

# Lesson Guide: Class Seven

## Passover: Exodus and Us

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Miller Introduction to  
Judaism Program

OF AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY



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## Lesson Guide for Class #7: Passover: Exodus and Us

### Class Summary:

Study of the Passover narrative, emphasizing its importance to shaping Jewish identity and values. Examination of the Passover dietary laws. Experiential study of the rituals of the Passover Seder.

**Note:** When possible, classes should engage in a model Passover Seder, allowing them to experience and practice the Passover traditions.

### Objectives:

*Students will:*

- Understand the details of the Exodus narrative and its significance for shaping Jewish identity and ethics.
- Become familiar with the basic laws on what can and cannot be eaten on Passover and how to prepare a home for Passover.
- Practice the rituals of the Seder so that they can feel comfortable participating fully in Seders and take personal ownership over this ritual.

### Key Vocabulary:

- Elijah's Cup
- Haggadah
- Hametz
- Charoset
- Karpas
- Kitniyot
- L'Shanah Ha'ba'ah B'Yerushalayim
- Maror

- Matzah
- Pesach
- Seder
- Zeroa

**In-Person Teaching Materials:**

- Room and door signs
- Name tags and pens
- Chalkboard, white-board, or large flip chart
- Colored markers or chalk
- On One Foot course books or printed PDFs
- Projector, computer & screen if using Class Slide Decks, On One Foot videos

**For a Model Seder:**

- Haggadot (We recommend Noam Zion & David Dishon, *A Different Night: Compact Edition* for its completeness combined with accessibility.)
- Seder Plate
- Matzah
- Wine or grape juice
- Karpas (parsley or other green vegetable)
- Salt water
- Maror
- Charoset
- Roasted Bone
- Hardboiled Egg
- Plates, cups, napkins, forks

**Online Teaching Materials:**

- Zoom Pro Account
- PDF of On One Foot chapter
- PowerPoint Class Slide Deck
- Appropriate background, lighting, and sound setup.
- We recommend staging a model Passover Seder in your teaching space. Refer to the list above for supply list.

**Set Induction: “Why Is This Night Different from All Other Nights?”**

According to the 2013 Pew Study of American Jews:

- 1 in 10 American Jews regularly attend synagogue

- 1 in 4 American Jews regularly light Shabbat candles
- 1 in 2 American Jews regularly fast on Yom Kippur
- **3 in 4 American Jews attend a Passover seder!**

Passover is clearly the most observed ritual in American Jewish life. Brainstorm as a class what are some possible reasons why:

- *The story is uniquely compelling and relevant*
- *The ritual can be done at home rather than in the synagogue*
- *The ritual takes place over a shared meal*
- *Ritual can be customized (short seders and long seders, kid-friendly, etc.)*
- *Ritual is uniquely interactive, rather than frontal, etc.*

The big question that we will explore in this session is what makes Passover different from all other holidays. What is it about this observance is uniquely powerful in shaping Jewish life and consciousness?

### **Activity: “Exodus Timeline”**

The Exodus story has already likely been discussed twice in the course (Class 1 & 4). This allows them to use what they already know to review and generate a timeline for themselves.

Divide the class into small groups (if teaching online, use breakout sessions) and have them fill in, to the best of their ability, the blank timeline found in the coursebook. They can use “Exodus in Seven Chapters” by Rabbi Rachael Barenblat, found in the coursebook, for reference if they get stuck.

Bring the class together and review the timeline using the PowerPoint slides to fill in gaps and answer questions.

### **Lecture: “Spiritual Spring Cleaning”**

The Jewish Tradition uses two primary rituals to remind us of the Exodus: the Seder and the removal of chametz. As was discussed in Class 4 – the holidays are experiential. Therefore, removing chametz and subsiding on matzah for the holiday is a way of re-enacting our ancestors' Exodus.

Provide an overview of the basic rules of hametz. Discuss what foods fall under the category of hametz (any product made from wheat, barley, oats, spelt, or rye) and

what falls under the category of kitniyot (legumes, corn, rice, etc.). Discuss the basics of how to kasher a kitchen for Pesach (all hametz items are removed, and surfaces are carefully cleaned and covered. For cooking or serving utensils, metal items may be cleaned by boiling or heating, glass by soaking, and porous materials like ceramic and wood must be traded out for the duration of the holiday).

It is helpful to distribute a copy of the Rabbinical Assembly's annually published Passover Guide (available at [rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide](http://rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide)) since there are more details than you can meaningfully cover in this short time. As with everything, it is important to emphasize that one can gradually take on this practice because Passover can be very intimidating for newcomers!

