

A Passover

- Four cups of wine/grape juice
- Unleavened bread – eg. Crackers
- 2 White Candles
- Pieces of ordinary bread
- Celery or Parsley
- Grated Horseraddish – The Maror
- An Egg
- Charoset – a mixture of equal parts chopped apples and nuts mixed with cinnamon and ginger to taste, Honey and Grape juice or Wine vinegar.
- A roasted lamb bone
- Water for each person

1.Welcome

Voice1

Welcome to our Passover meal, it is a story that connects us through time to the great stories of old - the story of Moses and the liberation of the exiles, the beginning of their long, long journey in the desert lands, the story of the Christ as he begins his journey of sacrifice in order to set all people free and stories of the community of disciples as they begin their journey out into the world, to all people and all nations bringing good news of freedom and shalom. May it be a new start for our journey as disciples and as a community.

Together

**We gather today to remember and to celebrate.
To remember harsh oppression and celebrate liberation.
To remember our sins and to celebrate our salvation.
To recognize New Pharaohs and rejoice in New Freedoms.**

(from the Shalom Centre - <http://www.shalomctr.org/>)

2.Removal of Chametz (pronounced ka-mets)

Chametz, is the leaven – a piece of old dough that gets mixed in the new dough and causes it to rise. However Leaven that has gone bad will corrupt the whole mixture and kill the batch of bread. In this case the Chametz signifies all that corrupts us... our sin. Removing the Chametz signifies a commitment to obey God and put behind us those parts of our lives which distract us from Gods purpose.

several pieces of regular raised bread should be "hidden" but visible the room

Voice 1 (male)

This is a story of deliverance from slavery, of freedom, and redemption. We have all been bound by something as where the slaves in Egypt, we have all walked in darkness, so this celebration is one of own freedom. It is in that spirit of community that we enter this Passover celebration.

Voice 2 (female)

As the Israelites prepared for the exodus by obeying the commands of God through Moses, so when we remove the Chametz, the leaven, we state our willingness to obey. As we gather each piece lets search our hearts and our lives for anything that might prevent us from receiving the full freedom God has promised us.

The chametz is collected into a bowl and removed from the room

Voice 1

We praise you great God, Creator and sovereign of the universe, who clears our lives from all that corrupts, who makes us holy

Together

Any thing bad that may remain among us, which we have not seen and have not removed, may it be like the dust of the earth, picked up in a storm and blown far away.

3. Lighting the Passover Candles

Reader

Moses said to the people, “Always remember this day. This is the day when you came out of Egypt from a house of slavery. God brought you out of here with a powerful hand”. Exodus 13:3

Voice 1

God is community and promised to be present with us as we are community. We light the lights, we welcome God amongst us.

The candles are lit.

Voice 2

We gather as community, as God loves us so we love each other. With the history of the whole people Israel linking the past and the future, we once again hear and follow God’s call to service. We live a story that is told for all people, and whose conclusion is yet to unfold.

Together

May the lights we now light inspire us to use our strength which you so freely give us to help and not to hinder, to love and not to hate, to bless and not to curse, to serve and worship you, the God of freedom.

4. The First Cup: the Cup of Freedom

Reader

“I am God. I will bring you out from under the cruel hard labour of Egypt. I will rescue you from slavery. I will redeem you, intervening with great acts of judgment. I’ll take you as my own people and I’ll be God to you. You’ll know that I am God, your God who brings you out from under the cruel hard labour of Egypt. Exodus 6:6-7

Voice 1

God promised freedom to His people. With four cups of wine we celebrate God’s promises to Israel and to us. One for freedom, one for deliverance, one for redemption, and one in thanksgiving that God keeps his promises.

The first cup is poured

Voice 1

This is a day of freedom. In every age oppressors rise against us to crush our spirits and bring us low. From the power of anything that hinders us from being your people, you rescue and restore us. We praise you, God who liberates us to holiness.

We all drink the first cup.

5. The Washing: Preparation

Voice 2

We prepare for the meal by washing our hands, a sign of the purity of heart and hands that we are called to have as God’s people as we come before God and as we serve the world.

Washing of hands

6. Karpas - The Green Vegetables and spring flowers

Voice 1

It is Spring, the season of rebirth, renewal, and new life. The days are filled with more light than darkness. The earth is becoming green with new life.

Voice 2

This vegetable, called Karpas, represents life, created and sustained by the Lord our God. We are filled with joy at the goodness of God in loving us and caring for us, and bringing into our lives all good things.

