

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive **SEDER EXPERIENCE**



והגדת לבנך - 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!



Personal Prompt card

- For me, this food represents:
- This representation teaches me that:
- 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:



ביצה | EGG

On the ONE hand...

The roasted egg on the seder plate is associated with the korban chagigah, the shared festival offering, brought by each person making the pilgrimage to the Temple. The seder plate egg itself isn't eaten at the seder, but some people eat other hard-boiled eggs during their seder meal. As a trace of the chagigah offering, the seder eggs are meant to make us feel joyful and festive.



ביצה | EGG

On the OTHER hand...

In Jewish tradition, eggs are often seen as a symbol of death and mourning, or of the life cycle (as they are round, they represent the cyclic nature of life). In this case, one might see a suggestion of the rebirth of a nation out of the ruins of slavery in the seder eggs. In that case, eating eggs at the seder should evoke a cautious yet triumphant feeling... a sense that we can and will rise up, even after so many years of subjugation.



זרוע | ZEREA

On the ONE hand...

The zerea – a roasted bone that is only referred to, but not eaten at the seder – represents the paschal lamb eaten for the first time on that night of anticipation and dread: the night of the plague of the firstborn, the night before the Israelites left Egypt. As such, the zerea recalls feelings of expectation and terror, all at the same time.



זרוע | ZEREA

On the OTHER hand...

The haggadah reminds us that "God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm – zerea netuyah – with awesome power, signs and wonders" (Deuteronomy 26:8). The Talmud, in various places, unpacks that metaphor by using the word zerea to mean strength, defense, or protection. Thus, the zerea is a symbol of God as our very own superhero – and therefore meant to evoke feelings of national pride and perhaps, even, of invincibility.





כרפס | KARPAS

On the ONE hand...

The karpas vegetable is a symbol of spring (appropriate, since Pesach is known as the "holiday of springtime") – the season of rebirth, when a long-shackled nation awoke to a new day. This makes the eating of karpas a hopeful act.



כרפס | KARPAS

On the OTHER hand...

Some see in karpas the Greco-Roman practice of starting a banquet with a course of hors d'oeuvres or finger foods, often dipped in sauces or dressings. On the seder night, we pointedly behave as "b'nei chorin" – free citizens, with the status of nobility. We are no longer slaves, and will act as high-class as we want!



כרפס | KARPAS

On the THIRD hand...

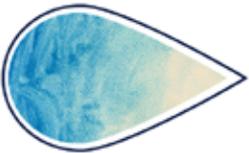
In the Talmud, karpas means parsley or cress or celery leaves – all of which resemble the agudat eizov, the bundle of hyssop, which, in Exodus 12:22, Moses instructs the Israelites to take and use as a sort of paintbrush to apply the blood of the slaughtered paschal lamb to the doorposts and lintels of their homes. This blood sign is to be used as a tip-off to God that these are homes of Israelites, not Egyptians, and thus should be "passed over" during the frightening plague of the firstborn. So eating karpas is meant to evoke the mixed feelings of prospect and desperation that the Israelites must have felt on that last night in Egypt.



מי מלח | SALT WATER

On the ONE hand...

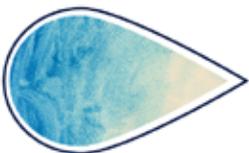
The salt water represents the blood of the paschal lamb offering that was painted on the Israelites' doorposts the night before they exited Egypt. This can be seen as a last chance "Hail Mary" to make sure they were redeemed by God.



מי מלח | SALT WATER

On the OTHER hand...

The salt water represents the sweat and tears shed during centuries of slavery – evoking a somber, grave reminiscence of our ancestors' suffering.



מי מלח | SALT WATER

On the THIRD hand...

The salt water corresponds to that of the Red Sea which the Israelites crossed, miraculously, in order to escape the clutches of their Egyptian captors. Dipping a vegetable into the salt water can almost evoke the heroic Nachshon, son of Aminadav, dipping his toe into the froth, then his foot, then stepping boldly into the sea – leading the people by example into the great unknown, before God split it into two, allowing them to walk through on dry land. Dipping one's vegetable into the salt water mixture can even be seen as a tipping of one's hat, or raising of one's glass, in a toast to the great Nachshon.





תורה | CHAROSET

On the ONE hand...

