



A Passover Meal for Maundy Thursday

Commemoration, Celebration and Hospitality

How to arrange

What to prepare

Who to invite

Order of proceedings

Introduction

A Passover meal in your home is an opportunity both to offer hospitality to a guest and to share something of the story of our faith. The Passover is central to the observances of the Jewish faith. In this meal, ordained by God as a perpetual commemoration, Jewish families remember the sufferings of their ancestors the Israelites in Egypt and their rescue by God.

Jesus' Last Supper was a Passover meal he had arranged, knowing that he would be betrayed that same night. He took the elements of bread and wine used in the Passover meal and repurposed them for our Christian celebration of Holy Communion, in which the bread represents his body and the wine his blood.

Our Passover meal script will weave both threads together.

Who's running it?

It's a joint venture - it would be unfair and unreasonable for one person to run this. If you like the idea of putting on a Passover, then don't wait for someone else to organise it. Get together with some people you could do this with. If your home is too small, then you'll need a someone to host the event. The host does not necessarily have to do the cooking! Next, you need people who can help to prepare the food, serve it and wash up afterwards. Someone might like to lead the scripted part.

You can make the event simple or grand. It's about sharing a meal with friends rather than preparing an elegant dinner party.

Who's coming as a guest?

There should be a seat or two for guests, who do not contribute. Figure out who you'd want to invite and invite them to the meal, explaining that we're celebrating Passover in Holy Week with a meal at home, and would be honoured if they'd join us.

We shoulder the cost of our hospitality, so you might want to agree funding together. Dare to approach this financially as you would a meal out, each contributor giving as they feel led.

What will I need for the meal?

This is a starter list. You can look up on the internet for some of the other items used at a Passover meal.

- A host and a leader
- Two people to read the 3 readings
- Someone (the youngest!) to act as the “child” and ask the questions before we eat.
- Someone to act as ‘mother’.
- roast lamb, veg, a dessert (optional)
- drinks to go with the meal
- some parsley pieces in salt water
- red wine or grape juice for the final part of the meal
- unleavened bread, or pitta bread, crackers or matzos (2 servings)
- An unlit candle on the table, matches.

The Script - Order and Words

You might not need to print out the script for every guest, as it might make it feel a little too formal. I would suggest that you print out copies of the Readings page (page 3) for guests to follow and to take home.

You might like to ask a guest to read out the child’s words if that is appropriate.

Make sure your readers have rehearsed their readings, and can give to them some personal insight.

You’re following a script, but you do not have to be formal or act piously over the proceedings!

Don’t let the food get cold!!

There is a Hebrew/English song, *Baruch haba b’shem Adonai*, that is suitable for playing before we sit down to table. You can find it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzNPBO20wKA>

Welcome to our Passover Meal

Start in your lounge if you have the space, or sit around the table.

Host: Welcome to our Passover meal. There are two strands at play this evening. Firstly, we are sharing in the drama of the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, an event which is celebrated annually by Jewish families across the world in their Passover meal. Secondly, Jesus' last supper was a Passover meal that he ate with his disciples before he was arrested, and so we weave that into our meal.

Before we eat

Leader: In the Passover meal, it is the duty of the youngest child to ask some questions about the Passover meal. This is so that the story is passed on through the generations.

I'll reply to each question with two answers, the traditional Jewish one, followed by our Christian perspective.

Child: Why is this night different from other nights?

Leader: We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt: and the Lord our God brought us out of Egypt. On this night Jesus Christ our Messiah gave to his disciples the Bread of Life.

Child: Why do we eat lamb on this night?

Leader: The lamb was an offering made to God on the night when He led our fathers out of Egypt. Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. He is the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed for us.

Child: Why do we eat unleavened bread on this night?

Leader: When our fathers fled from Egypt, there was no time to wait for the yeast to work. Jesus told us that the bread He broke was His body, given for us.

The leader passes round the bread

Child: Why do we eat bitter herbs on this night?

Leader: When our Fathers were captive in Egypt their lives were made bitter by the hard work they were forced to do. We remember, too, the bitterness of Christ's suffering on the cross as He died for us.

The leader passes round the parsley

Child: Why do we drink wine on this night?

Leader: It was to celebrate the freedom our Fathers gained from the Egyptians. Jesus shared the wine and called it His blood.

Bible Readings (separate sheet)

Exodus 12:1-14 and Matthew 26:17-30

Leader: Father God, we have come together to share this meal. Your Son Jesus is here with us because we meet in his name. Bless the food we eat and our fellowship with one another. Amen.

Leader: The peace of God be with you all.

'Mother' lights a candle and says this ancient prayer:

Mother: May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord be kind and gracious to us. May the Lord look on us with favour, and keep this "family" in peace and in love for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. You have given us this feast of the Passover. Bless us, and bless the food we eat. Amen.

The meal is served

After the meal

Leader: We remember that Jesus and his disciples celebrated Passover together as we have done tonight. During that that meal Jesus shared bread and wine with his friends.

Bread is distributed and a little wine poured into people's glasses.

Leader: Christ's body, broken for us, and his blood, shed for us.

Bible Reading for Good Friday

Matthew 27:27-37

Readings for our Passover Meal

Reading 1: The Preparation for the first Passover - Exodus 12

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “On the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour.

“The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. On the fourteenth day of the month all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

“That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

“Eat it with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover.

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

Reading 2: The Last Supper - Matthew 26

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you

don't mean me, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?"

Jesus answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Reading 3: Jesus is mocked and crucified - Matthew 27

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him.

Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.