Men

Get up, my dear friend, fair and beautiful lover-come to me! Look around you: Winter is over; the winter rains are over, gone! Spring flowers are in blossom all over. The whole world's a choir-and singing! Spring warblers are filling the forest with sweet arpeggios. Lilacs are exuberantly purple and perfumed, and cherry trees fragrant with blossoms. Song 2:10-13

Women

As an apricot tree stands out in the forest, my lover stands above the young men in town. All I want is to sit in his shade, to taste and savor his delicious love. He took me home with him for a festive meal, but his eyes feasted on me! Song 2:3-4

Together

Hang my locket around your neck, wear my ring on your finger. Love is invincible facing danger and death. Passion laughs at the terrors of hell. The fire of love stops at nothing-it sweeps everything before it. Flood waters can't drown love, torrents of rain can't put it out. Love can't be bought, love can't be sold-it's not to be found in the marketplace. Song 8:6-7

Voice 1

Life and love though they are good are mixed with sadness and tears. We are celebrating the freedom that God brought to us as slaves in Egypt, life in Egypt was hard and filled with pain and suffering and tears. The struggle for freedom always begins in suffering.

Lift up the bowl of salt water

Together: You God create all the fruit of the earth, we thank you that even in heartache and pain you provide riches beyond compare.

Everyone dips a piece of Karpas in the salt water and eats it.

7. The Breaking of Bread: The Matzah

There should be three matzot on a plate covered with a cloth. The middle Matzah is taken and broken – one part is held up and the shared

Voice 1

The sharing of bread forms a bond of fellowship and community. In sharing this bread we are in community with all people the rich man and the beggar. Our freedom is bound up with the freedom of all people everywhere. It is only the grace of God that sets the captives free!

Together

All who are hungry come share this bread, the bread of sorrow the people ate in Egypt. All who are needy come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we are all slaves. Next year may we be truly free.

The other half is wrapped in the cloth and put away

Voice 1

We cover a portion of the Matzah which is the Afikomen and put it away. It is a symbol of hope for the true freedom we know will come, but we cannot yet see.

8. The Story of Passover

Voice 2

Our Children will ask questions about who they are as God's people, we should tell them the story so that they might know. It is a privilege to answer the four questions of the Passover and to tell the story of grace.

Together

Why is this night different than all other nights? Why on all other nights do we eat bread with leaven, but on this night we eat only unleavened bread? Why on all other nights do we eat of all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat bitter herbs? Why on all other nights do we not dip herbs at all, but on this night we dip them twice? Why on all other nights do we eat in the normal way, but on this night we eat with special ceremony?

Voice 2

This night is special, it is a night of the past and the future, it is a night when we reject that which holds us back and corrupts us, it is a night when we remember the pain and sorrow of slavery and celebrate the freedom God gave us, it is a night we remember we are who we are only because of God's great love for us and because God knits us together as a people of love and freedom. We are free to follow God into the world.

Reader

God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would be a great people, a promise he renewed to each generation, to Isaac and Jacob. As time passed Jacob's children came to live in the land of

Egypt where his son Joseph was advisor to Pharaoh. But years passed and another Pharaoh came to power who did not remember Joseph and did not know his God, so he enslaved the Israelites. He forced them to work hard making bricks of clay and straw with which to build his cities. As the people increased in numbers, he feared that they might rebel against him, so he ordered every newborn boy drowned. They knew only toil, suffering, and tears. They cried out from their cruel oppression, hoping that God would remember the promises He had made to the fathers. And God heard their cry and remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham. Through a wise mother and sister, God saved the life of the boy Moses from the ruthless hands of Pharaoh. After he had grown up, God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, and promised Moses that He would be with him. And yet when Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelites, he refused and increased their labor. So God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh and the land of Egypt so they might know that the Lord is God, and let the people go.

The second cup is held up

Voice 1

Freedom was won in pain and suffering, lives were sacrificed, creation itself was ripped apart. We cannot celebrate without sorrow.

A drop of wine is spilled for each plague

Blood. Frogs. Lice. Swarms. Cattle Disease. Boils. Hail. Locusts. Darkness. Death of the First Born.

Reader

Pharaoh continued to refuse to let the people go until the last plague, the death of the firstborn of all of Egypt, convinced him to release the people. By following God's instructions and putting the blood of a lamb on the door posts of the houses, the Israelites were spared this plague as death "Passed Over" their houses.

The lamb bone is held up

Voice 1

This is the symbol of the Passover lamb that was killed so that Gods children might live. It is a symbol of the tension of sacrifice and grace.

The egg is held up

Voice 1

This is a symbol of new life and hope, God's grace is not confined to sacrifices in a temple. The Temple is gone, the Altar is gone yet life springs forth.

Reader

Even as the Israelites were leaving, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. Trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Sea of Reeds, the Israelites had nowhere to go. But God told Moses to lift his staff over the sea, and God parted the waters. They were able to pass through the midst of the sea . When the Egyptians tried to follow, the waters closed back over them. When the Israelites saw that they were free, Moses' sister Miriam led them in rejoicing and praising God.

