



Congregation
Ahavath Chesed





Dear Temple family,

Passover's powerful themes of redemption and hope remind us each year that change is possible, that, even in the darkest and coldest days, spring will come, and that there is always potential for renewal, even when we feel stuck. When we are trapped in our own narrow spaces, it can feel difficult to find the strength to emerge. But then, Passover comes again to prompt us to take the first steps forward, out of the places we find ourselves confined in, and into the possibility of growth and new beginnings.

When we feel vulnerable or hopeless, we can think back to the strength and bravery of our ancestors, who chose to leave the familiar in pursuit of a better life. It was a significant risk, but came with the highest reward: freedom.

My teacher and colleague Rabbi Sonja Keren Pilz wrote a beautiful poem to describe the ongoing process of we humans, and we Jewish people, striving for the redemption that appears in our Passover story. She reminds us that freedom happens slowly and intentionally and that, though we may not know what the future holds, it is crucial that we continue moving forward.

Wishing you a Pesach season of renewal, of steps forward, of kindness, laughter, and gentle caring, as we pray for peace for all Israel and all the world.



The first steps into freedom are taken,
The ground is still holding firm.
We are on the road now
Toward the destination
We don't know yet
How to get there
Or where it will
Be.

We
Each on their own
Have to decide now,
Committed to walking,
How to make this journey
A journey of kindness, of laughter,
Of Torah, of learning, and of gentle caring
So that when we arrive it will have been
worthwhile.

With hope,

Rabbi Maya Y. Glasser

-Rabbi Sonja K. Pilz, PhD



Passover

Passover, the most commonly celebrated Jewish holiday in America, commemorates the Hebrews' liberation from slavery in Egypt and the sparing of the firstborn of the Israelites, on the eve of the Exodus. Passover begins on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Nissan and ends seven days later among Reform Jews and in Israel. Conservative and Orthodox Jews celebrate for eight days. For the duration of the holiday, we eat nothing leavened, not bread nor anything else made with leavening agents. Instead, we eat unleavened bread called matzo which symbolizes both the Hebrews' suffering while in bondage and the haste with which we left Egypt.

There are several themes to the holiday:

- Celebration of our Exodus from slavery to freedom and redemption
- Let all who are hungry come and eat
- In every generation, it is our responsibility to retell the story
- Teach our children well in order that our story continues

As Reform Jews, we host the **seder** (order) the ritual meal on the first night of Passover. At the seder, participants read from the **Haggadah** ("telling"), which details the story of the Exodus and provides interpretations about the significance of the festival and the parts of the seder. Every family creates its own seder traditions. Most seders are lively gatherings complete with music, conversation, laughter and storytelling.

Despite the horrors the Hebrews experienced as slaves, Passover is overall a joyful holiday. Many choose to share the joy by welcoming friends, community newcomers, even a stranger to join in the festivities.



The Seder Plate

A central focus of the seder, aside from eating matzo, is the seder plate, which displays symbolic food items relevant to the story of Exodus and the Jewish experience of escaping slavery.

Hebrew	English	Symbolism	Additional Notes
<i>karpas</i>	Greens (usually parsley)	Flourishing, growth, springtime	Dipped in salt water or vinegar to represent tears
<i>haroset</i>	Mix of fruit, wine, nuts, and honey	Mortar used for construction	Eaten as filling on a matzo “sandwich” (korech) attributed to Hillel
<i>maror</i>	Bitter herb, often horseradish	Bitterness	Dipped into Charoset and eaten
<i>zeroa</i>	Shank bone/chicken neck (vegetarians often use beets)	Paschal lamb	Symbolic of the offerings at the Temple of Jerusalem
<i>beitzah</i>	Egg	Cycle of life	An egg was a cooked food offered as part of the pilgrimage festival at the Temple of Jerusalem

Some families include an orange on their seder plate. This 20th-century addition began with Dartmouth Jewish studies professor Susanna Heschel, the daughter of the modern Jewish philosopher and civil rights activist Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. She explains that the orange was intended to represent the inclusion of LGBTQ+ Jews and other marginalized people in the community. Heschel suggests that each guest consumes a segment of the orange and spits out the seeds, indicating their abhorrence of homophobia and exclusion.

Some include a **cup of water for Miriam**, the sister of Moses and Aaron, to commemorate her role in the Exodus and her significance among women in Jewish tradition.

Kos Eliyahu (Cup of Elijah) is a cup of wine to greet Elijah as he visits each seder table. Often a child opens the door to welcome Elijah, who, it is said, will announce the coming of the Messianic Age. In some homes, in an effort to keep the children engaged, an adult at the table sips from Kos Eliyahu when the child is at the door. Imagine the excitement when the child “learns” that Elijah has visited. As Reform Jews, we recognize our responsibility to make the world a better place, thereby, creating the Messianic Age. Opening the door for Elijah and Kos Eliyah provide an opportunity for discussion about what we all can do to hasten the arrival of the Messianic Age.



