An Interactive SEDER EXPERIENCE

The Haggadah charges us with retelling the Pesach story to the next generation each and every year. Building off the dynamic and multisensory seder that the Rabbis already laid out for us, this collection of seder activities is designed to ensure that participants of all ages will find renewed delight, novel questions and joyful engagement at the Pesach seder.

Our intention, of course, is that you choose the activities that best suit your seder participants, modifying and improvising as you go. While you might choose one activity – or several – from this collection, we anticipate that it will make the evening memorable for your family, friends and guests. We hope that our compilation brings both thoughtful introspection and light-hearted discussion to your seder table this year.

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators, which trains and empowers Jewish studies teachers and experiential Jewish educators to serve as knowledgeable, skilled, reflective and passionate professionals, was delighted to call upon our faculty and alumni to contribute to this collection. From our family to yours - חג שמח!
They Tried to Kill Us, We Won, Let’s Eat:
The Nuanced Nature of the Seder’s Ritual Eating

Contributor: Aviva Lauer Golbert, Acting Director, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

Portion of the Haggadah: Eating/discussing the seder’s ritual food items

Advanced prep time: About 10 minutes to cut out “Table Vote cards” if using; about 1 minute to cut out “Personal Prompts card” if using

Materials needed: “Table Vote cards” if using; “Personal Prompts card” if using

Quick activity overview: Seder participants, using either freestyle sentence prompts or background information cards, are given the opportunity to think about the varied meanings of the seder’s ritual food items, and to share which meaning resonates with them most strongly.

Background information: Full article They Tried to Kill Us, We Won, Let’s Eat on elmad.pardes.org

Instructions for Advanced Preparation:

Print and cut out “Table Vote cards,” found on pp. 3-5. Alternatively, if using, print and cut out “Personal Prompts card,” found on p. 3.

Running the Activity:

Table Vote:

As you go through the seder and reach the turn of each edible ritual item, give its “On the ONE hand...” card to one seder participant to read aloud, and the “On the OTHER hand...” card to another seder participant to read aloud (these cards depict the dual reasoning behind the seder’s ritual food items). Give all of the seder participants a minute to decide which card resonates with them the most, then do a hand-raise vote and see which card gets the majority! Ask a volunteer from each voting group to share why they voted as they did. Feel free to let anyone with a third or fourth understanding of the ritual food item state their piece as well.

Activity Alternatives or Supplements:

Personal Prompts:

As you go through the seder and reach the turn of each edible ritual item, hand around the “Personal Prompts card” to two or more seder participants. Allow each participant to share their ideas, and don’t be surprised when they each answer in a very different way!
On the other hand...

**JITZ | ZEROA**

For me, this food represents:

- What resonates the most for me about this food item is:
- I identify with the people in the exodus narrative through the eating of this food because:

**JITZ | EGG**

This representation teaches me that:

- For me, this food represents:
In Egypt, the Brit Mila is performed at the local Synagogue on the Shabbat before the birth. The baby is held by the mother, and the father holds the knife. When the knife strikes the umbilical cord, the baby cries. The Brit Mila is a symbolic act, representing the end of the baby's connection to the placenta and the beginning of their journey in the world.

On the Third hand... SALT WATER

In Egypt, the parents must have five loaves of bread to break after the circumcision. The bread symbolizes the five loaves and two fish that Jesus fed the crowd. The breaking of the bread is a symbol of the division of the baby from the mother and the beginning of their journey in the world.

On the Other hand... SALT WATER

The salt water represents the sweat and tears shed during the circumcision ceremony. It is a reminder of the pain and suffering that the baby endures during this ritual.

On the One hand... SALT WATER

The k'ara'as is a symbol of the baby's acceptance of the mitzvot. It is a reminder of the baby's commitment to the Jewish people and the Torah. The k'ara'as is a symbol of the baby's connection to the Jewish heritage and the future of the Jewish people.

K'ara'as | SALT WATER

K'ara'as | SALT WATER

K'ara'as | SALT WATER
The ceremony is made to look like the miracle used by
The Egyptians to make bricks’ in and of Israel.

The charoset is made to look like the mortar used by

The Egyptians to make bricks as they were encamped in Egypt.

In the miracle of the plagues, when the water turned into blood,

The Egyptians were so enraged they tried to kill every Jewish boy born during those plagues.

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset

On the other hand...