The charoset, with whatever recipe we use, is always sweet. Perhaps this is meant to evoke a sense of courage and making the best of things in the face of awful persecution – an edible version of the African-American slave songs sung during the workday to make the hours go by more easily. Additionally, the Talmud in Tractate Sotah 11b points out that charoset, made with apples, is also eaten as an homage to the apple trees under which, according to the midrash, the vigorous Israelite women gave birth to their children on their own with only divine help, and to the earth under those trees that swallowed up the children temporarily to hide them from the Egyptians seeking to murder them. Courage and boldness are sweet!



תורה | CHAROSET

On the OTHER hand...

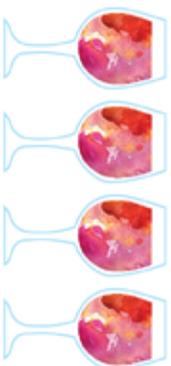
The charoset is made to look like the mortar used by the Israelite slaves to make bricks. In and of itself, that should evoke feelings of sorrow and suffering.



י"ד | WINE

On the ONE hand...

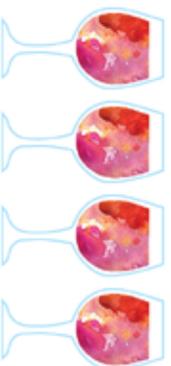
Wine represents joy and celebration – it is what Jewish tradition has us use in every situation of sanctification and marking of a special day or festival. We drink (at least!) four glasses of wine at the seder, increasing our sense of joy and levity. [When we recount the names of the ten plagues, the tradition is to remove a drop of wine from our glass for each plague listed, as we cannot allow ourselves full elation when we know that anyone – even an evil enemy – is suffering.]



י"ד | WINE

On the OTHER hand...

Wine, red wine, at least, can remind us of blood – both the initial plague of blood, which wreaked havoc on Egypt for several days, and the final plague of the firstborn, where all Egyptian firstborn humans and animals were executed. The wine can also remind us of the terribly distressing midrash in which Pharaoh liked to bathe in the blood of the Israelite baby boys.



מצה | MATZAH

On the ONE hand...

Matzah is the "bread of poverty" or the "bread of persecution." It is poor man's food – when one has no time to care for their own needs, one is relegated to preparing the quickest and easiest foods possible. As such, matzah can call to mind feelings of deprivation and even sadness. In some families, when they do yachatz – the symbolic breaking of the matzah in two and putting away the larger piece for later – they retell the story of the family member who, when he received a bit of bread in the concentration camp, would set aside most of the piece, since he never knew if he would get another piece at all tomorrow.



מצה | MATZAH

On the OTHER hand...

Matzah is the "bread of redemption." The haggadah has us ask and answer: "Matzah – why do we eat it? To remind ourselves that even before the dough of our ancestors in Egypt had time to rise and become leavened, the King of kings, The Holy One Blessed be He, revealed Himself and redeemed them." As a symbol of our salvation, matzah is eaten while reclining: on the seder night we are not only free, we are nobility.



Maggid Truth or Dare

15-25m
over course of maggid

7+ yrs

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 cards on pp. 7-8.

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:

מעשה ברבי אליעזר 

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.

מה נשתנה 

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!

עשר מכות 

Ten Plagues

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.

דיינו 

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.

בכל דור ודור
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.

ארבעה בנים
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.

ברוך שומר הבטחתו
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.)

פסח, מצה, ומרור
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.....

5–20m

3+ yrs

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).



Print and cut out the slips of paper on pp. 10–11.

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.
- 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

 <p>Kid-Friendly Objects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piece of Matzah • Vegetable (in a bag) • Small kiddush cup • Toy frog • Wild animal figurine (lion, etc.) • Small haggadah 		
<p>Lavan</p>		
<p>Rabbi Akiva</p>	<p>Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah</p>	<p>Angel of Death</p>
<p>Freedom</p>	<p>Chad Gadya (one goat)</p>	<p>Rabbi Eliezer</p>

Moshe	Pharaoh	Simple son/ child	Wicked son/ child
Eliyahu HaNavi (Elijah the Prophet)	First born child	The son/child who does not know how to ask	Wise son/ child
Seder plate	Zeroa (roasted bone)	Beitzah (burnt egg)	Maror (bitter herbs)
Charoset	Karpas (vegetable)	Salt water	Matzah
Elijah's cup	Pesach (offering)	10 plagues	Matzah ball soup
Afikomen	Egypt	Red Sea	Pesach cleaning



Four Sons/Children

“Family Portrait” Picture Matching Game

🕒 10–15m

👥 4+ yrs

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.



