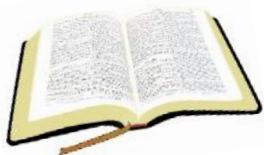


GOD'S SPRING FESTIVALS—PART 1: PASSOVER

A STUDY GUIDE FOR PARENTS TEACHING THEIR CHILDREN GOD'S WAY

Artist: James Mitchell—
Kingston, Jamaica

“AND THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES, SAYING, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: “The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.”’ (Leviticus 23:1-2). In that incredible moment, God announced that He wanted His people to keep His feasts and to keep them every single year! Through these special feasts, or holy days, He wanted to teach His people the wonderful and exciting plan He has for every human being that has ever lived! Each year, God’s feasts give us time to reflect on God’s plans while also giving us a reason to celebrate! God set up the feast calendar so the first feasts in His plan happen in the springtime. Like the season of spring where the flowers and trees begin to grow again after a long, cold winter, God knew it would be the perfect time to begin a perfect plan.



THIS STUDY GUIDE is written for the purpose of helping parents teach their children vital Biblical topics in a focused, easy-to-follow format. Each section is not meant to be taught in one lesson, rather the topics are organized so parents can choose specific areas of focus and gear lessons toward the learning styles and ages of their children. Each topic is presented in a straightforward manner with accompanying verses for study.

Each lesson packet includes memory verses, questions for meaningful discussion, and activities (added at the end of the packet). Also, though some things may be labeled as Level 1, 2, or 3, the activities, questions, and scriptures for memorizing can be used to fit the needs and learning levels for children of all ages. Enjoy!

PASSOVER—A REMINDER OF GOD’S LOVE



The first festival in God’s plan is Passover. It is a reminder that God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. But why did Jesus Christ have to die? Why is Passover the first festival in the year? Why is it called Passover? Let’s see what the Bible has to say about this special event and why we keep it.

PASSOVER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 23 lists all the Feasts of the Lord, and the first one listed after the Sabbath is Passover.

Read Leviticus 23:5

What elements do we learn about the Passover in this verse?

- It is one the 14th day of the first month (on God’s calendar)
- It is at “twilight” (just after sunset)
- It is called “The Lord’s Passover”

We can find out more about the Passover in another part of the Old Testament where it is first mentioned. The book of Exodus gives us the story of the Israelites and how God brought them out of Egypt.

If you remember, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The King of Egypt (called the Pharaoh) was very cruel to them and made them work very hard. God sent Moses to demand that the Pharaoh let the people go! But Pharaoh would not listen. God sent plagues on the Egyptians because He wanted to teach Pharaoh a lesson and to show His mighty power.



Think for a moment:

*Who is the firstborn in your family?
Who are some other people in your
extended family or in your friends’
families who are firstborn?*

After nine terrible plagues, God had one more plague in mind which He knew would make Pharaoh change his mind to let the people go. All the firstborn of every family in the land were going to die. God told the Israelites they had to prepare for this last plague, and He had very specific instructions for them so the firstborn in their families would not die.

(If you don’t remember what happened to the Israelites, take some time to read Exodus 1-11 before you continue the lesson).

Read Exodus 12

We find out some very important things about how the Israelites kept the Passover in this chapter. Here are some of the things we learn:

- It is kept in the first month of the year
- A lamb had to be chosen, kept for a few days, and sacrificed
- The blood of the lamb was to be painted on the doorposts
- They were to use hyssop to paint the blood on the doorposts
- They were to eat the roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs
- It is a memorial
- It is called Passover because God would “pass over” the houses of those who put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts
- It is a feast to be kept for an “everlasting ordinance”

Other Passovers in the Old Testament

Exodus isn't the only place in the Old testament where we find the Passover being kept. Here are some of the times the Bible records His people keeping this special memorial:

- The Israelites at Mount Sinai (**Numbers 9:1-5**)
- The Israelites before the Battle of Jericho (**Joshua 5:10-11**)
- King Hezekiah after he cleansed the temple in Jerusalem (**2 Chronicles 30**)
- King Josiah, who kept a Passover like no other since the time of Samuel (**2 Chronicles 35**)
- Ezra and the Jews who returned from captivity to Jerusalem (**Ezra 6**)

PASSOVER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we read about Passover in the New Testament, there are some differences from the way the Israelites kept it.

Read Luke 22 and John 13

From these accounts we find that Christ replaced some symbols for the Passover.