Mazah

Wine

Charoset
Maggid Truth or Dare

Contributor: Rachel Friedrichs, Director of Pedagogic Support, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators and Pardes Day School Educators Program (Cohort 6)

Portion of the Haggadah: Selected sections throughout maggid

Advanced prep time: 5 minutes to preview the prompts and place them in your haggadah; 6 minutes to print and cut out prompts

Materials needed: Printed versions of the truth/dare prompts

Quick activity overview: Upon the recitation of certain key and pre-selected portions of maggid, the facilitator poses to the seder participants a reflective ‘truth’ question or a silly ‘dare’ challenge connected to that part of the haggadah.

Instructions for Advanced Preparation:

Print and cut out the ‘Truth or Dare’ prompt cards below and place each one in your haggadah at the corresponding page. (Example: Place the ten plagues card in your haggadah at the page where the ten plagues are discussed.)

Running the Activity:

Throughout the recitation of maggid, there will be selected sections of the text where you will engage in a ‘Truth or Dare’ break, which you should explain to participants at the start of the maggid portion of the evening. After reading one of these sections of the text (example: The Four Questions) indicate to the seder participants that it is time for another round of ‘Truth or Dare.’ Ask for a volunteer or call on a suitable participant to participate. Give them the choice of choosing to answer the ‘truth’ question or take on the ‘dare’ challenge. Then read them the appropriate question/challenge.

Activity Alternatives or Supplements:

- Instead of engaging with all eight truth/dare prompts, consider only using the 2–3 most suitable for your seder participants, but then ask multiple people to respond to each prompt.

- To add a greater element of fun and surprise, instead of placing the truth/dare cards in your own haggadah to indicate the appropriate selections of text, place the cards in the participants’ haggadahs. Specifically, place one truth/dare card in one haggadah for each of the selected texts. So, for example, one seder participant would have a card placed between the pages next to the Four Children/Sons, another participant would find a card next to the Ten Plagues, etc. The person who finds the next card in their haggadah either gets to read the ‘Truth or Dare’ prompt for another participant or gets to respond to it.

- So that no one feels put on the spot, you can add a ‘lifeline’ option so that participants can ask...
for help or pass the question/challenge on to someone else all together.

- Instead of Truth OR Dare, you can play Truth AND Dare - having participants both answer the Truth question and take on the Dare challenge.
- Of course feel free to modify, add or subtract any questions/challenges. Make the game your own and experiment with tailoring it to the participants who will be at your seder.

‘Truth or Dare’ prompts:

**The Tale of Rabbi Eliezer…**

**TRUTH**

These Rabbis got so engrossed during their seder they lost track of time. What is your favorite leil haseder story from years past (or from family lore)? Why was that seder so special?

**DARE**

Stay up until it is time to say the morning shema - just kidding! But really, try to lose track of time like these Rabbis did. Don’t look at your watch or ask anyone about the time until the end of maggid.

**The Four Questions**

**TRUTH**

Add your own fifth question to this list - what else do you notice is different about this night? What is different from last year’s seder? What about the seder and Pesach story do you want to know more about?

**DARE**

Recite one of the Four Questions by heart - backwards!

**The Four Questions**

**TRUTH**

Do you think that the ten plagues were a matter of justice or of retribution? Today, which of these do you think you fight for? How so?

**DARE**

Act out (or strike a pose to represent) all of the ten plagues in under a minute.

**Dayenu**

**TRUTH**

What are some things in your life for which you are truly grateful? About which you can say, “I have enough”? How does recognizing the gifts in your life make you feel more free?

**DARE**

Think of your own final stanza to add to the end of the Dayenu - something for which you are truly grateful - and sing it to the tune of Dayenu.
In Every Generation

**TRUTH**

In what way do you really, actually feel that you personally were a redeemed slave, as this portion of the haggadah charges us to do? In what way have you worked towards becoming more free this year?

**DARE**

You can choose someone who will be your “taskmaster.” This taskmaster can ask you for help, to scratch his/her back, pour him/her some water, jump up and down five times, run around the table, etc. This dare can go on for the next 3-5 minutes, or until the next part of the seder, or until you wash your hands.

Four Children/Sons

**TRUTH**

In what ways do you identify with each of the four children/son archetypes? Do different parts of the seder elicit these different sides of your personality?

