Children’s Messianic Seder

**We Light the Candles:**

*Leader:* As we light the festival lights, we pray for the Spirit of God to understanding to our minds and light to our hearts during this, our Messianic Passover celebration.

*Helper: (While lighting the candles, says)* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who has set us apart by his Word, and in whose name we light the festival lights.

*Leader:* As the light for the festival of redemption is lit by the hand of a woman, we remember our redeemer, the light of the world, was born into the world to a woman.

**The 4 Cups of Wine (Grape Juice):**

*Leader:* When God spoke words of encouragement to Moses, he told Moses the plan by which he would redeem the children of Israel.

*Helper:* I will FREE you from the forced labor of the Egyptians…RESCUE you from their oppression…REDEEM you with an outstretched arm…I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.

*Leader:* At Passover, we celebrate these 4 promises of redemption by drinking from our cup 4 times. Each cup has special meaning, and each time we drink we want to think about the special way that reminds us to be united in love.

**The Cup of Sanctification:**

*Leader (while the juice is being poured):* The first cup is called the cup of Sanctification, and we drink it in the name of our Lord. First, we pray: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. Now let us all drink the first cup of Passover!

**We Wash Our Hands:**

*Leader:* Before the meal, we being by washing. The washing of our hands is a symbol of how God washes our hearts from sin. We are going to come around and wash your hands to remind us how Jesus humbled himself to serve his disciples in the same way.

*Helper reads this part of the story from the Jesus Storybook Bible – p. 286-288, the marked passage.*

*Leader:* Let us now offer the bowl of water and share in this hand-washing ceremony

**Parsley:**

*Leader (lifting up the parsley):* Passover is a holiday that comes in the springtime, when the earth is becoming green with life. This vegetable, called *karpas*, represents life, created and kept alive and healthy by Almighty God.

*(lifting up the salt water).* But life in Egypt for the children of Israel was a life of pain, suffering, and tears. Have you ever tasted your tears? How do they taste? (salty) Their tears are represented by this salt water. We are going to take a bit of parsley and dip it into the salt water to remind us that sometimes life is sad and things happen that make us cry. We are going to bring this around. Take some parsley and dip it in the water, but don’t eat it right away. Wait for us to pray and eat together.

*Pass the parsley and let them dip it in the water.*

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

*Leader:* Now let us, together, eat the *karpas.*

**The 4 Questions:**

*Helper:* How different this night is from all other nights!

On other nights we eat bread or *matzah.* On this night why do we only eat *matzah?*

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. On this night, why do we eat only bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once. On this night why do we dip them twice?

On all other nights we eat our meals sitting or reclining. On this night why do we eat only reclining?

**We Answer the 4 Questions:**

*Leader:* It is an honor to answer the 4 questions of Passover and to tell of the mighty works of our faithful God.

*Matzah:* The bread you see here is flat, more like a cracker. That is because it is missing something called leaven – it is what makes the bread rise. Rising takes time, and as the children of Israel were fleeing from Egypt, they didn’t have time to wait for the bread to rise. Instead, the hot desert sun baked it flat. But, even more than that, in the Bible leaven also represents sin. Just as it takes only a tiny amount of leaven to change bread from a cracker like this to something big and soft, it only takes a little sin in our life to change us into someone completely different from the amazing person God created us to be. As we break the bread, we want to remember to break the habits of sin and try for a fresh start.

(*Lifting the plate which contains the 3 matzah)*

This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread which was eaten in the land of Egypt.

The 3 *matzah* are wrapped together for Passover. There are a few different explanations for there being 3. Rabbis call this a “Unity” – either the unity of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), or the unity of worship (the priests – or pastors, the Levites – or worship leaders, and the people of Israel – or the congregation). We know that we can see the unity of the trinity (or tri-unity) of God – Father, Son, and Spirit. Three in one.

