

Reader 12:

[Read Exodus 12:29-34 directly from your Family Bible or use this adapted version]

At midnight, Yahweh struck down the first-born throughout Egypt; from the son of Pharaoh, to the first-born of the prisoner in his dungeon, to the first-born of the all the cattle. Pharaoh and all the Egyptians got up in the night and there was a great cry for there was not one house without its dead. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron: Get up, you and the sons and daughters of Israel, and go. Take your flocks and herds and leave. The people of Egypt urged them to hurry because they feared that there would be more death. So the people carried their bread, still unleavened, on their shoulders and went.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Jesus is our 'Pesach' – like the lamb that was sacrificed for the salvation of the Israelites in Egypt, Jesus allowed his blood to be spilt and his body broken in order that we too would be delivered from the slavery of sin.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God, who is the paschal lamb.

The Meal

[If you are having a full meal, have it now. Serve the lamb and vegetables. Set aside one piece of bread and the cup of wine for the final blessing. Share 'exodus' stories from your own life (eg a time when you moved home, migrated, set out on a journey physical or spiritual). Talk about what it would have been like when the plagues hit Egypt]

Last Supper Meal



This is my body



This is my blood

The Final Blessing

Leader: We end our meal by sharing this last piece of unleavened bread and the cup of wine. We recall, that at the Last Supper Jesus took the bread, broke it and said, "Take this, all of you. This is my body which is to be given up for you".

[Break the bread and pass it to each person]

Leader: After they had eaten, Jesus took the cup, offered thanks to God and giving it to his friends said "This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant. It will be shed for you".

[Pass the cup so that each person may drink from it]

Leader: We thank you Lord Jesus, for the gift of your body broken and your blood shed. May we also make a gift of ourselves in love to others.

May the Lord bless you and be with you.

All: Amen, Amen, Amen.

Food

- Lamb, cooked.
- Unleavened bread (eg Lebanese bread, or make your own*)
- A bitter herb (eg radish, horseradish, parsley)
- Wine (or grape juice)
- Other vegetables for your meal (eg potatoes, salads)
- Other drinks for the meal

Materials

- Bible
- Bowl, small towel and jug of water for washing
- Candles (minimum of 2)
- Large Plate (for the bread)
- Cup or glass (for the shared wine)

On the Thursday of Holy Week, we commemorate the Last Supper. Some of the Gospel writers tell us that that on this day, the night before he died, Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover (Pesach) in an upper room with his friends. The Passover is a holy day. It recalls how God saved His Chosen People, the Israelites, from slavery in the land of Egypt. Throughout history, the Jewish people have celebrated this event by gathering in their homes to retell the story of their liberation.

When Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples, he began a new tradition. As he broke the bread he said, "This is my body", and as he passed the cup he said, "This is my blood". With these words he set the foundations for the Mass. Now, every time we celebrate the Mass, we recall the mystery of our liberation from sin through Christ.

This family ritual draws on the rich symbolism of both the Jewish Passover and the Mass of the Last Supper. It may be used during Holy week or any time of the year.

Directions

1. Cook the meat and keep warm. Prepare the vegetables and set aside.
2. Set the table with a place for each person plus one extra.
3. Place candles in the centre of the table but do not light. Place bread and wine in the centre of the table.

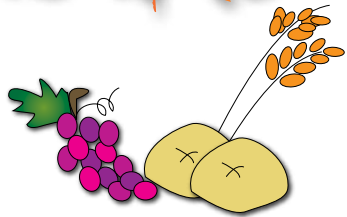
The Leader is usually the father or eldest male. Everyone present can participate in either reading a part or doing an activity.

* **Unleavened Bread** can be made by mixing 2 cups of flour and a teaspoon of salt with 1 tablespoon of oil and enough water to form a dough. Knead and separate into four portions. Roll each portion of dough into a flat, round sheet. Cook the sheet of dough in a fry pan or on the hot plate of a BBQ.



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Table Prayer



Leader: Today we gather to remember how Jesus gave himself to his disciples during his last meal before his death. They had gathered in an upper room to celebrate the Jewish Passover - a day of great holiness.

Lighting of Candles

Leader: We light these candles to remind us that Jesus is our light. His love dispels the darkness in our world.