**DARE**

One understanding for this part of the haggadah is that it is meant to teach us that everyone has a place at the seder and should be included in the storytelling. Choose four seder participants (NOT ones who represent a wise, wicked, simple and/or unable to ask child) and tell them why you are happy that they are included at your seder.

Blessed is the One Who Keeps the Promise

**TRUTH**

We praise God for keeping God’s promise - but God promised us that we would have to suffer before being freed and getting a *rechush gadol* (large fortune)! Share an experience that was really hard (where you suffered!) but in the end there was a great benefit. Was the suffering or difficulty really worth it?

**DARE**

Make a fun promise to someone at the seder table that will help them throughout the evening, and make sure to keep it! (Example: Promise the person next to you that you will make sure their cup of wine is always full, or promise the host/s that you will help clear the table after dinner.)

Pesach, Matzah & Bitter Herbs

**TRUTH**

Rabban Gamliel discusses the three key symbols of the Pesach seder - the shankbone, the matzah and the bitter herb. What symbolic item would be a meaningful addition to your seder? What is the most important theme of the night to you and how might you represent it at the seder table?

**DARE**

Say Pesach-Matzah-Maror 10, 15, or 20 times fast without mispronouncing the words.
The Other Four Questions.....

Contributor: Reuven Margrett, Director of Digital Content, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators, and Pardes Day School Educators Program (Cohort 6)

Portion of the Haggadah: The Four Questions/Mah Nishtana

Advanced prep time: 5–10 minutes to print and cut out slips of paper

Materials needed: Printed versions of the slips of paper, pen or pencil, bag or hat

Quick activity overview: This activity, based on the famous 20 Questions game, will get all generations engaged in the story and customs of Pesach – especially the custom of asking questions! Whereas in the original game a person would choose any person, place or object and others would ask up to 20 yes/no questions to discover what was chosen, in this version, participants choose a slip of paper on which a Pesach-related clue is written, and you only get to ask four questions to guess what it is.

Instructions for Advanced Preparation:

Print and cut out the slips of paper. Place them in a bag or hat and have them at the ready during the seder. There are some blank slips so that you can add your own ideas. To include children who can’t read in the game, there should also be actual objects they can pull out of the bag or hat (if you include an object, then don’t write the same object on a slip of paper).

Running the Activity:

During the seder (before or after the traditional Four Questions) participants will draw a slip of paper out of the bag or hat in turn. They will not show that slip of paper to anyone else but should say aloud which of the four categories the clue fits into (people, place, thing/concept, extra challenge). The other people around the table will ask up to four questions in order to guess what is on the slip of paper. For example: Could it be found in Egypt? [No] Is it found on the seder plate? [Yes] Is it eaten? [Yes] Is it bitter herbs?! [Yes!] When the round is over move on to the next person around the table.

Activity Alternatives or Supplements:

• Rather than give the clue to each person, you could ask one person to leave the room. Share the same clue with everyone at the seder. The person then returns and only they ask the questions, and everyone else responds yes/no.

• If only asking four questions is too hard – increase it to six or eight.

• Let children ask more than four questions.

• If you have a larger group don’t play this game all at once; instead have a few rounds where three or four people have a turn, then carry on with the seder. (This game may get more silly as the seder progresses through the four cups of wine!)

• Have small prizes for children (or adults) who guess correctly.
There are 4 Categories:

- People
- Places
- Things or Concepts
- Extra Challenging

**People**
- Moshe
- Eliyahu HaNavi (Elijah the Prophet)
- First born child
- The son/child who does not know how to ask
- Wise son/child
- Wicked son/child

**Places**
- Egypt
- Red Sea
- Pesach (offering)
- Matzah ball soup

**Things or Concepts**
- Seder plate
- Afikomen
- Elijah’s cup
- Karpas (vegetable)
- Salt water
- Matzah

**Extra Challenging**
- Pharaoh
- Simple son/child
- Zeroa (roasted bone)
- Maror (bitter herbs)
- Beitzah (burnt egg)
- 10 plagues
- Salt water

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rabbi Eliezer</th>
<th>Chad Gadya (one goat)</th>
<th>Rabbi Akiva</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah</td>
<td>Angel of Death</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Kid-Friendly Objects**

- Piece of Matzah
- Vegetable (in a bag)
- Small kiddush cup
- Wild animal figurine (lion, etc.)
- Toy frog
- Small haggadah
- Piece of Matzah

