



The Paschal Meal

A Catholic version of the Jewish Seder Meal

The following service is one Catholic family's adaptation of the Jewish Passover or Seder meal. Through this prayer service, we remember the actions of our "elder brothers" in the faith, the Jewish people, as well as the actions of Our Lord at the Last Supper. We pray that all who use this service are enriched in their celebration of Holy Week.

Please see the appendix for recipes, list of parts, and preparation tasks.

1. THE LIGHTING OF THE FESTIVAL LIGHTS

All are standing. The table is set and the lamb is set on the table. In front of each person is a small plate of horseradish, parsley, and haroses. In front of the leader is a pitcher of wine and a large goblet, and a basket with three matzos, each wrapped in a cloth.

COMMENTATOR: According to ancient Jewish custom it is the task of the mother to light the festival lights in every service that takes place in the Jewish home. The gesture for us symbolizes the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. The solemn blessing of the light at the beginning of the Easter Vigil service finds its origin in this Jewish custom.

A song is sung. A song about the light of Christ is appropriate here. (see appendix #4)

ASSISTANT: (*lighting the candles*) Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Your commandments and Who has commanded us to kindle the festival lights. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has kept us alive and once more brought us to this holy season. May our homes be consecrated, O God, by the light of Your countenance shining on us in blessing and giving us peace.

ALL: Amen.

2. KIDDISH, THE BLESSING OF THE FEAST

COMMENTATOR: You may be seated. Every food used in the Jewish Passover meal was blessed before it was eaten. Similarly, the bread and wine to be consecrated at Mass are blessed by the priest.

LEADER: (*pouring the first cup of wine*) Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Who has chosen us from among all peoples and has hallowed us with Your commandments, holy days, and times for rejoicing. We welcome this time with gladness and consecrate it to the celebration of Your Son's victory over sin and death. This is the cup of Thanksgiving.

ALL: Blessed are You, Lord our God, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

The leader drinks from the cup and passes it to the others present.

COMMENTATOR: Four times during the Paschal meal the wine was passed. The act of distributing wine from a common cup to all present is a sign of unity. At the Last Supper Jesus passed this first cup with the words, "Take this and divide it among you.

I tell you; from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the coming of the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:17-18)

The server brings a basin, pitcher and towel to the leader, who washes his hands.

COMMENTATOR: The washing of hands symbolized the interior cleansing necessary for those partaking in the meal. It was probably at this point that Our Lord washed the feet of His disciples as an expression of His new commandment of love and to show the dignity of service.

LEADER: (*while washing*) Blessed are you O Lord our God King of the Universe Who has commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

COMMENTATOR: All take up the green herb and dip it in the salt water which is symbolic of tears and sorrow.

LEADER: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has created the fruit of the soil.

ALL: Amen.

COMMENTATOR: All eat the green herb as the leader uncovers the upper matzo and lifts it up. Unleavened bread was prescribed for the Passover to commemorate the first Passover, for in the flight from Egypt there had been no time to make leavened bread. So the bread that Our Lord used to institute the Eucharist was unleavened, a custom carried on today in the Mass.

LEADER: This is the bread of affliction, which our Hebrew fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be God's will to redeem us from all evil and servitude. Next year at this time, may the entire people of Israel and all the children of God come to the table of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem and enjoy the glorious freedom purchased for us by His Blood.

ALL: Amen!

3. THE HAGGADAH, THE STORY OF THE FIRST PASSOVER

COMMENTATOR: Now the story of the first Passover is retold as is commanded in the Book of Exodus. The youngest person present traditionally asks the five traditional questions. At the Last Supper this was probably St. John.

YOUNGEST CHILD:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?

Why on this night do we eat very bitter herbs?

Why on this night do we dip the herbs in salt water?

Why on this night do we hold the Passover service?

READER 1: Our father Jacob and his sons left the country of Canaan during a time of severe famine to settle in the land of Egypt. After a time, a Pharaoh arose who did not know Joseph. He enslaved the Israelites, and they were greatly afflicted. In their suffering, the people cried for help, and God answered their prayer. He sent Moses to lead them out of the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews leave, God sent plagues upon the Egyptians until Pharaoh gave his permission.

