



# Life in Messiah

International

## HOSTING “MESSIAH IN THE PASSOVER”

### **Introduction:**

Passover is the commemoration of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt (see Exodus 12 and following for the biblical record). It comes in the spring of each year, in March or April. The reason for the variance is that Jewish people follow a lunar calendar while the Western world adopted a solar calendar. Passover always falls on Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar.

Passover is a time for family celebration around the table — a time for special foods and traditions, similar to what Christians may do at Christmas or Easter. In a Jewish home this special meal is called a **seder** (Hebrew word meaning "order"; the Passover commemoration is called a **seder** because the meal and service follow a set order.)

### **Hosting a seder:**

Many Christians have benefited from hosting a Passover **seder**\* in their churches. Hosting a **seder** requires a good deal of effort (particularly for the cooks!), but those people who help with the preparation testify that it makes the evening more meaningful. Believers who attend gain insight into the Lord's Supper, for communion was instituted by Jesus at a Passover meal. Seeing how the traditional elements point to Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection makes a powerful impact.

You may decide how closely you wish to duplicate an "authentic" Jewish **seder**, and how fancy you want to get. We have included several menu options (attached); your selections will determine how much money and effort will be expended. In addition, you may wish to use Chinet (throwaway) plates or your good place settings. Use of nice napkins and tablecloths, or putting fresh flowers on the tables as settings add to the atmosphere — but also to your budget.

### **Seder leader:**

Life in Messiah staff are available; our staff do not charge a fee, but appreciate an honorarium toward their ministry support in addition to having travel expenses met.

### **Menu considerations:**

Observant Jewish people do not eat any food with leaven (yeast, baking soda, or baking powder) during Passover. Neither will they eat dairy and meat products together during a meal. If you wish to observe these guidelines for the **seder** it will give you insight into the Jewish dietary restrictions. (But it is wise to inform people of why you are doing this, to head off complaints about not having bread, butter, or cream on the table!)

Jewish people normally use wine for their **seder**. Since evangelical Christians often abstain from alcohol, you will probably want to serve Welch's grape juice or an equivalent at your **seder**. If you want to get a little fancier, choose the sparkling (carbonated) grape juice.

\* You may opt for a **seder demonstration** suitable for an evening service or Sunday School format. Demonstrations provide an explanation rather than a "hands-on" experience. Though easier on the budget and less work (there is no meal to prepare), you lose much of the participatory element that adds to the uniqueness of the service.

# PLANNING GUIDELINE

## Program:

Adapt to suit needs/desires/budget of your congregation. Basic decisions about program include these considerations:

Purpose - informative (for Christians) or evangelistic (unsaved)?

Funding - how will expenses be covered (tickets, love offering, or other)? Costs may include:

Food - meal and Passover elements, including juice (see attached sheet)

Advertising - poster, bulletin insert, mailing, newspaper ad

Printing - tickets, program folders

Decorations - candles, flowers

Speaker - travel expenses, honorarium

Special music (taped or live; Messianic music adds to the atmosphere).

Personnel:

- ✧ Set up and take down (tables, decorations, sound equipment)
- ✧ Cooks and servers (family style, or waitresses)
- ✧ Sound system technician
- ✧ Cleanup crew (dishwashers!)

## Suggestions:

Head table - the **seder** leader's table should be situated to give the best sight lines possible. No more than four should be seated at the table, and a six to eight foot table is best.

If you have questions or need additional information, please call or email us:

(708) 418-0020

[info@LifeInMessiah.org](mailto:info@LifeInMessiah.org)

We are here to help!

## **SEDER ELEMENTS (for each table):**

Parsley sprigs - bowl with one sprig per person

Haroset - bowl with 2 tablespoon servings per person; mixture of chopped apples and walnuts, cinnamon, and enough grape juice to keep mixture moist. Recipes vary, so feel free to experiment.

Horseradish - bowl with one teaspoon per person

Salt water - bowl of water with sufficient salt to taste

Matzah - one "board" (6" x 6" slice) for every two people (usually sold 10 or 12 to a box)

Grape juice - enough for 4 small (2 oz.) glasses per person

Hard-boiled egg - one (1) for head table only

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES:**

**Haggadot** (hah-gah-doht - plural form of **haggadah**, the Hebrew word meaning "telling").

**Haggadot** - are booklets which contain the order of service and tell the story of Passover. One copy per person. [Maxwell House sometimes makes these available at no charge during Passover season in grocery stores near Jewish communities. If they are not available in your area, contact Life in Messiah for assistance, or you may download them off the internet from a variety of sights.

Place settings - soup or salad bowls, coffee cups and saucers, beverage glass, dinner plates, dessert plates, cutlery, napkins, juice tumblers (plastic 3 oz. tumblers are fine), bowls for elements

Table settings - matzah plates or baskets (sandwich three whole matzah boards between five napkins or paper towels, and place in basket or plate on each table); tablecloths (remember, grape juice will be used!)

Decorations - candles and/or flowers; wall decorations

Head table - small bowl of plain water, linen napkin, and candle in candleholder