

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

PASSOVER MEAL

Introduction

General Introduction—to be read by the Narrator to the assembled participants at the beginning of the meal.

The Passover Meal has been celebrated by the Jewish people ever since Moses led them out of Egypt 3,459 years ago. This annual celebration—including many of the details we will observe tonight—was commanded by God in Exodus 12 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Much of the meal as we will celebrate it tonight is the same as it was observed in Jesus day, and as Jesus himself celebrated it every year of his life on earth.

For the Jewish people, the Passover Meal celebrates their deliverance by God from years of slavery in Egypt. Through miraculous signs and wonders, and horrible plagues, God led his people out of Egypt to the promised land of Israel.

For those who believe in Jesus, the Passover Meal is also a celebration of the ministry of the Messiah and his work of delivering us from the bondage of sin. At Jesus' last Passover, which he ate with his disciples in the Upper Room, he explained this hidden meaning of the Passover. Christian churches still celebrate this teaching in the Lord's Supper, or Communion.

In the earliest Church, Christians celebrated the Passover Meal in a way very similar to the way we will do it tonight: a Christian version of the Passover Meal. They called it the Feast of the Savior's Passover (or the Passover of the Lord). Only later did Christians start to celebrate Holy Week, in which different events in Jesus' last week were celebrated at different times during the week. Tonight, we will join in the practice of the earliest Christians.

Passover is a family event, usually celebrated in peoples' homes. But tonight we will all celebrate it together as one big family. As in every family, we have a Father tonight: [introduce person playing the part of the Father]. We also have a Mother: [introduce person playing the Mother]. And we have a Child: [introduce Youngest].

To help us understand the true meaning of Passover, we have two readers: Reader #1 and Reader #2. The sections they will read are not in a typical Jewish Passover, but will help us as Christians understand the meaning of what is happening.

[If you are having a separate Jesus table:] At the last Passover of Jesus, he explained the meaning of the meal in a new way. To help us understand what he did, we will have a special table for Jesus and the disciples. They will read the special sections called "The Lord's Supper" in the program.

As with every Passover, we have some special food on the table:

Matza: Flat bread made without leaven [Show them an example].

Bitter Herbs: Plate with fresh vegetables [Show]. When the program says to take a piece of bitter herb, you can choose a piece of any of the vegetables on this plate.

Juice: We will all pour and drink four cups of juice during the meal. You don't have to drink a whole cup each time, but still you must pour and drink at least a little each time.

Wash Hands:¹ [Demonstrate] The hand washing done at Passover is a special ritual washing. Pour water over the back of the right hand and then the front. Repeat with the left hand.

You must not eat anything at your table until you are told to! The main meal will not begin until about halfway through the program. If you get hungry—you're supposed to! This is to help us remember the days of slavery in Egypt. A good chance to exercise self-control!

Timing: Do not start a new section or action until the preceding words or actions are finished. **Take** does not mean **Eat!** There are times when you will hold a piece of food or a cup of juice for a while before eating. Wait until instructed.

¹ **Please note: The ritual washing of hands was a new innovation in the time of Jesus, which he did not approve of (Matthew 15:1-20, Mark 7:1-23). This probably means that he and his disciples did not wash their hands during the Passover meal. For this reason, you may want to skip the hand washing sections of the meal.**

Any questions?

At the end of the meal, everyone is welcome to help clean up.

Practice Hebrew: There is a Hebrew phrase we will say several times during the meal: Baruch Attah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech Ha'Olam (bar-UCH a-TAH a-do-NAI el-o-HEI-nu ME-lech ha-o-LAM). [Have them repeat it after you, word by word.]
What does it mean? "Blessed are You, Lord Our God, King of the Universe." [Hear the Hebrew at www.totheends.com]