

Lesson 1: Preparing for Passover

Retelling: The Story of Moses and the Israelites in Egypt

Over 2,500 years ago, Joseph and his family moved to Egypt to escape a famine in Israel. They survived, and the generations of their family grew until they became a large group of people living in Egypt. Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, became scared of all the Jewish people living in his country and made them slaves. He even made a law that any Jewish baby boy born should be killed.



A baby boy named Moses was born and his mother wanted to save him, so she put him in a waterproof basket and put the basket in the Nile River. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and adopted him, and he grew up in Pharaoh's palace. The royal family did not know that Moses was Jewish.

When Moses grew up, he became very upset to see how his people, the Jewish people, were being treated as slaves. When he saw a Jewish slave being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster, Moses killed the Egyptian. This was a horrible thing, and Moses fled to the desert in fear. While Moses was in the desert, God spoke to him through a burning bush. God told him to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to "Let my people go!"

Moses asked Pharaoh many times to let the Jewish people go free, but even after nine plagues fell on Egypt, Pharaoh's heart was still hard and he would not let the people go. The final plague was the scariest - the angel of death was going to kill all the firstborn sons in Egypt.



The Lord told Moses to tell his people to listen and obey carefully in order to save their lives. They had to clean their houses and get rid of all *chametz* (kha-METS). *Chametz* is yeast, or leaven - so they had to throw out all their bread and cookies. They had to bake *matzah* (bread without yeast that's more like crackers than bread) and they had to kill a little lamb. The lamb was to be perfect, with no spots or bruises and no broken bones. The people had to take some blood from the lamb and put it on the

doorposts of their houses so that the Angel of Death would “pass over” their home. The lamb was to be roasted and eaten with bitter herbs and *matzah* and the people didn’t even have time to sit down. Instead, they had to be packed and ready to go - with their shoes and jackets on.

That night, the Angel of Death came and killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt - except those in families that had obeyed God’s instructions to put the lamb’s blood on their doorposts. There was much crying in Egypt that night, and Pharaoh’s own son died. Finally, after this horrible thing, Pharaoh told the Jewish people they were free to go and leave Egypt.

Main Points:

- 1) The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and they wanted to be free so they could go live in the Promised Land.
 - 2) Moses kept asking Pharaoh to let the people go and Pharaoh said no, even after nine plagues.
 - 3) The people prepared for the Passover night by getting rid of *chametz* (leaven/yeast). The New Testament says that leaven/yeast and represents sin in our lives (read 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Yeast is the ingredient that makes bread puffy. We don’t want to be “puffed up” with pride, making fun of other people and thinking we are better than them.
 - 4) Just like the lamb that was sacrificed had to be perfect, Jesus (who is called the Lamb of God) was also perfect and sinless. The blood of the Passover lamb saved the people from death in Egypt, and Jesus’ blood saves us from eternal death and gives us eternal life!
-

Craft:

Make two batches of dough - one with leaven/yeast and one without - so that the children can see the difference between risen dough and flat dough. You can also bring in a box of store-bought *matzah* for the kids to eat.



Hebrew Words:

Seder (SAY-der) - The Jewish ceremonial dinner on the first night of Passover, with lots of Bible reading and eating traditional foods.

Matzah (MAT-sah) - A hard cracker-like bread made from only flour and water (taste it!)

Chametz (kha-METS) Leaven/yeast, or all food that has this ingredient.

Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

Game: Search for the *Chametz*

Hide bagels, muffins, bread, cereal, pizza, or cookies all over the room for the kids to find. These could be plastic items (like toys or magnets) or the real thing (which they will be quite happy about!) If the food is real, make sure to seal the items in plastic bags to prevent a mess.

Lesson 2: The Plagues of Passover

Retelling: The Story of Pharaoh and the Ten Plagues

Pharaoh was the king of his country; he was boss over everyone in Egypt. Suddenly, Moses came and demanded that the Israelites - Pharaoh's slaves - all leave Egypt. Pharaoh had gotten used to this free labor and ability to mistreat the people. He was building a huge kingdom and needed them to make himself great, so he would not listen to Moses. God sent plague after plague on Egypt, but Pharaoh was stubborn and would not change his mind.



Each plague that fell on Egypt represented a battle between our God and the Egyptian gods. The Egyptians had “gods” for everything - water, crops, livestock, health - so each plague was directed towards these areas on purpose to show that the Egyptian gods were false gods. Our God is mighty and powerful, and the plagues that fell on Egypt are an example of His strength.

