

WHAT IT TAKES: HOW TO LEAD A VIRTUAL SEDER

Community Shared Ideas from our Two Sessions

BEST SEDERS/ MOST MEMORABLE

- There were a few questions the host sent out that we were asked to consider ahead of time. The questions and our answers got woven into the seder.
- The seder where everyone had a different Haggadah!
- A seder with a number of non-Jews present, because it caused me to explain more and, from that, to think more about the meanings of Pesach, and to talk about it in a more universal way.
- When the kids were little and they sang the silliest songs.
- Everyone at the table interjected with great questions and jokes (I also had many non-Jews at the table).
- When everyone there felt excited to participate in a long discussion. It didn't feel like anyone wanted to rush the experience.
- Plagues bags when the kids were later little.
- People of all different backgrounds - we said the 4 questions in a dozen languages!
- We used to cross the Red Sea (Red crepe paper) and pick up tambourines and sing
- Best seder was one where everybody was very into it (not just there because they had to be) and everyone participated.
- Two of the best seders - any Korman-Rivera seder at our home with The Nrityagram dance company from South India as our guests
- When we added some reflective questions that are relevant to current events and everyone participated.
- Best seder I ever attended was with my immediate family and there was a lot of laughter and sharing of memories as my kids were growing up and from me, before the kids were even there.
- Earth Liberations Seder Interfaith seder with farm-fresh eggs, parsley, horseradish, onion-grass, maple water.
- The year our house was destroyed in a tornado and we had the seder at the hotel with our family and friends to that special holiday.
- A Harlem Havruta Seder when we could not hold it in Harlem - 27 folks squeezed into our living room - the first time my father-in-law from Hamburg met my community of Jews of Color, allies and co-conspirators (!)
- Best Seder I went to was mainly oriented toward keeping kids interested while also taking adults seriously as Jews and participants.



On Seder in the Time of Coronavirus...

- One way to connect COVID to the Seder might be that very often, when we as Jews discuss our collective suffering, we often focus on Jewish suffering. After all, we have a rather compelling historical narrative in that regard. This year, though, COVID can serve a reminder that people suffer regardless of religion, race, etc. COVID affects people irrespective of any of that.
- www.dropbox.com/s/1xbbqqkheap4ibl/The%20Four%20Children%20and%20COVID-19.pdf

Haggadah Advice

- We made personal Haggadahs using photos of past Seders of our family. New members of our family are added every year.
- Politics & Prose (DC Indie Bookstore) gives you [a look at different Haggadot](#) and get a brief review of each.
- I'm putting my Haggadah into Google Slides so everyone can see it.
- We're going to use this Haggadah as our base which people can pull up on their screens or print and we're going to email a playbill of sorts that notes who will read which portions and which we'll skip, etc...
- We use a PowerPoint projected on a screen to add songs and readings to the Haggadah and some humorous pictures, etc.
- Also recommend adding comments so folks know which paragraph or prayer they're "assigned" (if that's what you're doing)
- FreeTheSlaves.net/Judaism has many resources for the Seders

Haggadah Options

- Plug for the [Black Lives Matter Haggadah from JFREJ](#) (Jews for Racial & Economic Justice). As a Jew of color, particularly a Black & Indigenous Jew, I found it powerful, but it's more supplementary. I use it alongside the A Different Night. I use the leader's guide!!
- [Slate's 2 minute haggadah is great!](#)
- [A Night of Questions is my favourite Haggadah](#)
- Here are a couple I made years back:
- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1B6mJber3u5JOX38K97k6hmL67hXbmYRO>
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ixr85YTAwkisl3nJKyjFY9h08_Oluifi
- [J Street sent out a Haggadah supplement](#) this week.
- I love the [Velveteen Rabbi Haggadah](#) - clear, accessible, and heavy on creative writings/poetry/reflections in case that's your jam. Free to download
- Dr. Seuss Haggadah
- Good Haggadah available for download at: get.jewbelong.com/passoverhaggadah/
- The Movement for Reform Judaism in the UK has [made their Haggadah freely available online](#)
- [Repair the World has great supplements](#), including 4 Questions that tie into "Making a Difference from a Distance"
- [Social justice oriented Haggadot and supplements](#)
- The Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative Movement) recently released [two one-pagers and a resource book](#) on modern-day slavery and human trafficking as Jews can relate to them - and help end them - on Passover.
- I'm a big fan of Ellie Wiesel's Haggadah



