



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night*  
*Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

**“When do we eat?”**

Seder night is a night of questions. Unfortunately, this is one of the most common questions, often the fifth of the “Four Questions,” insinuating that the participant is not only hungry, but disengaged or bored. Use this material as a guide to facilitating fun, meaningful and innovative Passover seders so that “when do we eat?” is only a response to craving bubbe’s chicken soup!

**Intro:**

*Pesachim* (a tractate of the Talmud) 108b-109a teaches us to let the children enjoy in a way that is fun for them. How then, can we make our seders more fun so that both the young and older are interested? *Take on your seder this year and bring along these seder aids to wow your friends and family with creative, fun and engaging ways to re-energize your seder and create new rituals rooted in ancient tradition.*

**Preliminaries/Pre-Seder**

- Bedikat Chametz- involve younger siblings or cousins in a chametz scavenger/ treasure hunt, Marco Polo game, blindfolded chametz chase. Put clues around the house so they can guess where hidden chametz may be. As the older cousin/sibling, hide pieces of chametz for them to find. Offer a prize for the winner. If no young ones, play with your siblings!
- Make your own Matzah (tastes gross, but it is fun) Flour to water: 3 1/2:1. Mix, roll, prick holes, bake 7 min.
- *Haggadah* comes from the word *l'hagid*- to tell. This is a time for your family to share stories, share traditions and exchange thoughts and questions. Don't be shy!
- Ask your family to invest in a few new books to make add a new spin to traditional rituals. See below.
- Include modern commentaries from *My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries Volume 1* by Lawrence Hoffman, encourage participants to add in their own “modern commentaries.”
- Ask your cousins/younger siblings to draw pictures to add to the Haggadah and showcase their art.
- Have people bring their own ritual items so they can make the seder more personal at someone else’s home
- Props- before seder begins raid the 99 cent store for any props you can find- 10 plagues, symbols of freedom, slavery
- Have candy ready to hand out not to those who answer questions but to those who ASK questions. Passover is all about good question asking.



**Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!**



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night*

*Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

- Search your house for costumes for anything related to the Passover story. Put costume pieces on chairs so participants can “get into it”
- Place thought provoking questions on each place setting that relate to Passover such as “Have you ever felt enslaved to something? What is a modern “plague?” Do you think God performs miracles today like God did in the time of Moses? Do the Jewish people have a modern day Moses? If you were Yocheved (Moses’ mom), what would you have done with your baby? Every so often, have each person pose their question and ask for volunteers to answer.
- Ask the host to keep nosh (candy, nuts, dried fruit, pickles, whatever) on the table for those who get antsy or hungry. Throw candy out to whoever asks good questions (not gives good answers- Passover is a night of asking questions).
- Make sure everyone is involved, assign roles and parts to everyone and use place cards at the table for roles
- Include internet resources such as Passover song parodies and jokes

More ideas step by step<sup>1</sup>:

Seder Step	Spice It Up!
<b>Candle Lighting</b>	Mi'dor L'dor- Have the youngest and oldest light together
<b>Shehechyanu</b> - thanks for being here!	Share your favorite Seder/Passover memory
<b>Kadesh</b> - first cup of wine, say the Kiddush for Passover	Hold a grape juice/wine blind taste test contest ?- Why we have wine on Jewish holy days?
<b>Urchatz</b> - handwashing, no blessing	? What is something you wish to “wipe yourself clean” of this year? A bad habit? An obsession or addiction? Bad grades?
<b>Karpas</b> - eat the green vegetable dipped in salt water	? Share your favorite thing about spring, what you look forward to every year
<b>Yachatz</b> - break the middle matzah and hide for Afikoman	? What do you think is “broken” in the world today?
<b>Magid</b> - tell Passover story, Mah Nishtana, 2 <sup>nd</sup> cup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have people who had costumes at their seat (see preliminaries) role play different scenes from the story in <u>first person</u> using feelings- example: “I am Yocheved, it terrified me to send my baby boy into the waters of the Nile” Have the others “interview” that person after they make their statements.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> ?- Pose a question to everyone at the table or choose specific people to respond



**Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!**



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night*  
*Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

- Use props for 10 plagues
- Guess the Plague- act out each plague and have people guess which one it is
- Vote on which plague you think would be the grossest, most painful or which was the worst (excluding the 10<sup>th</sup>). Discuss whether the plagues were too severe and whether the Egyptians as a whole should have been punished for Pharaoh's stubbornness
- Use masks or hats if you can find old Halloween or Purim costumes that relate
- Sing off/movie a thon- think of 10 movies or songs that have a freedom or slavery theme
- Freedom/Slavery- give each person different definitions of freedom and slavery from quotes or the dictionary. Have each person read aloud and compare definitions. Agree or disagree on the definitions and discuss
- Bibliodrama (described above) Become the characters! Assign each person a role of characters and inanimate objects in the story (such as Moshe's staff) and have everyone else interview that person/thing. Example: Moshe's basket- how did it feel to have the weight of the future leader of the Jewish people on your straw? Was it a lot of pressure to make sure that kid made it to safety? Did you purposely float into Bat Par'oh's bathing pool?
- Number count- how are numbers significant in the Hagadah? Have someone be the number spy and point out any time a significant number is mentioned. Give prizes out (Example:. 10 plagues, 4 children, 3 obligations of the seder. 3 matzot, 4 cups). Eventually, end the number game with "Echad Mi Yode'ah"
- The four children - Have parents in the room tell stories of when their children demonstrated characteristics of each of the 4 children, discuss/explain how the four children are in each one of us!
- Seder plate memory game (for young kids) - Study the seder plate, remove one item, have the child guess what was



# Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!



## Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night

Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY

	<p>removed and what it symbolizes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a story about post Exodus oppression/oppression of Jews, 20-21st century slavery. Example: Soviet Jews, Morranos of Spain, African American slavery, Shoah work camps, etc. Discussion- are we ever truly free?</li> <li>• Sing Modern songs relating to freedom (Let My People Go, Miriam's Song, contemporary music)</li> <li>• ? - Labels and stereotypes- Is it fair to label children as explained here in the Haggadah? What does labeling do to someone? When do labels hurt and when do they help? (Example: "special needs")</li> <li>• make sure to sing as often as you can and introduce new tunes and fun parodies found online</li> <li>• If something is unclear in the story, encourage people to question- it's a night of questions!</li> </ul> <p>(Examples: If God performed all these wonders to change Pharaoh's mind, why doesn't God do that today? Does God perform miracles and wonders today?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ?- Identity- Following Exodus, the Jews become a people. Ask questions about Jewish identity such as "What makes you proud to be a Jew? Or What is one thing Jewish you hope your children will value?"</li> </ul>
<b>Rachtzah</b> - handwashing with blessing	Use a special washing utensil that tells a family story- eg. this cup was from my parents first set of dishes when they got married. Share the story
<b>Motzi Matzah</b> - recite hamotzi and "achilat matzah" blessing	Share your favorite family or Passover recipe made with Matzah/matzah meal
<b>Maror</b> - eat bitter herbs and charoset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on the symbolism of the "oys" and "joys" of Jewish life- What are some of your Jewish challenges and joys? Why must we always be reminded of the "oy" with the "joy?"</li> <li>• Taste test- provide 2-3 different recipes of charoset and taste test. Vote on the best one</li> <li>• The Face of Bitterness- which child can make the funniest face after eating the maror</li> </ul>
<b>Korech</b> - eat sandwich of bitter herbs and matza	After the traditional korech is made, offer other things at the table to



**Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!**



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night*

*Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

	make a creative korech (eg. bitter chocolate and matzah) Explain why it's called the "Hillel Sandwich"
<b>Shulchan Orech</b> - tell Bubby her chicken soup is deeelish!	Blind folded taste test- Have the kids guess what traditional food they're eating, discuss favorite family recipes. Example: Who in the family makes the best KFP kugel?
<b>Tzafun</b> - time for the Afikoman!	Give a small, token gift such as candy and have the person who found it choose a Tzedaka to support. Have the children give gifts to each other for participating
<b>Barech</b> - benching- 3 <sup>rd</sup> cup	Ask the patriarch or oldest person to lead in benching
<b>Hallel</b> - sing your heart out- time for Psalms and praises	Encourage all to finish the second half of the seder by assigning roles and parts. Examples: give each person an assigned song to lead, add in your own modern songs of praise or seder parodies, include Passover jokes, stories of past seders, etc. to involve others.
<b>Nirzah</b> - conclusion- next year in Jerusalem!	More singing! Include Hatikvah and songs of Jerusalem Share a favorite memory/photo of Jerusalem What you imagine Jerusalem to look like Wishes/prayers for Israel Sing Hatikvah