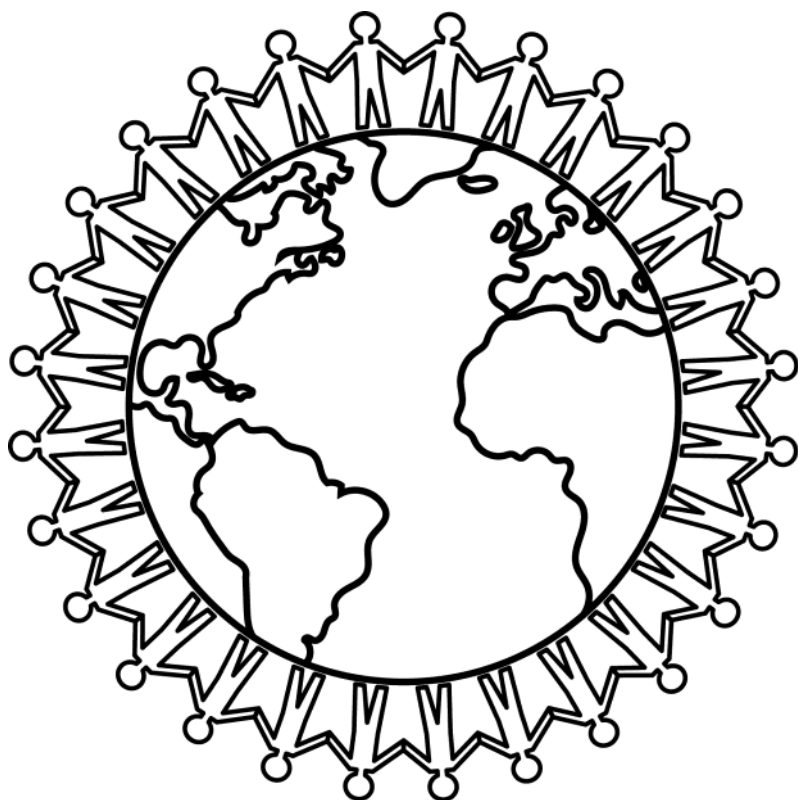
- Bread
- Wine
- Foot-washing



Jesus Christ taught His disciples a different way to keep it, using different symbols than what the Israelites used in Egypt. Why did He do it differently? In order to understand what the symbols in the Passover mean, and why God has us keep the Passover as the first festival in His plan, we need to start way back at the beginning...in fact, we need to start BEFORE the beginning.

THE CREATOR STARTS THE PLAN

Every plan has a first step--something that needs to happen at the beginning to get the plan going. At the very beginning--before the world existed--God had to create a plan. He decided what He wanted to do, then decided what the very first step would be to make His goal happen. So, what did God decide He wanted to do? He wants to build a family! He wants to have children and have the biggest, most wonderful family that has ever existed! To do that, He needed a very special plan.

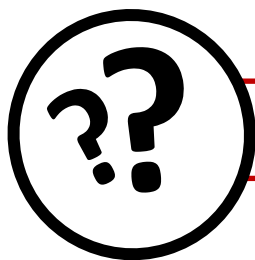


The Family of God

Before the world was created there were two beings in the family of God--God who the Bible also calls the Father, and "the Word" (this translation comes from the Greek word *Logos*).

The Being called "the Word", or the *Logos*, was the One who created the world when He spoke. The Bible tells us the *Logos* was also the Being who became Jesus Christ. These two Beings have always existed (Psalm 90:2), and it was before the beginning of creation that They created the plan.

Read John 1 and 1 Timothy 1



Stop and think: *Why do you think God decided He wanted a family?*

A Big Problem

When God and the Word worked on putting together the plan for a family, They knew they wanted Their children to be like Them. Before They created humans, They had already created lots of different beings, like the angels, for example, but the angels and the other creatures were not made to be like God. They were given different roles and responsibilities, but they weren't God's children. The Bible defines God by a particular characteristic--that characteristic is love. In order for God to have children like Him, their character would need to be like God's--completely filled with love.

Read 1 John 4:8

God had created a special angel who He named “Lucifer” which means “bringer of light”. Lucifer was a beautiful being, until he started to think of himself more highly than he ought. He wanted to take over God’s throne, so he and many of the angels God created rebelled against God and decided they no longer wanted to listen to Him. They had become evil, so God threw them out of Heaven and changed Lucifer’s name to “Satan” which means “adversary”. Satan, and the angels who followed him, rejected God and turned away from the way of love. God knew that in His plan to build a family He needed to make sure that His children would want to follow the way of love and never reject it to become evil like Satan. But how could God make sure that wouldn’t happen?