READER 2: A reading from the book of Exodus, Chapter 12: 21-36

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "Speak to the whole community and say,

"On the tenth day of this month each man must take a lamb from the flock, one for each family, one for each household. If a household is too small to eat the animal, a man must join his neighbor, the nearest to his house, as the number of persons requires. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted. With unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it...

In this manner you shall eat it: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and I will smite all of the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.'

"You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. And when you come to the land which the Lord will give you as He has promised you, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, for He passed over the people of Israel in Egypt when He slew the Egyptians but spared our houses.'"

The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

READER 1: The children of Israel hastily gathered together in the night and fled from Egyptian enslavement. Moses went before them and opened the waters of the Red Sea, so that they could get safely away. When the Egyptian armies pursued them, the waters closed on top of the armies, and destroyed them.

CHILD 1: What is the meaning of the paschal lamb?

LEADER: (*holding up the lamb*) The paschal lamb is the one which our Hebrew fathers sacrificed to the Lord in memory of that night when the Holy One passed over the houses of Israel when He saw the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. The true Passover lamb is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Who was slain for our sins and by Whose Blood we live.

CHILD 2: What is the meaning of the matzo?

LEADER: (*holding up the bread*) This is the bread of affliction which our fathers took with them out of Egypt on the night they left in haste. And the true unleavened bread is the body of Christ, our Thanksgiving, the Bread Who came down from Heaven to be broken for us in this holy season.

4. DAYENU—IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH!

To be read or chanted

LEADER: How many are the good things that the Lord has done for us! Had he brought us out of the land of Egypt and not divided the Red Sea--

ALL: --it would have been enough!

LEADER: Had he divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

LEADER: Had he permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us with manna in the desert—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He fed us with manna and not ordained the Sabbath—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He ordained the Sabbath and not brought us to Mt. Sinai—

CHILD 3: What is the meaning of the moror?

LEADER: This moror is the bitter herbs which reminds us of the bitterness of the slavery in Egypt out of which God delivered our fathers. And the true bitterness is bondage to sin from which we are delivered by Christ's saving grace.

CHILD 4: What is the meaning of the haroses?

LEADER: The haroses reminds us of the mud which our fathers were forced to make into bricks for the Egyptians as slaves. And the true slavery is sin, which masters us and separates us from our loving God.

Each of us must see ourselves as coming out of Egypt because God rescued our Hebrew fathers in order to rescue us. That is why we make this night different from all other nights. It is our glad duty to thank the Lord who did all these miracles for our fathers and for ourselves. He has brought us forth from slavery into freedom, out of sorrow into joy, out of darkness into a great light, out of subjection to a marvelous redemption. Let us therefore sing to Him a new song!

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He brought us to Mt. Sinai and not given us the Torah—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had he given us the Torah and not led us to the land of Israel—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He led us to the land of Israel and not built for us the temple—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He built for us the temple and not sent us the prophets of truth—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He sent us the prophets of truth and not made us a holy people—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He made us a holy people and not sent us His Son, the Messiah to save us—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He sent us His Son and not built a new Temple, His Immaculate Mother Mary—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He given us His Mother and not given us the New Law to love as He loved us—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He given us the New Law and not given us the New Manna, the Eucharist, His very flesh and blood—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He given us the New Manna and not opened for us the Promised Land of Heaven—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He opened for us Heaven but not given us the New Israel, His Church, to teach, guide, and strengthen us—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He established the New Israel and not sent us His Holy Spirit to comfort and sustain us—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

Had He sent us His Holy Spirit and not continued to work among us in the lives of holy men and women, the Fathers and Mothers of the Church, the martyrs, the saints, and all the holy angels—

ALL: --it would have been enough!

