**Passover**

You should have: one plastic cup per person, grape juice, matzah (including three in a serviette), extra serviette, bowl of charoset, small dish of horseradish, sprigs of parsley, bowl of salt water, plate with egg and a picture of a lamb, hand gel, two torches, pen, Bible

1: Father, we meet as members of your family to share together this special meal. We thank you for this time of remembering, with sincere gladness and great sadness, awed by your power and humility and love.

Amen

2: We light these lights and pray for the illumination of the Spirit of God to bring great personal meaning to our Passover celebration.

*Turn on the torches, stand them on their end like candles and say these words:*

May the Lord be gracious and bless us

May he make his face shine upon us

May he keep this, his family in peace and love

Forever and ever. Amen.

*Fill the glasses with grape juice, but do not drink yet. For each cup it is traditional to lean on one elbow.*

1: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation

Maker of the fruit of the vine

Let us give thanks for this Passover feast, which commemorates the departure from Egypt and freedom of the children of Israel from slavery.

The meal you shared with your closest disciples in the upper room

The meal you share with us now

Bless us O Lord, and bless this food we are to eat.

Amen

*Tell everyone to drink from the first cup.*

**Ritual dipping of parsley**

2: As we take this parsley and dip it into the salted water let us remember the tears of the Hebrews. We dare not take for granted what God has done for us. Let us remember the hyssop that was dipped in the lamb’s blood for wiping on the doorposts and lintels. Let tears of repentance never be far from us.

*Each person takes a piece of parsley and dips it into the salt water.*

Think of something in the past that makes you sad. Talk to God about it. Tell him how you feel.

*Pause for a moment, then ask everyone to eat their parsley.*

**Reading**

*Leader 1 reads Exodus 6:6–8.*

**Breaking the middle piece of matzah**

*Leader 2 takes the middle piece of matzah from the serviette and breaks it in two. One half is put back between the other two pieces, while the other half is wrapped in another serviette. Leader 1 hides this half somewhere in the room.*

2: This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt; let all who are hungry enter and eat, and all who are in want, come and celebrate the Passover.

**Washing of hands**

*The leaders should ‘wash’ the hands of each young person using the hand gel.*

**Telling the story**

*Fill the cups a second time, but do not drink yet. Give four young people a question each and ask them to ask these in order.*

**Question 1: On this night why do we eat only unleavened bread?**

1: *(Holding a matzah as this is read.)* On all other nights we eat normal bread made with yeast, but on Passover we eat only matzah, bread without yeast. As the children of Israel fled from Egypt, they did not have time to let their dough rise. Instead, the hot desert sun baked it flat.

But even more than that, the Bible says that yeast sometimes symbolises the things we do wrong. During this Passover meal, let’s promise to break our old habits of sin and selfishness and begin a fresh, new and holy life. Think of something you’d like to like to say sorry for, an old habit you’d like to break.

*Ask everyone to eat a piece of matzah as they think about this.*

**Question 2: On this night, why do we eat only bitter herbs? On this night, why do we dip them twice?**

2: On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on Passover we eat only bitter herbs (we are using horseradish). As sweet as our lives are today, we remember how bitter life was for the children of Israel in the land of Egypt. As we scoop some bitter herbs (horseradish) onto a piece of matzah, we allow the bitter taste to cause us to shed tears of compassion for the sorrow that our ancestors knew thousands of years ago.

*Each dips piece of Matzah into the horseradish and eats, bitterness of horseradish supposed to bring tears to our eyes in remembrance.*

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 salt water. The children of Israel worked with bricks and mortar, building for Pharaoh. We remember this task in a mixture called charoset.

Once again, we scoop some bitter herbs (horseradish) onto matzah. But this time, before we eat, we dip it into the sweet charoset to remind us that even the most bitter of circumstances can be sweetened by the faithfulness of God.

*Each dips matzah first into horseradish, then into charoset and eats.*

As you eat, think of a time when God was faithful to you.

*If appropriate, one or both of the leaders should share a time with the group when God was faithful to them.*

**Question 3: On this night, why do we recline while we eat?**

1: On all other nights we eat sitting but tonight we eat reclining. The children of Israel were instructed to eat the Passover in haste. But today, we recline and freely enjoy Passover remembering that Jesus said, ‘Come to me all you who are heavily laden, and I will give you rest’ Matthew 11:28.

**Question 4: On this night, why do we have a lamb bone and a roasted egg on the plate?**

2: The lamb bone reminds us of the lamb that was offered as a sacrifice in the temple. The lamb was offered to say sorry to God for things done wrong. The egg is a reminder of the burnt offering made on this and other festivals.

This was the most powerful symbol for Jesus at the Last Supper. He was to become the sacrificial lamb when he died on the cross, but more on that later in the week.

1: We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, because you kept your promises to your people. Thank you for your faithfulness and thank you that you keep your promises today.

*All drink the second cup.*

**Conclusion**

*Send the young people off to find the piece of matzah that was hidden earlier.*

2: The second broken matzah represents Jesus, broken for us. The breaking earlier represents crucifixion, the hiding symbolises burial and the finding reminds us of Jesus’ resurrection three days later.

*Pray for the group, that they will remember God’s faithfulness in rescuing his people over the next few days as they learn more about what Jesus came to do, to rescue us from the things we do wrong.*

*Read Psalm 136:1–15, with each leader taking alternate lines, and the young people responding with ‘His love continues for ever.’ If the young people have any examples of where God has been faithful to them (from question 2), include those the end of the Psalm, eg:*

*He kept me safe when I was in a car crash*

*His love continues for ever*

*He held me close when my grandma died*

*His love continues for ever*

*He gave me great friends when I was lonely*

*His love continues for ever*