In *matzah* we also see a picture of Jesus the Messiah. See how it is striped? Before Jesus was crucified, they whipped him – like a spanking, but worse. And it left marks on his back that looked like stripes. See how it has holes like it was poked or pierced? When they put Jesus on the cross they put nails in his hands and feet – these created holes. There are verses in the Bible, in the Old Testament, before Jesus was even born, that said these 2 things would happen to the Messiah who would redeem the world.

(Removing and breaking the middle *matzah* in half)

Just as the middle piece of the bread of affliction is broken, Jesus, too, was afflicted and broken. One half is now called the *afikomen* – “the coming one.” It is wrapped in a white cloth just as Jesus’ body was wrapped for burial (wrap the *afikomen)*. Now if you all will cover your eyes, (helper) is going to hide the *afikomen.* No peeking!

*Hide the afikomen someplace where it isn’t obvious, but will not require too much searching.*

Just as (helper) hid the *afikomen*, Jesus was placed in a tomb and hidden for a time. But just as the *afikomen* will return to complete our Seder, Jesus rose from the dead!

*(Break off pieces of the leftover matzah for all the kids to try)*

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Let us now share a piece of this unleavened bread of Passover.

**The Maror (bitter herbs):**

*Leader:* On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on Passover we only eat bitter herbs – which are called *maror.* As sweet as our lives are today, we still want to remember how bitter life was for the children of Israel when they were slaves in Egypt. Everyone will get an opportunity to scoop some *maror* onto a piece of *matzah*. If you don’t want to try the *maror*, you do not have to, but you should at least smell it. Once you have your piece of *matzah –* with or without *maror* – leave it on your plate until we all are ready to eat it together.

*Helper will pass out pieces of matzah while Leader goes around with the maror until everyone has something.*

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who has set us apart by his Word and commanded us to eat bitter herbs. Let us all eat!

**We Dip Twice:**

*Leader:* On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once, but tonight we dip them twice. We have already dipped the parsley into the salt water.

*(Lifting the kharoset)*

*Leader:* The children of Israel toiled to make treasure cities for Pharoah, working in brick and clay. We remember this task in a mixture called *kharoset*, made from chopped apples, honey, and nuts. Normally, at this time you would dip *matzah* into *maror* and then dip that into *kharoset* and eat it all together. I know that you all were brave enough eating the *maror* the first time, so we will just dip the *matzah* into the *kharoset* and pretend we dipped twice! Once again, please wait until everyone has some so we can all eat together.

*(Leader will pass out pieces of the matzah and Helper will take around the kharoset for the kids to try).*

*Helper:* We eat this to remember that even the most bitter and sad times can be sweetened by the hope we have in God. Let us eat!

**Tonight We Recline:**

*Leader:* On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining, but tonight we eat reclining. The first Passover was celebrated by a people enslaved. Because they were preparing to run from Egypt, they had to eat the first Passover meal quickly – barely having time to sit down! Now we eat with comfort and relaxation and enjoy the meal in freedom.

**The Story of Passover:**

*Leader:* Last week, we learned about the story of Passover. Who can help me remember bits of the story? (*Have the kids help retell the story)*. We are going to fill our cup a second time. This cup is called the Cup of Plagues. While the full cup reminds us that we are filled with joy when God saves us, we also remember the great cost. Lives were lost to bring about freedom from slavery in Egypt. But a far greater price had to be paid to free us from sin – the death of Jesus, the Messiah. To remember this, before we drink we are going to say each plague – and each time we say a plague you are going to dip your finger into the cup. I’ll say them and then you repeat and dip your finger. Ready?

Blood! Frogs! Gnats! Beasts! Sickness! Boils! Hail! Locusts! Darkness! Death of the Firstborn!