The Seder



The table is set and each place has a haggadah. Time for the Seder to begin. Seder is Hebrew for “order” and a complete Seder has 15 steps.

1. Kadesh (קדש) - Sanctify: Recite Kiddush over the first cup of wine.
2. Urchatz (ורחץ) - Wash: Wash hands without a blessing.
3. Karpas (כרפס) - Vegetable: Dip the parsley from the seder plate in saltwater.
4. Yachatz (יחץ) - Break: Break the middle matzah; hide the larger piece (Afikoman).
5. Maggid (מגיד) - Tell: Tell the Exodus story, drink the second cup.
6. Rachtzah (רחצה) - Wash: Second washing of hands with a blessing.
7. Motzi (מוציא) - Blessing: Recite blessing for bread (HaMotzi).
8. Matzah (מצה) - Matzah: Recite blessing on eating matzah.
9. Maror (מרור) - Bitter Herbs: Eat bitter herbs dipped in charoset.
10. Korech (כורך) - Sandwich: Make a sandwich of matzah and Maror.
11. Shulchan Orech (שלחן עורך) - Meal: Eat the festive meal.
12. Tzafun (צפון) - Hidden: Eat the hidden afikoman.
13. Barech (ברך) - Grace: Recite Grace After Meals (Birkat Hamazon) and drink the third cup.
14. Hallel (הלל) - Praises: Recite psalms of praise and drink the fourth cup.
15. Nirtzah (נרצה) - Accepted: Traditionally, the Seder concludes with the phrase “Next Year in Jerusalem!”

Video: The Passover

Seder: What to Expect



The Four Questions

It can be a challenge to keep children (and even some adults!) engaged in the recitation of the Exodus story. “When do we eat” is a familiar refrain heard many times before the festive dinner is served. The traditional way to include the children is to teach them to ask the Four Questions. Traditionally, the youngest child asks, in recitation or song. Often referred to as *Ma Nishtana* “What is different?”—about what distinguishes the holiday from other nights.

Learn “Mah Nishtana” in Both Hebrew and English



4 Questions Song For Kids



Mah Nishtana - The 4 Questions Song



All these questions are answered as the story of the Exodus is retold. Some families choose to ask additional questions or to replace the traditional questions with questions like these:

- How can our communities embrace and celebrate the “mixed multitudes” of the Jewish people?
- How will we address gender inequity so that we can cultivate the Miriams, together with the Moses and Aarons of the future?
- How will we dismantle antisemitism so we can live in safety, freedom and a sense of belonging?
- How does God’s liberation of our ancestors inform our actions today?



The 10 Plagues

The Egyptians were challenged with ten plagues before Pharaoh finally agreed to “let the people go.” We are told that those ten plagues were:

Blood

Frogs

Lice

Flies

Livestock sickness

Boils

Hail

Locusts

Darkness

Death of the first born

Traditionally, we spill a drop of wine from each kiddush cup as each plague is named. At some modern seder tables, the participants name actions or inactions that are destroying our world. For example, the making of war; intolerance, prejudice and bigotry; lack of commitment to the environment; ignoring the hungry; pain we cause when we hurt others’ feelings; failure to control the use of guns; oppression of people; the erosion of our freedoms. Consider asking each of your guests (even the children) to identify something that makes the world a hard place to live.



Passover Music

PJ Library Album Available on
Apple Music and Afternoons
with Mimi (young children)



Dayenu



Passover Spotify Playlist (all
ages)



Eliyahu Hanavi



Celebrate Passover (youtube)
(Babies)



Bound for the Promised Land



Sing Ms. Sara's Favorite
Passover Songs (youtube)
(young children)



Where's the Afikomen?



Matza Mia! An ABBA Passover



Who Knows One?



Kadesh Urechatz:
Teaches Hebrew names for ceremonial
items, continues to other songs in Hebrew



Chad Gadya



Passover Lessons

by Ruth Van Alstine

When a child reaches the age
of maturity and understanding
and adulthood brings responsibility
to honor traditions, build community,
create a caring and nurturing society,
assuring Passover brings with it remembrance.

Once slaves, our people walk free,
freedom that came with a price of hardship,

lessons on how to manage obstacles,
to face them bravely,
as we move ahead with our lives,
and to extend charity for those in need.