Print and cut out cards on pp. 14–19.

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?
-

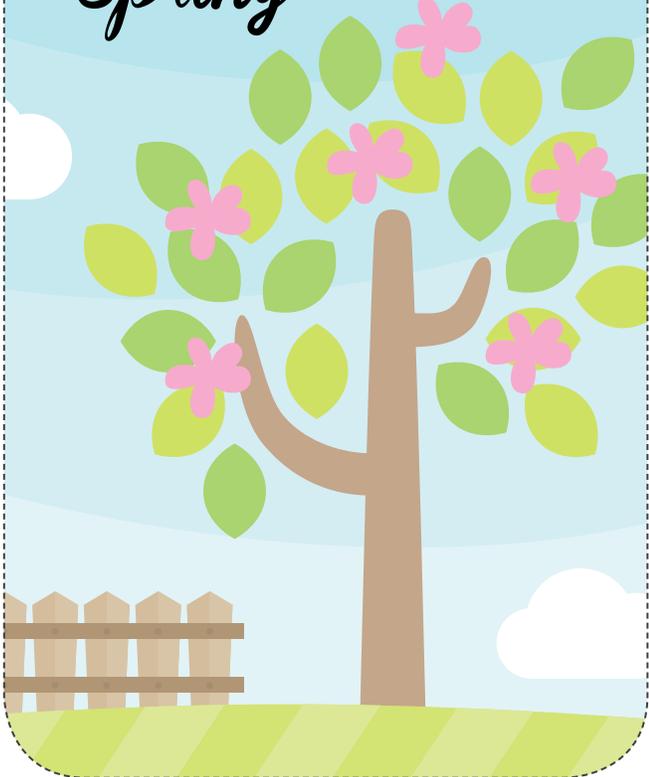
Autumn



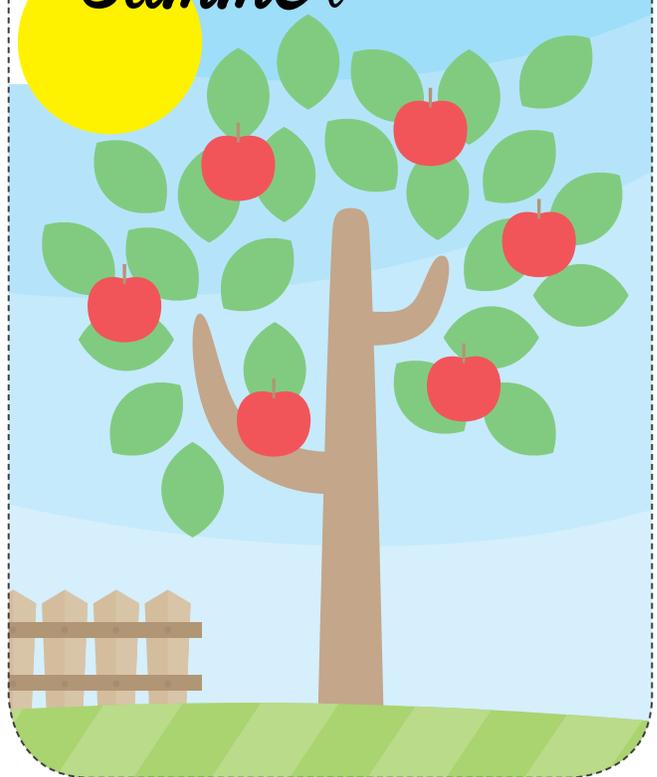
Winter