**The Passover Lamb:**

*Leader:* We have eaten the *Matzah* to remind us of how quickly the children of Israel had to leave Egypt. We have tasted the bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. There are a few more things we need to point out and remember. The first is this lamb, which represents the lamb whose blood marked the houses of the children of Israel. Their obedience to God protected them from the final plague. It also reminds us that no one but God set the children of Israel free, just as no one but God can set us free from our sins. *(Lifting up the egg)* The other thing to explain is this roasted egg called *khagigah*. The egg is a symbol of mourning – being sad. It is also a symbol of eternal life since the shape of the egg has no beginning and no end.

**Dayenu:**

*Leader:* I want to teach you a word. It is *Dayenu!* Can all of you say that with me? It means “it would have been enough.” God is great and just like he did so many things to free his people, he does so many wonderful things for us. Each time we think of something God has done for us, we say “*Dayenu!”* and remember that even one thing would have been enough, but God loves us and keeps doing good things for us. Let’s try going around and each saying something God has done for you. Each time someone is finished we will all say “*Dayenu!”*

*Take time to go around. Encourage and give examples.*

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O God, for you have, in mercy, supplied ALL our needs. You have given us Messiah, forgiveness for sin, life abundant and life everlasting. Hallelujah! Let us drink the second cup!

*Leader:* Normally, at a Seder, now would be the time to sing the *Dayenu* song and eat a Seder meal. But we don’t know the song and we don’t have a whole meal (unless you do, then this is the time to eat), so we are going to move on to the next part. But first, this is the time to find the *afikomen* that (helper) hid earlier! Find it, and you will receive a prize! *(once the kids have found it and while passing out the prizes)* In a Seder, the person who finds the *afikomen* gets money or a prize, but we like to give something to everyone because, when Jesus died and rose again, he paid the price for everyone’s sins. Now everyone can receive the gift of freedom from sin and eternal life in Heaven.

**The Affikomen:**

*Leader:* Now it is time for us to share the *affikomen.* This is considered the dessert since it is the final food eaten at Passover. When Jesus gathered with his disciples, this is the part we read about in the story of the last supper. (*name of helper*) is going to read the story, and then we will continue.

*Helper will read from the Jesus Storybook Bible – p. 292 marked passage #2*

*Leader:* Jesus took the bread that, for centuries before he lived, represented the Messiah. As he broke it he told the disciples, “This is my body, being given for you.” He knew that would mean something big to them. He was telling them he was the redeemer for which they had been waiting. He asked his disciples to remember him every time they took this meal. As we eat the *matzah* we remember Jesus and what he did to save us all.

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. (*everyone eats).*

**The Cup of Redemption:**

*Leader:* We are going to fill our cup for the third time this evening. This cup is the cup of redemption, symbolizing the blood of the Passover lamb. It is the cup reminding us that, just as the Israelites couldn’t free themselves from slavery, we can’t free ourselves from sin. It took a sacrifice of blood to provide freedom. When Jesus said to the disciples, “This is my blood,” he was saying that this cup no longer represented the Passover lamb, it represents Jesus and the sacrifice he made to free us from sin – all we have to do is believe in him. As we drink this cup, we think about what Jesus did for us.

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. Let us gratefully drink!

**The Cup of Praise:**

*Leader:* We are going to fill our cups for the fourth and last time. This cup is the cup of praise. This cup is our response to all that God has done for us – we overflow with praise and give him thanks! As we drink this cup we think about how wonderful God is and how thankful we are for his love.

*Helper:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. Let us lift our cups and bless the name of the Lord!

*Helper will read from the Jesus Storybook Bible – p. 292 marked passage #3*

*Leader:* This is the end of our Passover Seder! Just as Jesus and his disciples finished with their favorite song, we are going to finish with a song. But first, I want you all to know that we talked about some big things today. If you want to know more about sin, how it affects our hearts and lives, what Jesus did to free us from sin, and how you can believe in him please come talk to me anytime! I definitely want to make sure you understand these things, and would love to help you know more about believing in Jesus. Now, what song do we want to sing to close?

*Sing whatever song they pick, and then we usually continue to snack and eat until church is over.*