5. PRAYERS AFTER THE MEAL

COMMENTATOR: The second matzo is now unwrapped. To the Jewish people, the three matzos symbolize Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To the Christian, they symbolize the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was most probably at this moment when Jesus took the bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My Body which is given up for you."

How much MORE grateful, then, are we to be to the Lord, Our God, for all of these good things which He has indeed done for us.

ALL: Amen, amen! Praise ye the Lord!

It is possible to insert here a song of praise (see appendix #4)

COMMENTATOR: The Leader pours the second cup

LEADER: Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has redeemed us and our fathers from Egypt, Who has sent us His Son, and Who has brought us to this day to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs as we remember the marvels Your hand has wrought. May we always rejoice in Your salvation!

This is the cup of Haggadah, of Deliverance. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

COMMENTATOR: The Leader passes the cup, and unwraps the first matzo again.

LEADER: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth, and Who commanded us to eat the unleavened bread on this night in remembrance of Your deliverance and Your many, many blessings.

COMMENTATOR: The leader passes the first matzo. Holding the matzo in their hands, all place some moror and haroses on it and say together:

ALL: Blessed are you, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe Who has commanded us to eat this unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

The Paschal Meal is now served and eaten.

LEADER: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Redeemer of Your people, Who has brought forth bread from the earth and Who has become Bread out of love for us.

COMMENTATOR: The leader breaks the matzo and passes it to those present, who hold it in their hands.

LEADER: Let us bless the Lord.

ALL: Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth and forever.

LEADER: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Who feeds the entire world with Your goodness, grace, and loving kindness. You give breath to all flesh, for Your love endures forever. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, who at this meal instituted the Sacrament of Your Body and Blood.

ALL: Blessed be our God, of whose bounty we have partaken and by whose Flesh and Blood we live.

COMMENTATOR: As we eat the matzo, the leader pours the third cup.

LEADER: This is the cup of Blessing, which became the salvation of our God. What return will I make to the Lord for all the good things He has done for me?

ALL: I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord! Blessed are you, O Lord Our God, who has created the fruit of the vine.

5. THE FINAL BLESSING

LEADER: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may He make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, may the Lord look upon you kindly and give you His peace!

ALL: Amen!

LEADER: May we end this Pascal meal in joy and may we be worthy to celebrate it in future years!

ALL: Amen!

LEADER: May we all celebrate it in glory with Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem!

ALL: Amen!

LEADER: May our children live to see the day when all the Jewish people will come to the table of the

COMMENTATOR: The cup of blessing is passed and all drink.

Desert may be served at this time. The third matzo can be hidden at this time in order to be found by the children after the Pashcal Meal is over.

COMMENTATOR: After desert is over, the leader fills the cup once more, the cup of Melchisedech. Jesus did not drink of this cup at the Last Supper. He completed the Passover meal, the first Mass, on the cross when He drank the bitter cup of sour wine before He gave up His spirit, declaring it was finished.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

COMMENTATOR: The final cup is passed as the leader gives the final blessing.

Eucharist to partake of Christ, their Messiah. O Lord, hasten that day when the olive branch will be regrafted onto its true tree to bring life to the Gentiles!

ALL: Amen!

LEADER: Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

ALL: Amen! Amen! Amen!

End with a song of praise. Children may now begin searching for the hidden matzo!

appendix

1. SETTING THE TABLE

GATHER THESE ITEMS:

- a bottle or pitcher of wine with enough wine to allow four cups to be poured
- a large goblet
- a basket and cloth for matzos
- a few small plates
- candles, ideally eight
- your best china, ideally with a dinner plate and a smaller salad plate
- a copy of the service and song sheets
- a washbowl
- a water pitcher
- a hand towel

2. ROLES

Before the meal, be sure to assign the following parts to those at the table:

- Leader
- Assistant
- Commentator
- Server for handwashing
- Reader 1
- Reader 2
- The youngest child (or person) present
- Child 1 - Child 4 (feel free to combine if you have fewer than five participating children)

THE LEADER

This part is usually read by the father, but he may wish to give some of his parts to an older child so all can participate.

