

## INTRODUCTION TO PASSOVER AND LAST SUPPER MEAL

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This is ...

- ◆ a family gathering; a meal which is social, child-friendly, easy to understand;
- ◆ a Christian liturgy, with prayers and symbols, with ancient meaning;
- ◆ a learning experience, teaching those who participate about the Jewish origins to our faith, in particular the type of meal that Jesus and his disciples ate on the night that we now remember as Maundy Thursday. It is a simplified, and 'Christianised' version of the words spoken, food eaten, and symbolic actions done in Passover meals through the centuries. It is also a time of learning about the background and meaning of our Communion/eucharist.
- ◆ designed for use on Maundy Thursday.

### The setting:

Gather for the Meal in a home, or in a lounge at church. Ideally have a group small enough to be seated around a large table. It needs a family, informal atmosphere. Play some games or music before beginning the Meal. Explain to those present that we will be sharing in a simple version of the Passover festival meal that Jewish people have shared for about 3 thousand years. It is also a Christian celebration, remembering Jesus and his gift to us of Communion.

The Meal makes use of some foods as symbols in the liturgy, plus a time for eating together more normal foods. You might like to ask people to bring a plate.

### You will need:

- ◆ A copy of the 'Passover and Last Supper Meal' hand-out for everyone to read,
- ◆ Candles and matches for the table,
- ◆ A cup and plate for each person,
- ◆ A large jug of grape juice, for filling everyone's cup, with plenty of spare juice,
- ◆ A bowl and towel for hand washing,
- ◆ A loaf of unleavened bread (such as pita bread),
- ◆ A bunch of fresh herbs (e.g. rosemary, parsley),
- ◆ Some boiled egg (sliced) which is salty,
- ◆ Other food to make up a meal, in particular roast lamb,
- ◆ Two goblets (the '3<sup>rd</sup>' and '4<sup>th</sup>' cups),
- ◆ Song sheets/books.

## PASSOVER AND LAST SUPPER MEAL

(Adapted from the Jewish Haggadah Passover)

*Everyone sits around the table. Welcome. Sing a song.*

Light the candles

Everyone: **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe. You have called us here and made us holy through your love. You are the light of the world, and we light these candles to remind us that we, too, are called to be lights in the world.**

### **The First Cup: the Cup of Remembering**

*Everyone's cup is filled.*

Everyone: **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine.**

Leader: Thank you that you have made us and chosen us to be your people. In your love you have given us time for gladness and rejoicing together, especially this feast of unleavened bread as a celebration of freedom. Tonight we remember the freedom you won for your people when they escaped from Egypt, long ago.

*Everyone drinks from their cup.*

### **Washing our hands**

Question: Why do we wash our hands tonight?

Answer: We wash each others hands as a sign that God washes away our guilt and fear. We also remember that Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the Passover meal, as a sign that we are to serve each other.

*Pass around the bowl and towel, and wash your neighbour's hands.*

### **The Second Cup: the Cup of Suffering**

*Everyone holds up their cup, then puts it down again.*

Question: Why is this night different from all other nights?

Answer: My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt, because of a famine in Canaan, and took refuge there. We were few in number when we went, about 70 people, but we multiplied and became like the stars in heaven. We grew strong and great and powerful and the Egyptians became afraid. They mistreated us and made us suffer terribly. Then we cried to the Lord the God of our fathers and mothers and the Lord heard us and saw our SOITOW, toil and oppression. He brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

God said, "I will pass over the land of Egypt on this night and strike down every firstborn in the land. I will destroy all the Egyptian gods, for I alone am the Lord." The Hebrew people put blood over their doors, and the angel of death passed over and saved them.

And these are the ten signs which God brought upon the Egyptians:

*Everyone dips their finger into their cup and shake a drop of drink onto their plate - one for each plague - to represent the blood of the Egyptians. Say the plague as you do it.*

<u>Everyone:</u>	Blood	Frogs
	Lice	Wild beasts
	Pestilence	Boils
	Hail	Locusts
	Darkness	Death of the firstborn child.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe, because you saved our people from death and captivity.

### **Breaking the Bread**

*The leader brings out the unleavened bread.*

Question: Why do we eat bread with no rising tonight?

Answer: When the Egyptians were struck down, they set the Hebrews free. So they ran, escaping from slavery. But they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise, so they cooked it without yeast, in a hurry to leave.

Leader: We also remember that when Jesus ate this meal for the last time with his friends, he took this bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'This is my body, which is broken for you. Remember me.'

Everyone: **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe, for this bread, and for all good things you give us. Thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus, who gave himself to die to set us free.**

*Everyone eats a piece of the bread.*

### **Bitter Herbs**

The leader takes the herbs.

Question: Why do we eat herbs tonight?

Answer: Their bitter taste reminds us of the pain and suffering of the Hebrew people, and the Egyptians, and of Jesus dying on the cross.

*Pass around the herbs, and everyone eats a little.*

### **Salty Egg**

Question: Why do we eat salty egg tonight?

Answer: This is a sign of grieving. The salt water is like the tears of the people trapped in captivity, and all those who have been oppressed throughout the ages.

*Pass around the bowl of salty egg, and everyone eats a slice.*

### **Meal**

*Eat the main meal together. While eating, tell jokes and stories ... have fun!*

### **The Third Cup: the Cup of Thanks**

*The leader takes the goblet, fills it.*

Leader: This cup is a sign of our thanks to God, from whom all things flow. It is this cup that Jesus took after the meal. He held it up, gave thanks to God, and told his friends, 'This wine is my blood. It is poured out for you, and with it God makes his new Covenant, new agreement with you.'

Everyone: **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe, for your loving kindness to us. Thank you for your son Jesus, who showed us your love and made us your friends.**

*Pass around the cup, and everyone takes a sip. (Or a little is poured into each person's glass.)*

*Sing a song*

### **The Fourth Cup: the Cup of Hope**

*There is one CUP left that no one has drunk from. Someone picks it up after the meal and asks:*

Question: Whose cup is this?

Answer: We saved that cup for the great prophet, who will come back to teach us and save us again. Maybe it will be Elijah! It is a sign of our hope that Christ is still alive. He is here with us, and will one day come back to make the world the place God intended it to be.

Everyone: **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of the universe, for giving us this time together, and for filling us with hope and joy. Please be with us through the next year. Keep us well, and surround us with your peace. AMEN.**