Together

You are a great God, creator and sovereign of the universe. You hear the cries of the oppressed, you bring freedom to the captive, and embrace us as your children.

Reader

A new king came to power in Egypt who didn't know Joseph. 9He spoke to his people in alarm, "There are way too many of these Israelites for us to handle. We've got to do something: Let's devise a plan to contain them, lest if there's a war they should join our enemies, or just walk off and leave us." So they organized them into

work-gangs and put them to hard labor under gang-foremen. They built the storage cities Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. But the harder the Egyptians worked them the more children the Israelites had-children everywhere! The Egyptians got so they couldn't stand the Israelites and treated them worse than ever, crushing them with slave labor. They made them miserable with hard labor-making bricks and mortar and back-breaking work in the fields. They piled on the work, crushing them under the cruel workload. Exodus 1:8-14

Point to the Horseraddish – the Maror

Voice1

This is the Maror. Tonight we eat bitter herbs to remind us of how bitter our lives were in slavery. As sweet as our lives are now, we must never forget the bitterness of captivity

Point to theThe Charoset (pronounced ka-ro-set).

This is the Charoset. Tonight we eat sweet fruit to remind of us of the feeling of joy in the first steps of freedom. We dip it as we dipped the Karpas to remind us of the sweetness that God brings into even the most bitter moments of life.

Voice 2

A sweet song has been heard by countless people through the centuries as generation after generation have experienced the liberating grace God. We join with them in sing a new song of freedom.

Together

Once we were slaves but now we are free!

Music – Amazing Grace

9.The Second Cup: the Cup of Deliverance

The second cup is held up

Voice 1

We praise you God, Creator and Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth. You delivered us from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to light, from slavery to redemption.

The second cup is passed round

10.The Meal

The three remaining pieces of Matzah are placed on the table

Voice 1

All bread comes from God.

We eat a piece of Matzah.

But life in captivity is harsh and bitter, we remember and experience the tears of all whose lives are bound in slavery and pain.

We eat a piece of Maror (Horseraddish)

As we taste the bitterness we also experience the hope of relief and freedom that God promises and the fruit God provides.

The Charoset reminds us of the mortar that the slaves used to make bricks for the Egyptians. The women in captivity gave birth under Apple trees to avoid the laws of Egypt, with not assurance of safety but with hope. The mixture also speaks of the sweetness of Gods provision and the generations of Gods children to come.

We eat some Charoset

Life is so often a mixture of sorrow and joy, of bitterness and sweetness. We cannot separate our experience from our Hope, we cannot taste true freedom without remembering the captivity from which God has brought us. So we make the Hillel sandwich but unlike the Rabbi we do not eat the Lamb for in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God all need of the Temple and blood sacrifice is past.

A sandwich is made of the Maror and the Charoset and eaten

We eat our community meal

11.The Third Cup: the Cup of Redemption

The third cup is poured and the Aflokomen returned to the Table

Voice1

The people of Israel waited for the coming of Elijah to welcome the Messiah at the Passover as the prophet Malachi said: "See, I will send you Elijah the prophet before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes." They left the third cup untouched in hope and anticipation.

Jesus took this cup.

The Afikomen, the remnant, has traditionally symbolized hope for the future, a symbol of redemption, as God again acts in history to proclaim good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Jesus took this bread.

Reader

Then Jesus turned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. “If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you.” Surprised, they said, “But we’re descendants of Abraham. We’ve never been slaves to anyone. How can you say, ‘The truth will free you’?” Jesus said, “I tell you most solemnly that anyone who chooses a life of sin is trapped in a dead-end life and is, in fact, a slave. A slave is a transient, who can’t come and go at will. The Son, though, has an established position, the run of the house. So if the Son sets you free, you are free through and through.

John 8:31-34

Voice 1

Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, “Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I’ll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives.” Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory.” He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you.

We break the bread and share the wine

12.The Fourth Cup: the Cup of Thanksgiving and Hope

Voice 2

The Passover is complete, we celebrate true freedom in God through Christ. Yet there is much to do, we still wait and yearn for re-creation. The Shalom of God is here and is yet to come. We raise our final Cup in thanksgiving for the freedom we have received and in hope for the freedom that is to come for all of creation.

People:

**Our Father, who is in heaven,
Holy is your name!
Your Kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into trials, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**

All raise their glasses and drink

Voice 1

As the Jews always finish the Passover meal with a cry of hope and ultimate freedom so do we.

Together

Next year in the New Jerusalem!

This liturgy is a mixture of original text and inspiration from many sources. Bible passages are from The Message. With particular thanks to <http://www.crivoice.org/> for the structure and the “story of Passover” text.