In front of the leader there should be a large goblet for wine and three matzos, each wrapped individually and placed, one on top of the other, in a basket or plate.

The leader could also have a plate with a sample of each of the passover foods—matzo, haroses, bitter herb, greens, piece of lamb, and an egg.

Use your finest china and glasses to set the table. Every place should have a dinner plate with a smaller plate on top of it set with the Passover food. To make it even more special, you could even have place cards showing each guest where to sit.

The small plate should have on it a piece of matzo, a spoonful of haroses, a little bit of moror (bitter herbs such as radish slices or horseradish), and a sprig of greens, like parsley or celery leaves, (see #3 below for details)

Every 2-3 people should share a small bowl of salted water.

Every person should have a copy of the service, including a song sheet, at their place.

THE ASSISTANT

This part is usually read by the mother of the home.

The assistant lights the festival lights for the meal. These lights can be a menorah, a blessed candle, a pillar candle, or simple tapers in candlesticks. If possible, it would be most appropriate to have eight candles (like a menorah).

The assistant should have a lighter or match available.

COMMENTATOR

This reader gives directions for how the Passover is celebrated. It can be given to the mother or an older child or another adult. If your family is familiar enough with the Passover service to not need directions, you could omit this part, or the leader could read the relevant parts.

THE SERVER

The Leader should have available to him/her a washbowl and towel. A young person could act as a “server” and bring them to the leader at the time of the handwashing. If possible, the bowl and pitcher should be the right size for the server to hold one in each hand. With the towel draped over their arm, the server will pour the water over the hands of the Leader. This is the same service the altar servers provide to the priest at mass.

appendix

3. FOOD AND RECIPES

Haroses

Serves 12. *This is a type of apple relish. Applesauce is a substitute but haroses is fun to make and children love it!*

INGREDIENTS:

- 1c chopped apples,
- 1c chopped walnuts (if desired)
- 2t cinnamon
- 2T sugar

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine ingredients in a large bowl. If you need to make it more moist, add sweet wine or grape juice. It should have the consistency of thick mud.

Moror

This is a bitter herb such as horseradish or a thin slice of radish or even dandelion greens.

Green Herbs

Soft leafy green such as parsley, celery green, or cilantro

Matzo

You can simply buy matzo in the store, or use pitas, or make your own!

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 ¼ c flour
- 1c water
- 1T salt
- 1T olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine ingredients.
2. Divide into 3 equal balls of dough. Add flour as needed to make the dough workable.
3. Shape into a very thin circle (6-8" diameter).
4. Bake 500 for 5-6 minutes until brown.

Lamb

It is best to get a leg of lamb and roast it. Here is the recipe we use every year.

INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 (8 pound) leg of lamb, boned and butterflied to a more or less even thickness, 4 ¾ to 5 ½ pounds trimmed weight, fell and most fat removed
- 1 lemon, juiced
- Minced fresh parsley, cilantro or mint (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix oil, garlic, salt, pepper, cumin and oregano; spread paste on both sides of the lamb and let stand for an hour until meat comes to room temperature.
2. Adjust oven rack to upper or upper-middle position (depending on lamb's thickness) and preheat broiler on high for at least 10 minutes.
3. Place lamb, cut side up, on a large wire rack set over a foil-lined roasting pan. Broil, moving pan so the entire surface browns evenly, about 8 minutes. Turn lamb over; continue to broil until well browned on the other side, about 8 minutes longer. Turn off broiler, remove lamb from oven and let rest for 10 minutes.
4. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest portion of the lamb; return it to the oven. Roast for a total of 50 minutes to 1 hour, until thermometer registers a rosy-pink 140 degrees. Check lamb several times after 30 minutes. If lamb is done sooner, simply turn down oven to 170 degrees until ready to serve.
5. As soon as lamb comes out of the oven, squeeze on lemon juice and sprinkle with fresh herbs.

appendix

Carve, slicing across the grain when possible.
Arrange on a platter, drizzle with accumulated
juices, and serve.