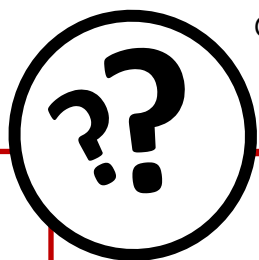
The Power of Choice

Choices, choices! We make choices every single day! What choices have you made today? What about in the past few hours? Past few minutes? Are you making any choices right now?

No matter what we do, we can’t get away from the fact that we have many, many choices to make. As humans we get to decide all kinds of things...what we are going to eat, what we will wear, what time we want to wake up in the morning, what our favorite movie is, how many times we are going to throw the stick when our dog wants to play fetch. God wants us to make decisions. He made us that way on purpose, because there is one particular, very important choice that He won’t ever make for us.

Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20

What is the important choice that God is giving us? It is the choice between life and death. We must decide whether we will follow God’s way of love and live forever and ever or if we will reject God to follow the path of evil that Satan took which ultimately leads to eternal death. Life or death? It’s a choice every person has to make, because God wants to know if we really want to be in His family or not. So, you might ask, what does this have to do with the Passover? Just wait and see!



Think for a Moment:

What were the names of the two trees? What happened to Adam and Eve after they made their choice?

The First Humans Choose...

When God created the first man and woman, He already had His plan ready. Something had to happen before He could act out Step 1 of His plan. The two people He made, Adam and Eve, had to make a choice--the same choice every human being has to make. Would they choose life--to follow God’s way to be His children forever? Or would they choose death--to do their own thing, to reject God’s law of love and practice evil instead?

Read Genesis 3

So, what happened to the first man and the first woman that God created? Because of that one decision in the Garden, will they not be able to be in God’s family? Don’t worry! Remember, God made a very careful plan, and this is where Step 1 of the plan comes into action.

A Serious Penalty

When the man and woman chose to eat from the forbidden tree, they were disobeying God. Remember, He had told them not to eat from that tree. When we disobey God it is called sin. The Bible tells us that sin means breaking God's law.

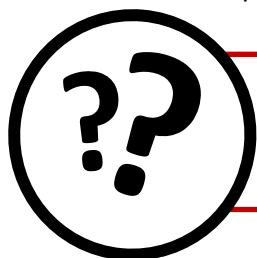
Read 1 John 3:4

When someone sins, there is a penalty or punishment for what that person has done. For example, if you are angry with your brother and decide to hit him, when your mother finds out what you have done, you know there are going to be consequences and you should be punished. Why? Well, if there weren't any consequences and your mother just allowed you and your brother to hit each other anytime you felt like it, there wouldn't be peace in your house. In the end, you and your brother would end up getting hurt which would be very sad. Thankfully, because your mother loves you and doesn't want you to get hurt, she has a rule that if you hit your brother you will get punished. The punishment is meant to keep us from making the same bad choice again.

It is similar with God. When people disobey Him, the world becomes a very dangerous and scary place. God wants children in His family who will live in peace so they can be safe and happy, and that's why there is a punishment for those who choose not to follow God's laws.

Stop and Think:

What are some of God's laws? Why does God give us laws to follow?



Consider this: *Can you think of how laws keep people safe and happy? Can you think how the world would be different if everyone followed just one of God's commandments?*

Read Romans 6:23

The Bible tells us that the penalty for sin is death. When we make choices to disobey God's law, we are choosing the way that leads to death. When God made His plan, He saw that there was going to be a problem—human beings make mistakes easily and choose the wrong way a lot. Just like Adam and Eve who sinned against God's command in the Garden, every human being has sinned (except for one, who we will talk about in a minute). So, wait...if everyone has sinned, and the penalty for sin is death, does that mean no one will get to be in God's family? Thankfully, God thought of this as He was planning. Since He wants as many children in His family as possible, He made Step 1.

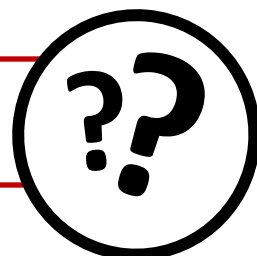
STEP 1: THE CREATOR PAYS THE PENALTY

What is love? Not the mushy, fairytale kind of love that you might see in romantic movies. We are talking about TRUE love. If you are able to understand what true love is, then you can begin to understand who God is. Step 1 of God's plan is all about true love. God knew from the beginning that human beings were going to make bad choices and sin, and something would need to be done to keep them from receiving the penalty of death. Someone would have to die to pay for their sins. It would have to be someone who never sinned. Who would that be?