[light the candles]

Reader 1: Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe, who is the source of light and the creator of the world. Blessed are you, God, for you have given us life and sustained us through all seasons. May our home be blessed O God, and may it be filled with your joy and peace.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God.

The Extra Place

Leader: We have set an extra place at our table. This represents our willingness to share this meal with any who would wish to join us. It reminds us that God has called us to welcome the stranger, to feed the hungry, to care for those who are sick or imprisoned.

Reader 2: Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe. You bless us with family and home. We pray for those who are hungry, lonely or without shelter this night. May they be blessed with your peace and joy.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God.

Washing of Hands

Leader: When Jesus gathered with his disciples, he washed their feet which would have been tired and dirty from their day of walking.

[Read from your family bible 13:3-15 or use the following abbreviation]

Reader 3: When Jesus came to Peter, Peter objected saying: "You shall never wash my feet!" But Jesus persuaded him, saying: "If I do not wash your feet, you can have nothing in common with me". Jesus then explained: "You call me Master and Lord, and so I am. By washing your feet, I have given you an example - you also should serve one another". The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: Following Jesus' example, I will now wash your hands as a sign of my willingness to serve.

[The leader washes the hands of each member moving around the table. Another family member may hold the bowl under each person's hands as water is poured over them. Dry their hands with the towel]

Reader 4: We thank you God, for the gift of cleansing water and for showing us how to love and serve each other.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God, for ever and ever.

The Blessing of Food

Leader: Food is always blessed before it is eaten. Just as the Israelites blessed their food at the first Passover, so also do we bless ours. Some of the prayers that were used by the Jewish people and by Jesus were adopted into the prayers of the Mass.

Reader 5: Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the Universe. Through your goodness, we have this bread and wine to offer, given from the earth and made with human hands.

In love you have given us days of joy and seasons of gladness. You have chosen us for your service. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has preserved us, sustained us and brought us to this meal.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God, for ever and ever.

Retelling of the Exodus story

Reader 6: Why do we hold this meal tonight? Why did Jesus and his disciples celebrate the Passover?

Leader: Let us retell the story of the first Passover.

[Read Exodus 12:1-14 directly from your Family Bible or use this adapted version]

Reader 7: Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month is to be the first month of your year. Speak to the whole community of Israel and say: 'On the tenth day of this month, each man must take an animal from his flock, one for each family. It must be an animal without blemish; a male, one year old; you may take it from either sheep or goats. On the fourteenth day of the month, slaughter it. Some blood must be taken and put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house where it is eaten. That night, the flesh is to be eaten, roasted over the fire. It must be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Whatever is left you are to burn. You shall eat it like this: with a girdle round your waist, sandals on your feet, a staff in your hand. You shall eat it hastily: it is a Passover in honour of Yahweh. That night I will go through the land of Egypt, and strike down all the first-born, man and beast alike. I am Yahweh! The blood shall serve to mark the houses in which you live and when I see it, I shall pass over you and you shall not be harmed. This day is a day of remembrance and you must celebrate it as a feast in Yahweh's honour.'"

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Meaning of the Food

Reader 8: Why do we eat bitter herbs?

Leader: Bitter herbs remind us of the harsh life that God's people endured as slaves in Egypt. Many people in our world today still suffer greatly. We eat these herbs to remind us of the bitterness of our own sin and how it causes suffering to others.

[Each person takes a piece of bitter herb and eats it]

All: Blessed are you, Lord God, who sets us free from sin.

Reader 9: Why do we eat unleavened bread?

Leader: Unleavened bread is made without yeast. Yeast makes bread rise, but the Israelites did not have time to wait for the yeast to rise their bread.

Reader 10: Behold! This is the bread of affliction which the Israelites ate in the land of Egypt. May all who are hungry come and eat.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God, who feeds us and sustains us.

[The leader breaks or tears one of the bread and passes it around the table, each person eats a piece]

Reader 11: Why do we eat lamb?

Leader: A lamb was slaughtered and eaten at the first Passover. As God commanded, the Israelites used the blood from the lamb to mark the door posts of their homes. The blood of the Paschal lamb served to protect those who lived in that home. Let us hear what happened.