**Books:**

- Lawrence Hoffman, *My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries Volume 1*
- Noam Zion and David Dishon, *A Different Night: a Family Participation Hagadah* (leader's guide also available)
- Noam Zion, *A Night to Remember - A Hagadah of Contemporary Voices*
- Joy Levitt, Michael Strassfeld, Jeffrey Schrier, *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah*
- David Arnow, *Creating Lively Passover Seders*



**Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!**



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night  
Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

### **Website Recommendation:**

A great website for Passover song parodies, tips for koshering your home, explanations, seder resources, new Kosher for Passover foods, humor, recipes and more:

[www.kosher4passover.com](http://www.kosher4passover.com)

### **Passover Art to try with Younger Siblings/props to use even with adults:**

- Afikoman bag or matzah cover
- Giant Kos Eliyahu
- Decorated pillow case for reclining pillows
- Felt finger puppets for seder participants to re-tell the Exodus story
- Decpraye a wooden spoon for Bedikat Hametz
- Bag of plagues from 99 cent store
- Moses, Miriam, Aaron, Yoheved costumes
- Burning Bush prop
- Place cards/mats with parts assigned (including a special one for Elijah!



**Don't be a Slave to Your Seder!**



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night  
Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

### **Bored Already? Ten Quick Cheesy (but fun!) Ways to Enhance your Seder**

10. Two Words: Plague Charades- go for it!
9. voices- narrator voice, Moses voice, God voice, whatever!
8. Go around the table mentioning which of the 4 sons you'd like to date/have dinner with/debate/get to know better
  7. Sing Dayanu to the tune of Labamba (Di, Di, Di, Di Di Aynu!)
  6. To get kids really asking questions, cancel Seder... in favor of a nap
  5. Come up with creative alternative uses for each of the seder plate items
  4. Promise \$1000 to the first kid who finds Moshe's name in the Haggadah twice (hmmm...)
3. Ask, "If you were an Egyptian stranded on an island, and you could only have one plague for the rest of your life which one would it be?"
  2. Haggadah game of "Taboo" (taboo words: Slaves, Free, Plague, Outstretched)
  1. Spontaneous Seder Table Wave

### **Debate it: *Would You Rather?* Passover Version**

Eat only Marror the rest of your life or drink only saltwater?

Be covered from head to toe in boils OR covered from head to toe in lice?

Lose 1 of your ten pieces of bread during bedika OR find ten pieces of bread during chol hamoed? (!)

Recline whenever you eat or dip everything you eat?

Die from extreme Marror Heart Burn or from Matzah Choking?

Hit the Dog OR Bite the Cat?

Have to taste Manna nowadays or eat Treif on Pesach?

Still be in Egypt OR still be in school 100 hours a week?

Drink 4 cups of Maror juice or 10 drops of blood?

Find the Afikomen next to chometz OR never find/eat the afikomen ever?

Eat kosher for Passover all year round OR eat exclusively bread on pesach?

Eat only matzah brei all year OR eat only cholent?

Have freed the Jews but brought them to Uganda OR Enslaved the Jews but enslaved them in Israel?

Live always in Darkness but be rich OR live always in light but be poor?

Have a 9 hour seder with gourmet food at end or a 1 hour seder with just OK food?



*Creative Ways to Beat out Boredom on Seder Night*  
*Materials prepared by Amy Dorsch for USY*

Have the 4 sons as your children, OR have an only child that is wise?

Invent the Glow in the Dark Goggles for Darkness OR Find the Cure for Pestilence?