Read John 3:16

His own Son. His only Son. And who is God's only Son? The Logos! The One who spoke at the beginning and brought forth the creation with His mighty voice! The very Being who breathed into man the breath of life. The One who spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He was the One who came to live on earth as a human, and His name is Jesus Christ. God and the Logos decided that in order to save their future children from the penalty of death, God would send the Logos, as His Son, to live a perfect life of obedience as a human being and then die to pay the penalty for our sins. God loved His children so much that in His mercy and love He was willing to do this incredible thing!

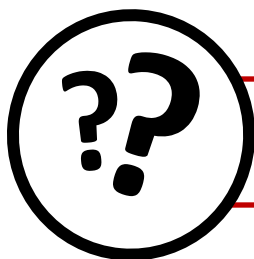
Ponder this: *How are you and I alive right now? Who is the source of life? Why did the penalty for sins need to be paid by someone who never sinned?*



THE PERFECT LAMB

When the Israelites kept the Passover in Egypt they were told to select a perfect lamb--one without any spots or blemishes. They were to keep it in their home for four days, then at the end of the time they were supposed to kill the lamb and use its blood to paint on the doorposts. In order for the firstborn children to be saved, the lamb had to die. It died so others could live. Christ did the same thing for us! He, who was perfect and innocent, was killed just like the perfect little lamb so that every human being could have a chance to live! So, the lamb in the Passover in the Old Testament represented Jesus Christ.

Review John 1



Pause and Think: *What do you think it would be like to have a little lamb living in your house with you for four days? How do you think you would feel when the lamb had to be killed?*

HOW DO WE KEEP THE PASSOVER TODAY?

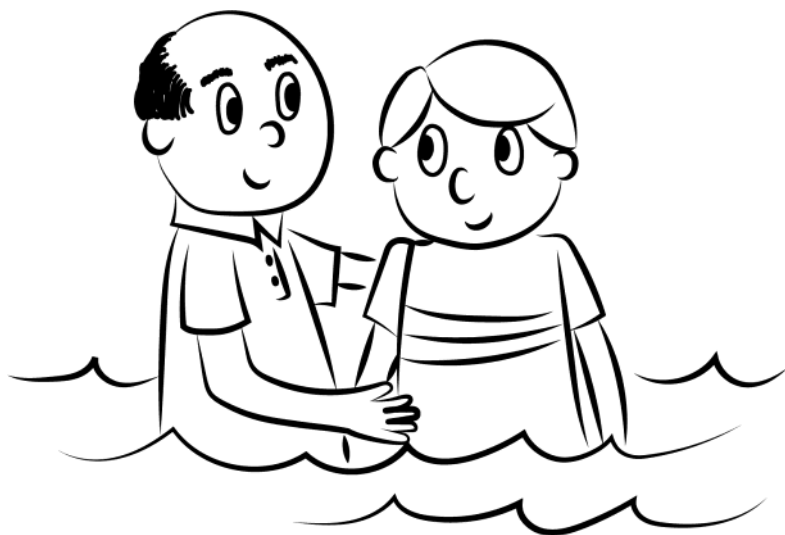
We continue to observe the Passover in the church today. We keep it the way Jesus Christ showed His disciples with the new symbols of the bread, wine, and foot-washing. Christ explains these symbols to us in His word. The bread represents Christ's body which was broken for us, the wine represents Christ's blood which He shed for our sins, and the foot-washing represents Christ's attitude of humility and service as an example of how we should act. We keep it on the same day when Christ kept it--the same evening that the Israelites were commanded to keep in Exodus and Leviticus. It is kept as a solemn ceremony to remember what Christ has done for us and how God showed His love for us by allowing His only Son to die to pay for our sins.



Renewing the Covenant

Along with being a memorial for Christ's sacrifice, Passover is a special ceremony for those who have entered into a covenant with God. Christ died for every person who ever lived, because He doesn't want anyone to be left out of His family, but remember, God still wants everyone to make a choice about whether they want to be in His family or not. In order to be in His family, we have to choose to obey God's laws and allow Christ to live in us so we can work hard to become like Him.

Another thing we need to be in His family is His Holy Spirit. God gives us His Holy Spirit when we enter into a covenant with Him. A covenant is a type of agreement. In this covenant, we agree to follow God, to obey His commandments, and work hard to be like Him, and God agrees that He will give us His Holy Spirit to help us. God also promises as part of this special covenant that Christ's sacrifice will pay for our sins so we can have the opportunity to live forever in His family! Christians make this covenant with God when they are baptized.



