The Four Questions".

Question 1: Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat leavened bread. Why do we eat only unleavened bread tonight?

Response 1: Exodus 12:1-8 (*A minute of silent reflection on the scripture reading*)

Question 2: Why on this night do we all eat this bread together?

Response 2: 1 Corinthians 11: 23-24 (*A minute of silent reflection on the scripture reading*)

Question 3: Why on this night do all of us drink wine together?

Response 3: 1 Corinthians 11: 25-26 (*A minute of silent reflection on the scripture reading*)

Question 4: Why on this night should all of us be here together?

Response 4: John 13: 1-5 (*A minute of silent reflection on the scripture reading*)

Luke 22: 14-20 (*A minute of silent reflection on the scripture reading*)

Narrator: God did not only rescue our forefathers, but us too. So, let us rejoice at the miracle of ourselves being delivered: from sorrow into joy, from weeping into celebrating, from darkness into light, from slavery into freedom. And, let

us stand and raise our glasses again in celebration and praise as we sing a new song to our God.

Song: Laudato Si' *(or another song)*

Bitter Herbs And Haroset

(The bitter herbs and haroset are now served, but not eaten)

Narrator: This symbolic food in front of us represents the story of how this food should become part of us. We're asked to scoop a good bit of the bitter herbs *(the egg and horseradish)* onto a piece of unleavened bread, so that we really feel the bitterness of slavery as we eat it. *(Pause while all eat)*

We are also asked to follow it up with a good helping of the sweet mixture *(haroset)* to remind us of the sweetness of freedom and to reassure us that, through the goodness of God, good will triumph over evil. *(Again, pause while all eat)* After we have tasted of this food, let us say together:

All: Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation. You make us holy through being obedient to Your commands. Blessed be God forever. Blessed be God forever.

Narrator: And now that we have started eating, we will continue with the meal and the order of the ceremony will continue afterwards. *(Meal is served)*

Song: The Time Is Now *(or another song)*

Reader 3: Our dessert cake is baked in the shape of a lamb to symbolize Christ, the new Passover, who brings sweetness to our lips and happiness to our hearts. We are glad and rejoice to share this food and our faith in Jesus Christ. *(Cake is served)*

Narrator: We have now come to the end of our Seder meal. Let us stand, raise our glasses and say together:

All: Give thanks to God for He is good. Great is His love, love without end. All creatures look to You to give them their food in due season. You give it,

and they eat. You open Your hand and they have their fill. Blessed are those who trust in God, for God will always help them. God will give strength to His people and bless His people with peace. Blessed are You, Lord, King of all creation. You create the fruit of the vine. Blessed be God forever. Blessed be God forever. Amen. (*All drink*)

Final Blessing: May God bless and keep us. May God's Face shine upon us. May God be kind to us and give us peace.

All: Amen.

Song: Share the Blessing with one another: May the Lord Bless You and Keep You

Song: Go Out Together (*or another song*)