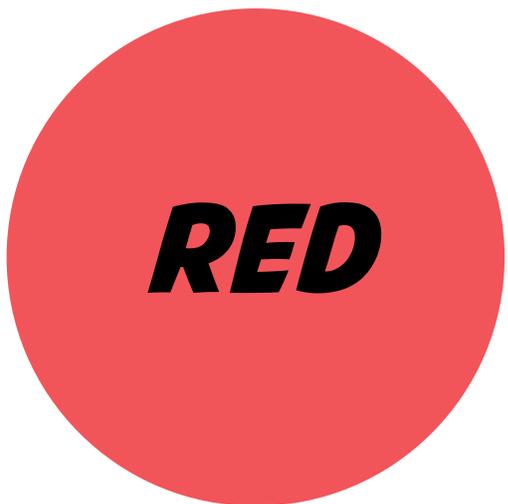


Spring



Summer

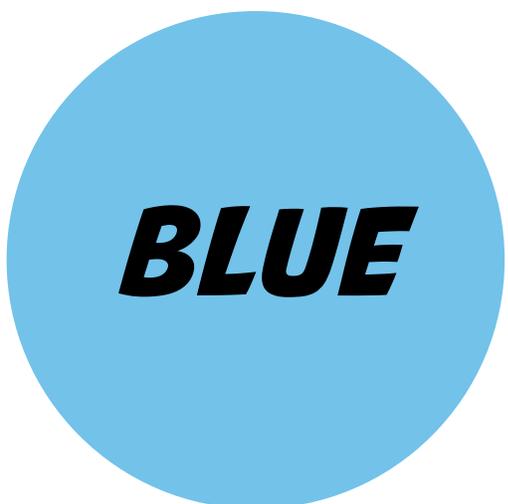




RED



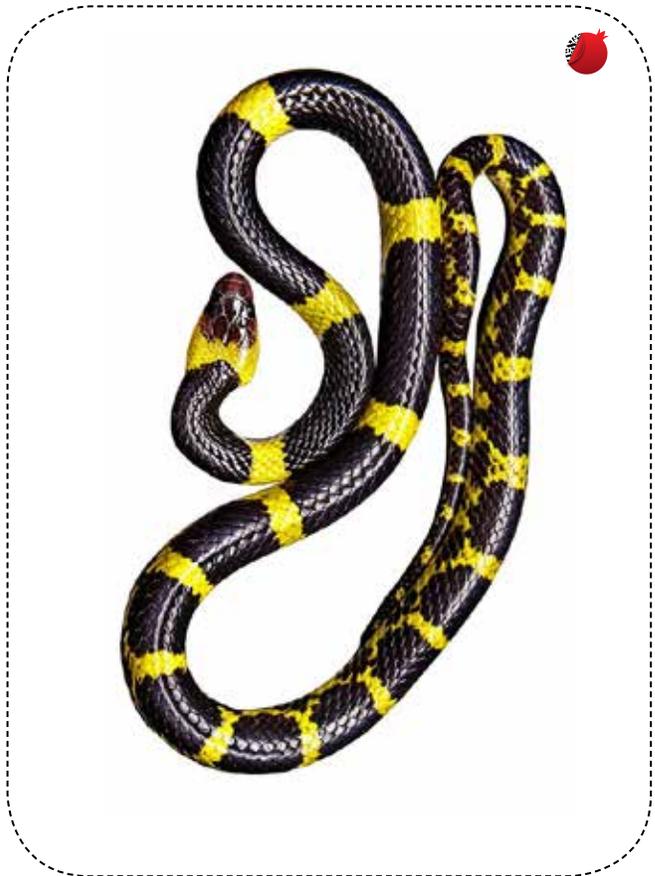
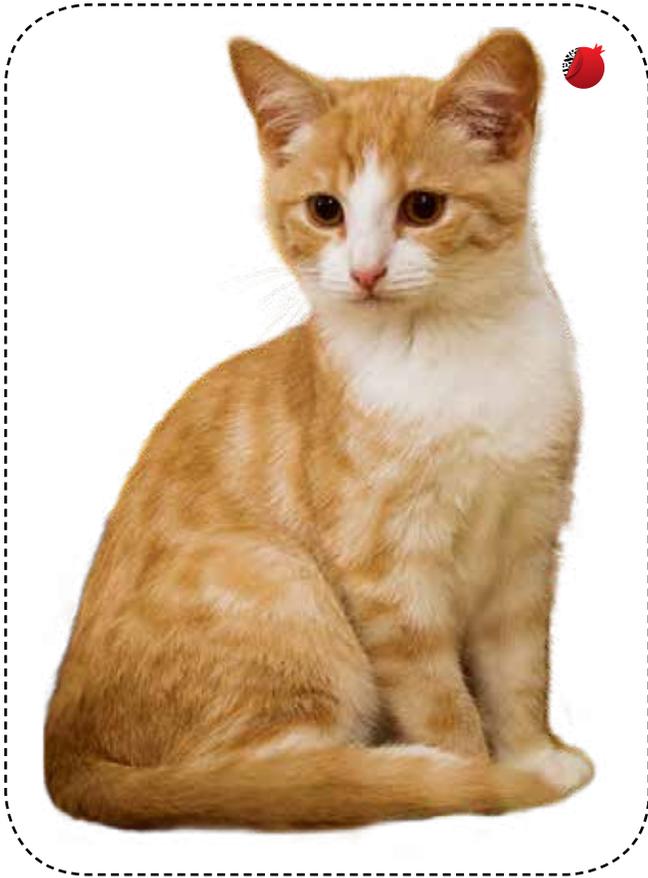
YELLOW