During the first nine plagues, Pharaoh would not listen and did not want to admit that he had lost against the Most High God. How many times does God try to get our attention and we are stubborn, or we think our ideas are better than His?

Pharaoh refused to listen to God until it was too late. The tenth plague - the death of all the firstborn in Egypt - was the harshest. God always tries to get our attention so we can listen to Him and obey Him. He gives us chances and is patient with us. How many times will it take?

Theme Words & Bible Verses

This lesson can be as interactive as you wish. Start by asking the children to list the plagues; chances are that they will forget one or two. Ask them what they think it was like to live through the plagues. Maybe they have experienced something similar. How did they react? You could also reenact the plagues - this will take some props and preparation on your part.

- 1) **The Plague of Blood** (Exodus 7:14-24) - All the water in Egypt was turned to blood. It was disgusting, it stank and the fish died. In a hot, desert country, the people needed fresh water!

If you want to be creative, have a clear pitcher with already placed, inconspicuous red dye on the bottom (maybe place the pitcher on a dark table mat or piece of paper to hide the dye). Fill the pitcher with clear water and watch it turn to “blood.”

- 2) **The Plague of Frogs** (Exodus 7:25-8:15) - There were frogs everywhere! Have the children imagine all the places where the frogs would be! Once the plague was over, all the frogs died and stank - pretty gross. If the class wants to be silly - have them hop around like frogs!



- 3) **The Plague of Lice/Gnats** (Exodus 8:16-19) - These tiny bugs were everywhere: on the ground, in the homes, even people’s skin was MOVING! (suddenly throw some plastic store-bought bugs on the kids next to you - it should get a reaction!)
- 4) **The Plague of Flies** (Exodus 8:20-32) - You know the song “Shoo fly, don’t bother me”? Imagine swarms and swarms of flies hovering everywhere, touching you, the ground, in your food, on your pets - so annoying and disgusting. Oops, I think I swallowed a fly!
- 5) **The Plague of Livestock** (Exodus 9:1-7) - All the animals of Egypt died. In those days, they didn’t have cars or tractors to pull heavy things around; instead they had horses, camels and strong cattle. How were they to get milk and meat? How were they going to eat, to work... and what



happened if you had a favorite goat? The Israelites’ animals did not die. Pharaoh knew this, but it only made him more stubborn!

- 6) **The Plague of Boils** (Exodus 9:8-12) - Have you ever had the chicken pox - or better yet - a really big red zit? That is kind of what boils are. The Egyptians had them everywhere on their bodies and it hurt to touch, to sleep, to move. They itched too - have the children pretend to scratch like they have the worst chicken pox in the world!
- 7) **The Plague of Hail** (Exodus 9:35) - The Lord sent the worst hailstorm ever; Egypt had never seen a storm like this! Remember that in a desert climate like Egypt's, they might never have seen ice or snow! (In the middle of your explanation, throw cotton balls, ping pong balls or marshmallows on the kids.) The hail stones were so big that they destroyed everything, and anyone who was left outside died - both people and animals. They destroyed most of the crops, too. But God was merciful and gave the message to Pharaoh with enough time to tell the people to bring everything into shelter. Pharaoh almost listened to God and let the people go, but after the terrifying storm was over, he changed his mind.
- 8) **The Plague of Locusts** (Exodus 10:1-20) - Pharaoh tried to make a deal with God by allowing the men to leave Egypt but making the women and children stay. This was not acceptable, and God sent another devastating plague to teach Pharaoh to listen. There had already been lice, flies and frogs to swarm around everything, and hail to destroy the crops. Now locusts came to eat up the last bits of grass, leaves and fruit. They were so numerous that the ground was black from them! Ever eat a chocolate-covered locust?
- 9) **The Plague of Darkness** (Exodus 10:21-29) - Pharaoh tried to make another deal with God, saying that the people could leave, but their cattle had to stay. Moses reminded Pharaoh that *everything* must leave Egypt - even all the Israelites' possessions. It was all or nothing! Pharaoh got angry and told Moses never to come before him again. The Lord then sent complete darkness on Egypt. Have you ever been in a dark cave where you can't even see your hand in front of you? In darkness, you get disoriented, you can't get anything done; it's boring and scary! If you can, turn off the lights and sit in darkness for a few minutes. Maybe retell this part of the story in darkness (or with the kids' eyes closed).
- 10) **Death of the Firstborn** (Exodus 11) - (Don't worry, we won't reenact this one!) It would have been better if the Egyptians had recognized God's power over the natural and spiritual elements of the world.