**Elmad TqR**

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Pardes Center for Jewish Education
Four Sons/Children
“Family Portrait” Picture Matching Game

Contributor: Myra Meskin, Pardes Experiential Educators Program (Cohort 3)
Portion of the Haggadah: The Four Sons/Children
Advanced prep time: 10 minutes (printing and cutting)
Materials needed: Printed copies of the included picture sets (number of sets depends on number of seder participants - see below), scissors, paper clips or rubber bands
Quick activity overview: Participants will engage in a picture-matching game together, discussing and analyzing the characteristics of the four children/sons. Through this activity participants will be able to engage with each other in a visual and fun way, to discover new things about the identities of the four children/sons, as well as about themselves as Jewish learners.

Instructions for Advanced Preparation:

Print out enough copies of the included pictures so that there will be one complete set of pictures (24 total) for every 3–4 people who will be at the seder. (Example: If you are having 10 seder participants, print three sets of pictures which totals 72 cards.) Cut out each set of pictures so that it creates a set of four cards; we recommend that you keep each set of 24 cards bound together with a paper clip or rubber band.

Running the Activity:

After reading the section of the haggadah on the four children/sons, split the seder participants into small groups of 3–4 each, and feel free to mix generations! Give each group a full set of 24 picture cards. Instruct the groups to go through each set of four pictures (example: the seasons, body parts, colors, etc.), and divide them into four categories - wise, wicked, simple, unable to ask - based on which image they think best represents each of the four children/sons. For example: When looking at the four animals, is the wicked child better represented by the cat or the snake? When looking at the four body parts, is the wise child better represented by the brain or the heart?

Members of each group should discuss and challenge one another to explain/”drash” their choices. In the end, each group should have a stack of picture cards for each of the four children/sons, made up of one from each type of picture (example: the “wise child” pile might include a picture of a cat, water, green, the number 1, and a brain).

Finally, once groups have divided their picture cards into four categories based on the child/son they represent, invite each group to share their choices with everyone at the seder. While they’re showing their groupings, ask them to explain their logic - why did they make that choice? Once each group has shared, you can open the discussion to further questions: What was the decision your group disagreed on the most? What new characteristics did you learn about each child? For example, a group might explain, “We chose the cat as the wise child, which made me realize that sometimes being smart or...”
knowledgeable about something can also make you seem arrogant and less approachable, like a cat.”

Consider engaging all the seder participants in further follow-up reflection questions:

- Is there one picture/aspect of each of the four children/sons that I can identify with?
- When am I like each of these four children/sons?
- Which self have I been lately?
- Which self am I bringing to our seder table this year?
Do you Kiss Your Matzah?!

Contributor: Mordechai Rackover, Pardes Day School Educators Program (Cohort 3)

Portion of the Haggadah: Motzi Matzah/Eating the Matzah

Advanced prep time: 5–10 minutes

Materials needed: Matzah, lips

Quick activity overview: There is an opportunity to reclaim matzah eating as a transcendent experience rather than one of affliction. Very often we hear complaints about the taste of matzah. But really, eating matzah can be seen as a massive gift.

Running the Activity:

The seder facilitator can read (or paraphrase) the paragraph below to get participants thinking about their matzah a bit differently:

Have you ever noticed what people do when they really love something? They hug and kiss it. Our family and friends are here and we are happy to see them. We hugged and kissed when they arrived. Some people also kiss holy, very special, things. What are some things you have seen kissed? Tzitzit. Tefillin. The Torah. The Mezuzah. Some people kiss holy books when they put them away. Some people kiss bread if they have to put it in the trash! So did you know that some people kiss the matzah!? Matzah is also very precious. It is filled with love.

Ask seder participants to consider the following questions:

• Why do you think the matzah is full of love?
• How might it make us feel to express our love for the matzah?

After giving participants time to think and discuss their ideas, here are some thoughts about the fundamental reasons we eat matzah that you could add to the conversation:

• I eat matzah because my parents and grandparents do/did.
• I eat matzah because the Torah says to do so.
• I eat matzah because it reminds me that God took us out of Egypt, because God loves the Jewish people.