BLUE



GREEN





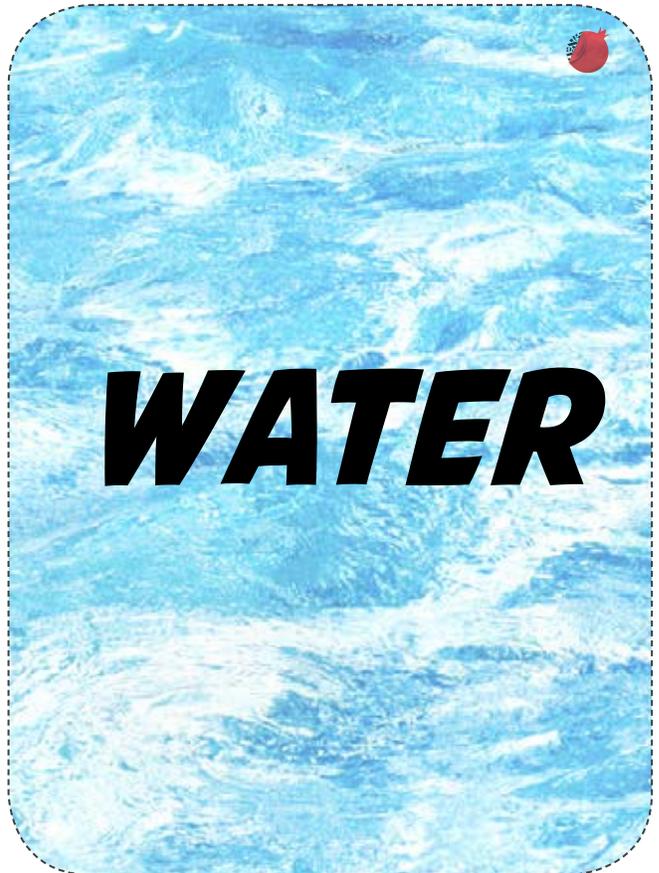
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