Instead, the Angel of Death passed through Egypt and wherever the blood of the spotless lamb was not seen on the doorposts of the homes, the firstborn boy died - both human and animal. During this horrible night, the Israelites had very important instructions from God in order to save their lives and prepare them for leaving Egypt. They were ready to go with everything packed, and as they ate their Passover dinner they knew they were saved from the Angel of Death as it passed over them. That night, even Pharaoh's own son died.

After these ten plagues, Pharaoh at last let the Israelites leave Egypt and go to the Promised Land. It took ten plagues for Pharaoh to finally obey God. How many times does it take for us to listen to God and do what He says? It's best if it's just one time!

Lesson 3: Participating in Passover

This lesson focuses on the actual *Seder*. There is some preparation you can do beforehand, and some you can do with the children. The *Seder* elements are listed below, and you can eat them all together (after the kids have decorated their *Seder* plates) and discuss their meaning.

If you would like to see if a Chosen People Ministries representative is available to present the *Seder* to your Sunday school class or home school group, call 1-888-405-5874.

Bible Passage: Exodus 12

Retelling & Craft: Let's have a Seder!

Buy some large paper plates and child-safe markers. Each child can draw five circles on the plate and write the names of the items (given below) in Hebrew or English.

Now you get to participate in your own Seder! We will go through each *Seder* item and explain what it means, so you can see, smell, and taste them and learn more about God. Some of these items are biblical and some are traditional. The biblical items are the most important, and they are listed in Exodus 12. These items were used thousands of years ago by Moses and the people of Israel at the first Passover *Seder* ever, on the night when the Angel of Death swept through Egypt and struck down all the firstborn in houses that did not have the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts.

You will want to try to find some *matzah*, the unleavened bread representing a life without sin. The Jewish people had to bake this bread quickly, without allowing the dough time to rise, because they ate their dinner with their jackets and shoes on - ready to leave Egypt at any moment as soon as Moses said "Go!"

Now, as you participate in your *Seder*, we use the best dishes and eat like kings and queens in freedom!

Items on the Seder Plate:

1. **Zeroah** (zeh-ROH-ah) - Lamb bone. The bone reminds us of the Passover lamb sacrificed at the first *Seder*. Jesus is our Passover Lamb who died to give us eternal life! Jewish people don't understand that Jesus is the Lamb of God, so let's take a moment to pray for them. Put this item in the top right hand circle - the 2 PM position on a clock.



2. **Charoset** (kha-ROH-sit) - A mixture of apples, honey, nuts (do not include if there are allergies), cinnamon, and a dash of grape juice - VERY TASTY! This mixture looks like mortar for bricks. When the Israelites were slaves, they had to mix straw, dirt, and water to make their own mortar for building. The *Charoset* reminds us of the hard slave work in Egypt. But why does a reminder of something so bitter taste so sweet? Because we remember that even in hard work and suffering, we can have redemption. The Israelites were freed and were able to go to the Promised Land! We can remember that our lives can be sweet and wonderful with Jesus! Put this item in the bottom right circle on the plate - the 4 PM position on a clock.



3. **Maror** (mah-ROAR) - Horseradish root (from a jar - the red kind is not as spicy as the white kind. It is wise to taste only a finger-tip amount, as it might be too spicy for some!) Some people use Romaine lettuce instead of horseradish. This bitter herb represents the harsh suffering and bitter times the Jewish people endured when they were slaves in Egypt. As believers, we can remember how difficult and unhappy our lives were before we received Jesus into our hearts! Put this item in the middle of the plate.



4. **Karpas** (CAR-pass) - Parsley (just a sprig or two). The parsley is a symbol of spring and new life - just as new leaves grow on trees in the spring! It reminds us of the rebirth of the Jewish nation and of freedom. Put this item in the bottom left circle on the plate - the 8 PM position on a clock.

5. **Beitzah** (beit-SAH) - Hard-boiled egg (this can be cut up and each child can be given a half or quarter). This reminds us of the ceremonial offering that was brought to the Temple each Passover. Also, since Passover always falls in the spring, the egg reminds us of life - new life in Jesus. Put this item in the 10 PM position on a clock.



Charoset and Maror Sandwich - Put a bit of the horseradish and the sweet apple mixture between two pieces of *matzah* and eat the “sandwich.” These two ingredients together stand for the joy and sorrow that was found in the Israelites’ lives when they were in Egypt - they were slaves (which was bitter) and then were granted freedom (which was sweet). Even though bad things sometimes happen in our lives, we have the sweetness of knowing that Jesus set us free from being slaves to sin.

Throughout the *seder*, the kids can be drinking grape juice.