(taken from <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/77005/broiled-and-slow-roasted-butterflied-leg-of-lamb-with-cumin-and-garlic/>)

Side Dishes

We try to use side dishes that are typically Middle Eastern—rice, hummus, salad, green beans, root

vegetables and cabbage. A salad with seven bitter herbs for the Seven Sorrows of Mary is nice (use a typical spring mix from the grocery store).

Dessert

Because there is an emphasis on eating unleavened foods, we try to avoid cakes for dessert in favor of apple crisp, a fruit cobbler, custard, or ice cream.

4. SONGS

SONGS FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

- [“The Light of Christ” by Donald Fishel](#)
- [“Christ Be Our Light” by Bernadette Farrell](#)
- [“Christ is Light” by Jack Miffleton](#)

SONGS OF PRAISE

Some of these are upbeat and others are slow and easy to sing. Use what your family likes best!

- [“It Is Good” by Paul Wilber](#)
- [“Exodus XV” by Frank Gallio](#)
- [“El-Shaddai” by Amy Grant](#)
- [“10,000 Reasons \(Bless the Lord, O my Soul\)” by Matt Redman](#)

- [“The Horse and Rider,” sung to the tune of the Israeli song “Tzena.”](#)

ADDITIONAL MUSIC

(great for playing during food preparation)

- If you want to learn the traditional Jewish version of the Dayenu Prayer, here's a fun Hebrew version for kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p1pabOX3fc>
- Additional Christian Jewish music can be found by searching for the Messianic Christian artist Joel Chernoff on YouTube. A few of our favorites include “The Sacrifice Lamb,” “Dancing in Jerusalem,” “S’hma Israel,” and “Enter His Gates.”

Songs for the the Paschal Meal

"The Light of Christ" by Donald Fishel

Chorus:

The light of Christ has come into the world.
(The light of Christ has come into the world.)
The light of Christ has come into the world.
(The light of Christ has come.)

1. We must all born again to see the kingdom of God.
The water and the Spirit bring new life in God's love.
2. God gave up His only Son out of love for the world,
So that all who believe in Him will live for ever.
3. The light of God has come to us so that we might have salvation.
From the darkness of our sins we walk into glory with Christ Jesus.

"Christ is Light" by Jack Miffleton

Christ is Light: in Him there is no darkness.
Come to Him and He will give you light!

(3X or do as a round)

"Exodus XV" by Frank Gallio

1. The Lord (the Lord) is my strength
And my song
And He (and He) is become My salvation
He is my God. (2X)

Chorus:

And I shall prepare Him my heart. (3X)

2. The Lord (the Lord), He shall reign
Forever and ever
The Lord (the Lord), He shall reign
Forever and ever
Amen.

(Repeat chorus)

The Horse and Rider

To the tune of Tzena. (Can be done as a round)

I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and rider thrown into the sea! (2X)

The Lord My God, my strength, my song, has now become my victory! (2X)

The Lord is God and I will praise Him,
my father's God and I will exult Him! (2X)

It Is Good by Paul Wilber

1. It is good to praise the Lord
And make music to Your name, O God Most High,
To proclaim Your love and faithfulness
All the day and through the night

Chorus:

Lai lai lai
Lai lai lai lai lai....

2. You make me glad by Your deeds, O Lord
So I sing for joy at all Your hands have made
How great are Your works O Lord!
Elohim Baruch Hashem
3. May I dwell in Your courts, O Lord,
There to flourish like the trees of Lebanon
Planted in the house of Adonai
There to live forevermore!

Child Reader Cards

Print and cut these cards out.

Hand one out to each child who will be reading

YOUNGEST CHILD:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?

Why on this night do we eat very bitter herbs?

Why on this night do we dip the herbs in salt water?

Why on this night do we hold the Passover service?

CHILD 1

What is the meaning of the paschal lamb?

CHILD 2:

What is the meaning of the matzo?

CHILD 3:

What is the meaning of the moror?

CHILD 4:

What is the meaning of the haroses?