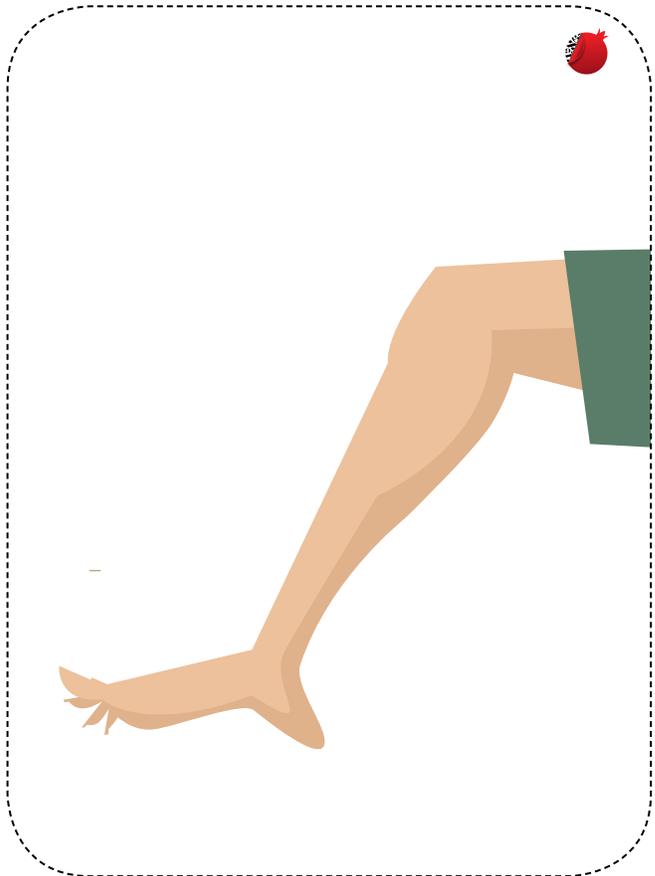
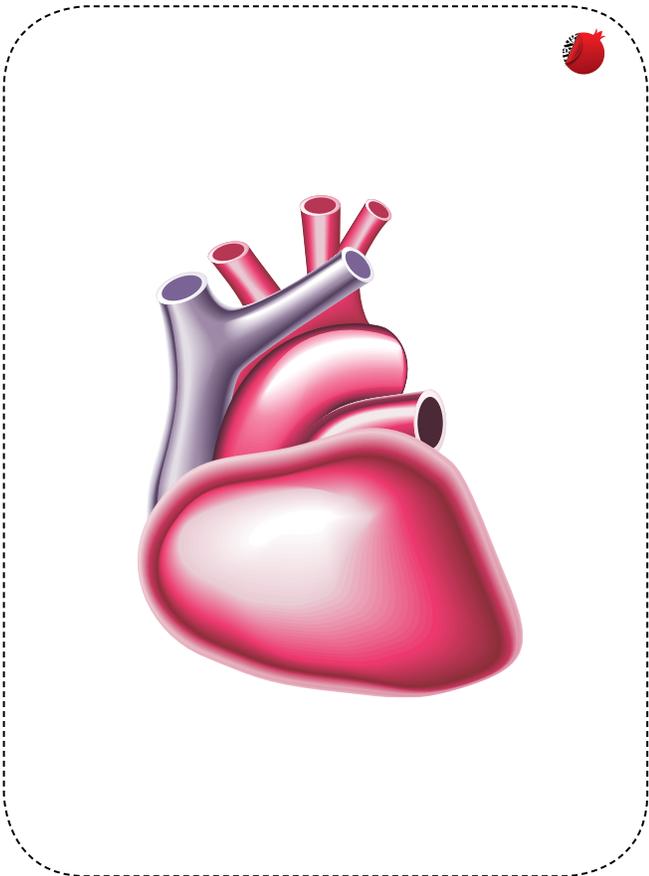
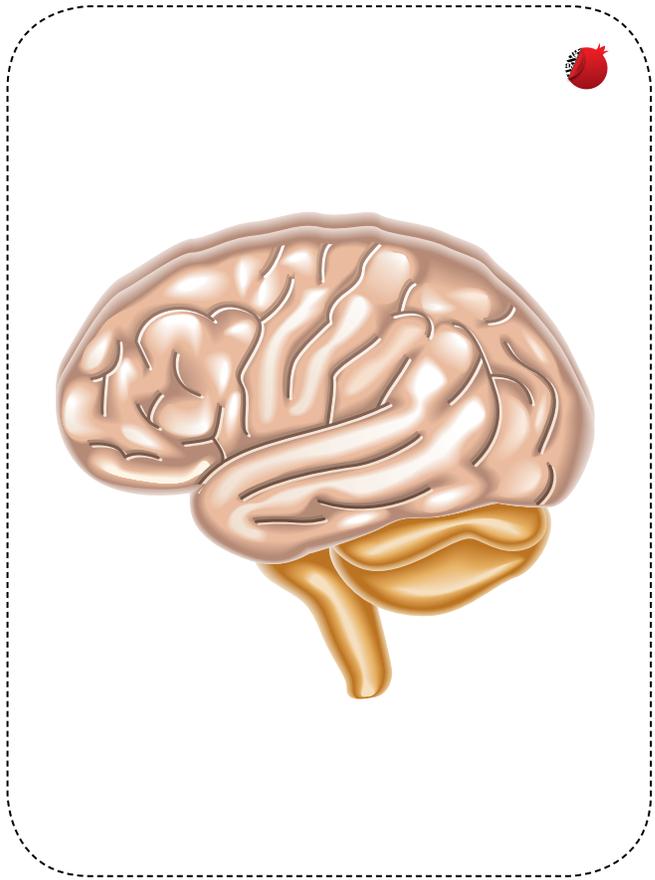
WIND