Technology/ Virtual Platforms

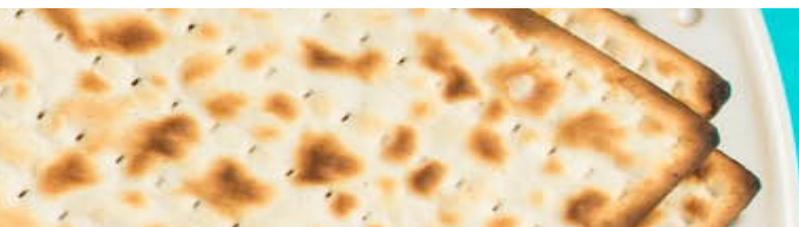
- Consider putting people into zoom breakouts ([how-to-guide here](#)) and just agree on when you'll pull them back with the whole group - Just make sure you have a version of zoom that enables breakouts. Not all zoom accounts are created equally.
- You can set side by side on view options next to the screen share notice on zoom.
- Zoom allows gallery view and shared screen.
- When people log into zoom, they can only see what's in the chat once they join, so leaving a message in the chat won't really work unless you keep copying-and-pasting whatever message is there.
- Zoom pro account is only \$15 USD/\$20 CAD for a month.
- You can have people raise their hands in zoom so that things don't get out of control. There should be a moderator for the zoom.
- Zoom virtual backgrounds is fun, but be aware that Zoom backgrounds can blur or bleed the contours of people's faces and bleed words in docs.
- If you want to prompt questions for people to pre-record their responses, I would recommend setting up a flip grid and sharing it with seder guests ahead of time
- If you have multiple devices: you can ask people to open the haggadah on their phone or tablet. That way you can have a full screen of faces.

Music/Singing

- I am also sad about solo singing. Here's what I'm trying: having my seder guests record a few core songs ahead of time and edit it so it sounds like we're all singing together. Then, when we're singing that song, I will play the track while everyone mutes and sings along, but it will sound like you're singing with everyone.
- Adding songs in English to folk songs and funny songs which allows everyone to sing and participate.
- If people move away from the mic, you can do singing.
- believe this was recorded via zoom, but with [some attention to how to navigate mics](#).
- There are great recordings of all the Passover songs if you are wanting to bring a bit more depth to your singing.
- One way to sing together: have everyone mute their computers and CALL into the conference line that Zoom provides (instead of using their computer audio). The phone will probably not have the same lag time.

Food

- Symbolic foods are a great entry point for rituals, old and new.
- We serve appetizers starting at the very beginning so people are not rushing to the meal.
- The food... we were going to send everyone out with a shopping list, or possible drop off packages - but you can also buy the food in a kit for people, apparently:<https://www.ohnuts.com/buy.cfm/complete-seder-gift-pack>
- Check out charoset recipes from around the world.
- Our Italian charoset tradition is to have 18 (Chai) ingredients — it's scrumptious and never exactly the same. Some ingredients I always include: figs, apples, bananas, orange, lemon/lemon zest, cinnamon, cloves, cashews, almonds, other nuts, wine.
- I think a recipe share would be great. Maybe even a sample menu organized by Simple, Medium Level, Hard. Then people can choose what works for them.



General Suggestions for Creativity

- Answer Garden: You can use this tool to ask a question, with the option of many people responding to it in live time. For example, you can ask the question: Why is this night different from other nights?
- Wordle: This must be done by only 1 person scribing people's responses. The wordle can be created and shared via "Share Screen".
- I've done a land acknowledgement, noting the indigenous land that you're on, and the contradiction of celebrating freedom while being on stolen land.
- We always ask people to talk about the way they do things in their seders and their traditions and comparing them to each other. I think this will be particularly interesting this year.
- We chant the order of the seder at the beginning but then go back to singing it at each new step. Start at beginning and end at the step we're on.
- One of my family members is a Spanish translator, and will say things in Spanish instead of English.
- We always do a Jewish-themed trivia game. Every time we get to the end of a different seder section, we pull out a question. The one who gets the most answers right gets a prize at the end of the night (this is non-virtual).