Remind seder participants that when we kiss the matzah we can close our eyes and focus on something or someone we love. We can use that feeling to consider what great kind and loving things that person has done for us. That is a way to prepare to eat matzah with a full heart. For example, one can think about the great love and kindness that God has and does and shares with our people. When kissing and then taking a bite of the matzah, one can combine memory and emotion into the one simple act. The act of remembering that God made us free because of love can be infused into our eating of the matzah. After everyone has kissed and eaten their matzah, consider asking some reflection questions:

• In what ways did it feel different to eat the matzah with a kavanah/focus on love?
• Did the matzah taste different?
• Can we bring this kavanah/focus on love to other parts of the seder?
Master Chef: Charoset Edition

**Contributor:** Stef Jadd Susnow, Pardes Day School Educators Program (Cohort 8)

**Portion of the Haggadah:** Before eating maror

**Advanced prep time:** 30 minutes

**Outside texts used:** Mishna Pesachim 10:3, Talmud Masechet Pesachim 116a

**Materials needed:** Ingredients for charoset (see below), small mixing bowls and spoons

**Quick activity overview:** What is charoset and why does mine taste different than yours? Learn about the origins of charoset and how different communities interpret its recipe. Then make your own!

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**Background Knowledge:**

The mishna in Masechet Pesachim tells us to place charoset on our seder tables. **But what is charoset?** The gemara in Pesachim 116a gives us some clues. First, the mishna told us that we put charoset on the seder table even though it’s not a mitzvah. The gemara then asks: So why do we need it? The answer: As an antidote for the maror (bitter herbs).

But what if charoset actually is a mitzvah, as R. Elazar b’R. Tzadok in the mishna suggests? What’s the mitzvah? R. Levi says: To remind us of the “apple tree” from the verse in Shir HaShirim that alludes to the Israelites leaving Egypt. R. Yohanan says: To remind us of the mortar that the Israelites used in enslavement. Therefore, Abaye tells us that the charoset should be both tart and thick. Tart to remind us of the apple, thick to remind us of the clay. R. Yohanan adds that the spices/seASONING in the charoset are to remind us of the straw, while the charoset reminds us of the clay.

Now let’s create the recipe! To be the antidote to maror, maybe charoset should be sweet. We should include apples, but some suggest that “tapuach” actually referred to some type of apricot. How do we thicken it? And what seasonings remind us of straw?

Jewish communities from all over the world have different charoset recipes, due to differing traditions and availability of ingredients.

Most **Ashkenazi** charoset recipes are made from chopped walnuts or pecans and apples, spiced with cinnamon and sweet red wine or grape juice. Honey or sugar is sometimes added as a sweetener and binder.

In **Sephardi traditions**, charoset is more like a paste, made from raisins, figs and dates.

**Egyptian** Jews make it from dates, raisins, walnuts, cinnamon, and sweet wine.

**Greek and Turkish** Jews use apples, dates, chopped almonds, and wine. Italian Jews add chestnuts.

**Persian** recipes can include bananas, pears, vinegar, pistachios and pomegranate juice.

Some **Spanish and Portuguese** communities, such as the Jews of Suriname, add apricots and coconut.

**Yemenite** tradition calls for ground or whole sesame seeds to be added to the paste of figs, raisins and dates. The charoset can be spiced with cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, cumin and cayenne pepper. Traditionally, full sprigs of marjoram can be added to resemble the straw.
**Instructions for Advanced Preparation:**

Before Seder night, prepare as many of the above mentioned ingredients as you want and put them each in their own serving bowl. Feel free to add your own creative ingredients as well. Be aware that some ingredients, such as cardamom and sesame seeds, are considered kitniyot.

**Running the Activity:**

Now for the fun! On Seder night, before eating the maror, each seder participant (or small group of participants) will be given a small mixing bowl and will create their own unique charoset recipe from the prepared ingredients.

Encourage participants, as they are concocting and mixing, to think about which symbolic meaning of the charoset is most resonant with them. Should it be extra sweet to counteract the maror? Very thick so that it truly has mortar-like consistency? Ask seder participants to get creative: what symbolic value might the crunchy nuts, sharp spices (cayenne pepper!) or fruit juices have?

If your family has a competitive edge, a pre-designated judge can taste all the charoset concoctions and crown a winner – the Master Chef of Charoset!

Everyone then gets to enjoy their own charoset and share with other guests as the seder continues.

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We’d love to hear your feedback. Email us at pesach@pardes.org.il describing your experience using these materials at your seder. As thanks for your comments get 10% off the Pardes Summer Program or Executive Learning Seminar.

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