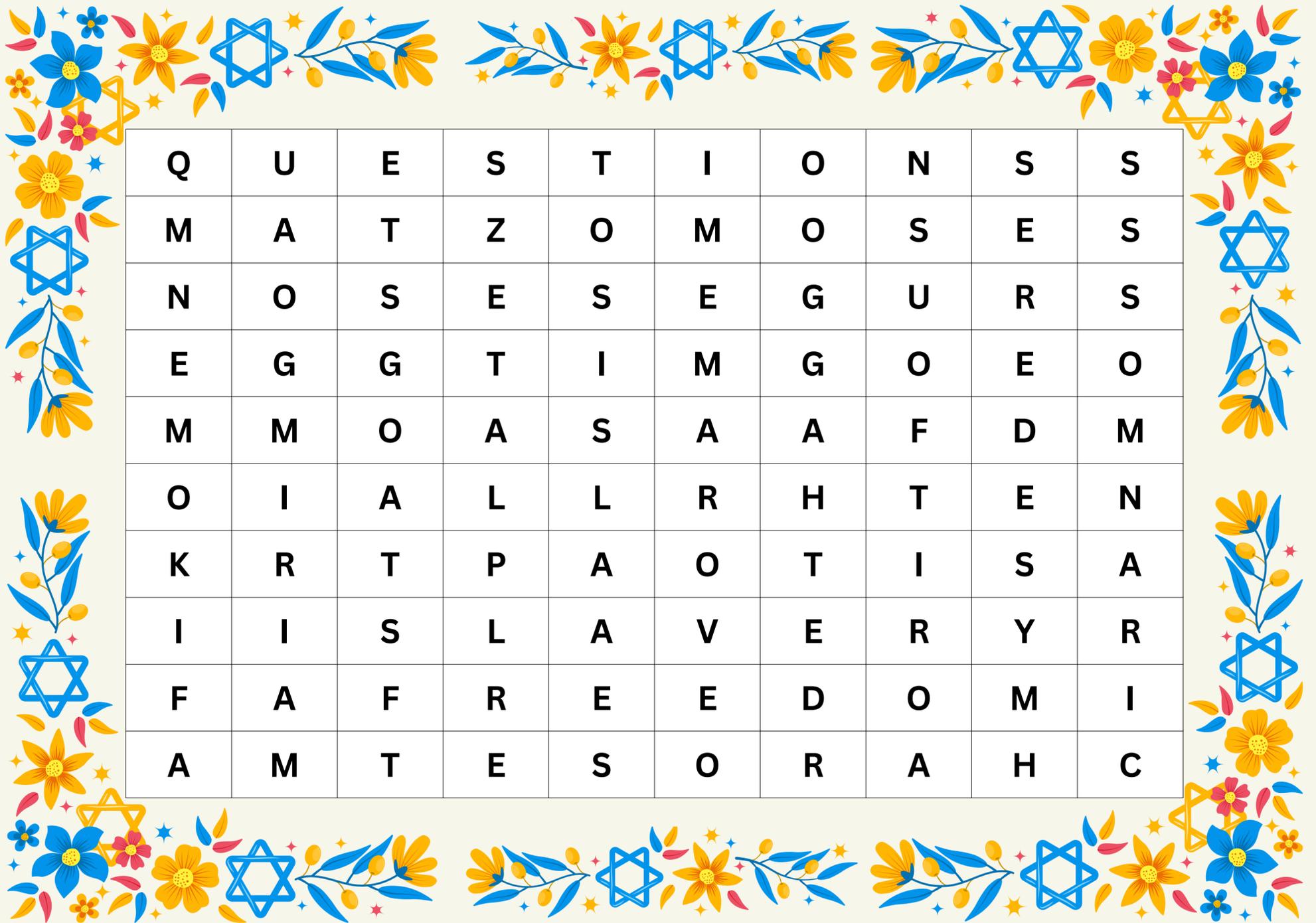
Ha Lachma Anya ~ "Whoever is hungry,
let him come and eat.

Whoever is in need,
let him come and celebrate Passover.

מי שרעב, יבוא ויאכל; מי שצריך, יבוא ויחגוג את הפסח



Word Search



Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N	S	S
M	A	T	Z	O	M	O	S	E	S
N	O	S	E	S	E	G	U	R	S
E	G	G	T	I	M	G	O	E	O
M	M	O	A	S	A	A	F	D	M
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K	R	T	P	A	O	T	I	S	A
I	I	S	L	A	V	E	R	Y	R
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A	M	T	E	S	O	R	A	H	C

AFIKOMEN
QUESTIONS
MATZO
SEDER
CHAROSET

PLATE
TEN
PLAGUE
GOAT

MIRIAM
MOSES
EGG
FREEDOM
SLAVERY

Rooted in our rich Jewish tradition of caring for one another, the **Caring Congregation** fosters a culture of compassion within our community. We offer support, solace, and hope to congregants and their families during times of illness, loss, or need.

The Caring Congregation provides practical assistance, by preparing homemade chicken soup, offering transportation or companionship, and much more. Trained congregants are available to lead a shiva minyan when clergy is unavailable.

For assistance or to volunteer, reach out to us at [904-733-7078](tel:904-733-7078).



**Congregation
Ahavath Chesed**

Happy Passover

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It is only through the generosity of our members that we are able to achieve our mission. Thank you for your support.

Please contact Lynn Busch
(Lbusch@thetemplejacksonville.org)
if you have any questions about your donation.

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