Seder Plate/Symbolism

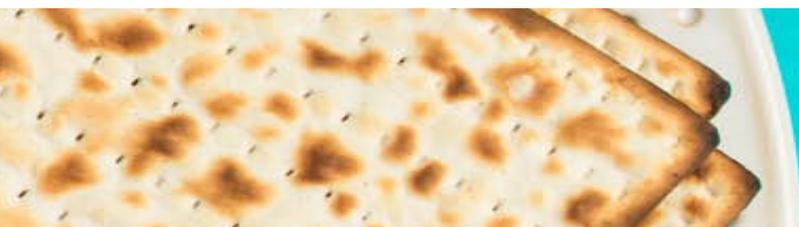
- I add a roasted beet instead of lamb shank (vegan). Also an orange - for rebirth and renewal!
- For adding items to the seder plate. . . it could be fun to throw out a theme and ask participants to "go find" an object to represent it in their houses and then come share them back on zoom.
- We are going to have a virtual seder plate where everyone brings to the Zoom screen something that represents a silver lining to this time. Something we're doing or thinking about that's been pleasant or enriching, helping us get through this time.
- <https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/color-seder-plate/>

Karpas

- Our Karpas appetizers come under the blessing of what grows in the ground. with dips. so asparagus, potatoes, sweet peppers, and the like. no matzah crackers because we have not yet made the blessing over the
- We serve boiled potatoes at Karpas to keep people from asking, "When do we eat?"!

Maggid/Four Questions

- I like opening things up for people to ask their own questions.
- Those years with a number of 11 - 18 year olds at our seder we have dollar bills to give anyone who asks a "good" question. It incentivizes young people to get involved.
- I use dollar coins and \$2 bills, since they are more unusual.
- I like to bring in more recent forms of slavery at Avadim Chayinu, including human trafficking, if people can handle that conversation.



Ten Plagues

- At our seders after the 10 plagues, we go around the table and say which plague we would be and why.
- I've always "enjoyed" "modernizing" the 10 plagues: it seems like there are always new "opportunities" to point them out every year.
- For children: There are the plague finger puppets and masks, if you are comfortable with that
Oh - for kids, I found the plague masks for kids that I used a year or so ago. Some are a little.... grim, but most are super cute: www.amazon.com/Rite-Lite-Judaica-Passover-Plague/dp/B007UWD1E8/ref=sr_1_13

Post Dinner

- Ki Lo Na'eh conga line through the house
- We could pre-record the post-meal liturgy on FB Live and then folks could go to it whenever they finish eating.
- My dad reads the entire Hallel at the speed of an auctioneer...essentially does it for us so that it can be completed.

Hiding the Afikomen

- You could make a series of riddles or brain games leading to a figurative afikomen (more like solving the riddle).
- If you're doing "Passover packages", you could give everyone an envelope that they are not to open until the hunt for the afikomen - and then everyone opens their package, and (poof) one person has "found" it!
- Afikomen virtual scavenger hunt.
- I read an idea somewhere to share a word hunt or some other kind of shared scavenger hunt, rather than finding a physical afikomen. Or discussing what we need to find within ourselves.
- Creative ways to hide afikomen: A baby camera focused on the Afikomen?
- I really want to find an artist to create a WHERE's WALDO kind of image for people to look at that has a piece of matzah hidden or put together a page along the lines of Where's Waldo, then hide the afikomen among all of the other stuff in the picture.
- Here are [some good resources](#) from the Reform Movement, including something related to finding the afikomen:
- The affikomen alternative is: <https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/passover-pesach/dog-vs-afikomen>
- You could also just invite everybody to use the Internet to find a matzah.
- Could do a "Newlywed Game" style? Have everyone type where they would hide the afikomen in the home where you usually do the seder. The ones who match are the winners, or maybe the only unique answer is the winner.