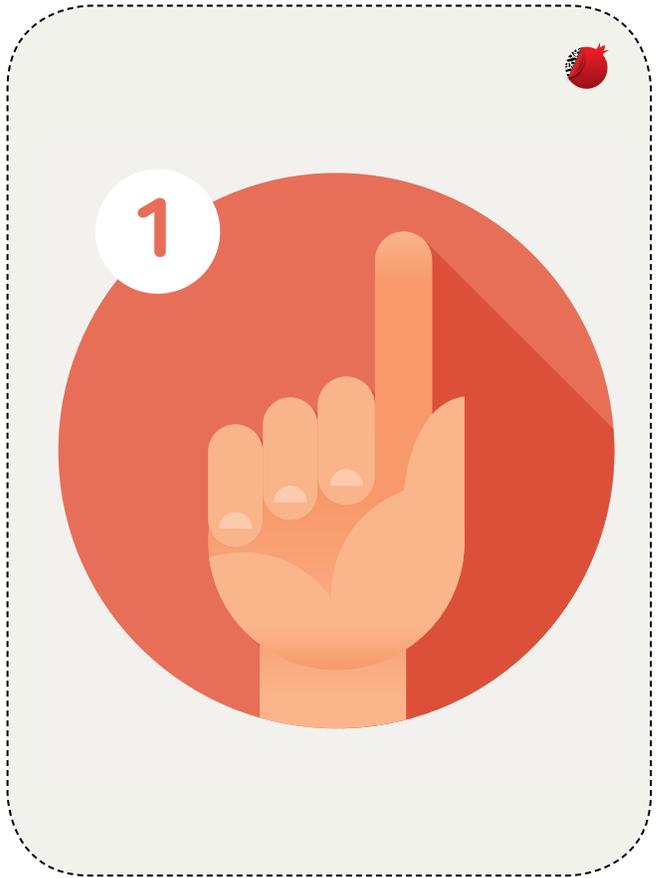
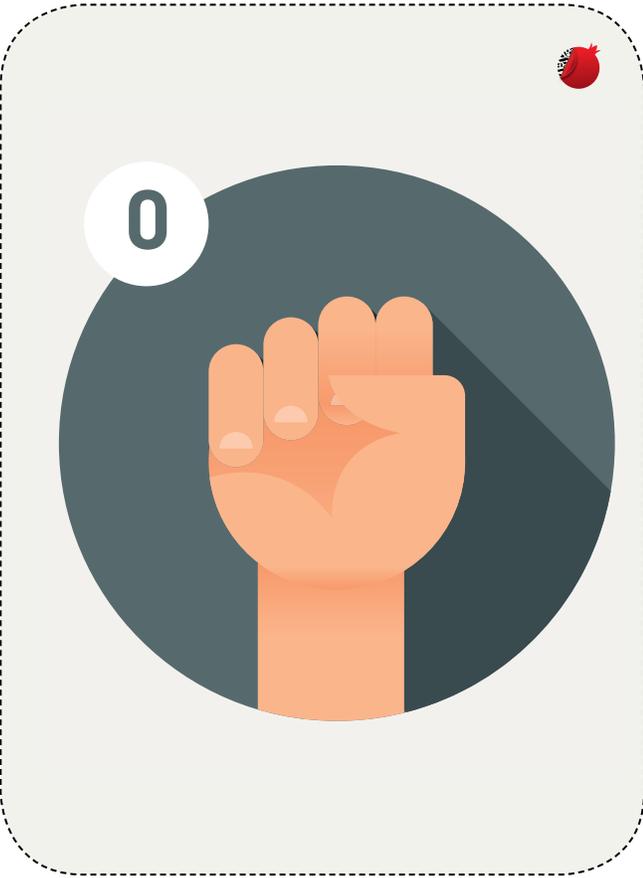


FIRE



WATER





Do you Kiss Your Matzah?!

3-7m

2+ yrs

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

10–15m

2+ yrs

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!

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.

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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