## **Break**

### **Experience: “Model Seder”**

If you are teaching in-person, we strongly encourage you to create a model seder for your students. A supply list is provided above. A model seder is a significant undertaking, so pre-planning for assistance in purchasing, preparation, and clean-up is essential!

There should be Haggadot to distribute to all students. We recommend *A Different Night: The Compact Edition*, edited by Noam Zion and David Dishon.

As with Class 5 (Shabbat), if you are teaching online, we recommend staging a Passover Seder table in your teaching space so that rituals can be demonstrated rather than just discussed. To add to the experience, you can also send out a shopping list ahead of time and have students purchase basic Seder supplies and join with you in the rituals from home.

There are many ways to approach a model seder: It can be entirely run like a regular learners' seder, going through the steps, and providing additional explanations and commentary. Or you can go less strictly according to the Haggadah and do more lecture/discussion at the table, using the food and rituals as “props.” Do what feels natural to your teaching style.

Major items to cover:

- Define the terms *seder* and *haggadah*.
- Review the fifteen steps of the seder and the items on the seder plate.

- Practice first sentence of Kiddush (*borei pri ha-gafen*) on cup of wine and talk about the four cups.
- Discuss and dip karpas in salt water and practice the blessing.
- Do some portion of the Maggid section (At minimum, The Four Questions and Dayyenu. End by discussing the line, “In every generation, a person is obligated to see themselves as though they left Egypt”).
- Discuss and eat matzah and practice the blessing
- Discuss and eat maror and practice the blessing.
- Discuss charoset and eat Hillel sandwich.
- Search for the afikomen.
- Discuss Cup for Elijah and sing *Eliyahu ha-Navi*
- Discuss *L’Shanah ha-ba’ah B’Yerushalayim*

Some additional suggestions:

- Have students engage in chavruta during the Maggid section on the Michael Walzer Exodus and Revolution text, found in the coursebook, together with the journaling questions. Then discuss the line *b’chol dor vador* and discuss the possible connection between Jewish leadership in social justice movements and the ritual of retelling the Exodus story.
- Add a non-Ashkenazi element by suppling green onions and have the students try the Persian tradition of hitting each other with onions while singing Dayyenu.
- Follow the Hasidic custom of leaving the Cup for Elijah empty, and close the model seder by passing it around and asking each person to contribute the remaining wine in their cup to fill it and express one word that represents what “redemption” would mean to them.
- If possible, provide dinner, not just the symbolic foods, and use this as an opportunity for class bonding over a meal

## Wrap Up and Reflection

*Journal Prompt (for use in conjunction with the Exodus and Revolution text: “What elements of my society are Egyptian?” “What is my vision for a Promised Land” “Who are my marching partners?”*

Instructors should be checking for understanding throughout the lesson and regularly pausing for questions. However, it is essential to do so at the close of each class. In addition to using the journal prompts included in coursebook, the instructor may wish to do a group check for understanding using one of the following methods:

- As a whole class, have students go around and briefly state/write in chat one thing they learned/that surprised them/that interested them in class.
- Have students divide into pairs and share with their partner something they learned/that surprised them/that particularly interested them.

If you want to check that the students understand primary content, at the end of this class, students should be able to define seder, haggadah, hametz, and kitniyot, as well as be able to state the basic narrative of the Exodus story and name the items on the Seder plate. Students should also be able to articulate why Passover is such a significant holiday and what they feel is its contemporary relevance.

### **At Home Work**

Students should be told to watch the "Exodus and Us" video and answer the review questions and journal prompt.

# The Basics: How to Conduct a Spiritual Spring Cleaning

## Hametz

Leavened items (or products from grains, including wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye, which could become leavened) which are forbidden to eat, or even have in one's possession, during the holiday of Pesach.

## Kitniyot

Additional grains and other foods forbidden by the Ashkenazi rabbis (though not the Sephardim) during Passover, including corn, soy, rice, and beans.

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Metal pots and pans and utensils are cleaned by:

Most metal pots and pans can be kashered by thorough cleaning and then being immersed in boiling water.

Baking dishes and grills are cleaned by:

Metal baking dishes and grills can be kashered by thorough cleaning and then being heated until red hot (when a piece of paper would singe just by touching it.)

Counter tops, ovens, and other spaces are cleaned by:

Counter tops should be washed down with boiling water and covered. Ovens should be thoroughly cleaned, and then either set on a self-cleaning cycle, or left on at maximum temperature for at least one hour.

The following cannot be cleaned for Passover:

Ceramic, wood, or other porous materials cannot be kashered for Passover. Additionally, items that cannot be thoroughly cleaned or immersed in boiling water cannot be kashered for Passover.