Baptized people renew this covenant with God during the Passover service when they eat the bread and drink the wine. So if you have ever wondered why kids don't participate in the Passover service, this is why! Kids haven't formally made the covenant with God yet. Once a person is mature enough to understand the incredible commitment it is to be in a covenant with God, then they can counsel with a minister to prepare to be baptized. It is a very solemn agreement because it has to do with whether or not God will give us eternal life, and that is a very important thing!

The decision to be baptized, to accept Christ as our personal Savior, and to agree to live God's way for the rest of our lives is the biggest and most important decision a person can ever make! So one day, when it's your turn to make that decision, think and pray about it very carefully.



Think for a minute: *Why do you think the church recommends someone to be at least 18 when they begin counseling about the decision to be baptized?*

Passover is only the first step to God's wonderful plan, but without it, the rest of God's plan would not be possible. Because of what Christ did for us, the rest of the plan can happen! Step two in God's plan comes immediately after the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We will take a look at this wonderful festival in our next lesson.



QUESTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION



Level 1

1. Why is the first Holy Day in God's calendar called "Passover"?
2. What do you think it was like for the Israelites to keep the Passover in Egypt? What are some things that happened that night?
3. What were the Israelites supposed to put on their doorposts to keep them safe from the 10th plague?

Level 2

1. What were the ten plagues that God sent on Egypt? Can you name them in order? No peeking!
2. Why did God tell the Israelites to use the blood of a lamb? What connection does this have to Jesus Christ?
3. How often are God's people supposed to keep the Passover? Why does God call it a memorial?

Level 3

1. What did Jesus Christ change about how to keep the Passover? Why did He change it?
2. Why did Jesus Christ wash His disciples feet? Why do we continue to follow this practice during the Passover service today?
3. How did God show His love to us? How does Christ's sacrifice remove our sins? What are some things we can do to show that we love God and are thankful for what He did for us?

MEMORY VERSES

FOR THE PASSOVER

Level 1

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

Level 2

Exodus 12:12-13 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

Level 3

John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

ACTIVITIES

FOR THE PASSOVER

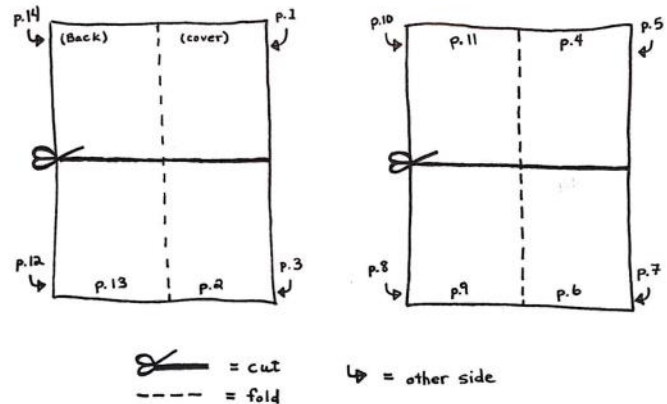
Activity: Book of Plagues

Help your child remember the ten plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians by helping them create their own personalized book of plagues!

Related Bible Verses: Exodus 7-12

Supplies:

- 2 sheets printer paper
- Yarn
- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Colored pencils or markers
- Pencil or Pen



Directions:

1. **Cut sheets of paper** in half (as shown in diagram). Fold each half sheet as indicated by the dotted line on the diagram.
2. **Write captions** on the bottom or top of each page. Leave space for drawing. *See suggested captions for each page below
3. **Create Cover Page** with title "The Story of the Ten Plagues" Illustrated by [Add your name here]
4. **Draw and color** your own illustrations for each page.
5. **Organize sheets** so your story is in order . For binding, punch 2 holes on the left side and use yarn to tie together.

*Suggested Captions:

Page 1: God talks to Moses from the burning bush.

Page 2: Moses' rod is turned into a snake before Pharaoh.

Page 3: Plague 1 - The River Nile is turned into blood

Page 4: Plague 2 - Frogs cover the land of Egypt

Page 5: Plague 3 - Lice covers all the people and animals.

Page 6: Plague 4 - Swarms of flies fill the houses of the Egyptians.

Page 7: Plague 5 - The livestock of the Egyptians die.

Page 8: Plague 6 - Boils cover the people and animals.

Page 9: Plague 7 - God sends hail mingled with fire on the ground.

Page 10: Plague 8 - Locusts eat every green plant.

Page 11: Plague 9 - Egyptians covered with three days of darkness.

Page 12: Plague 10 - The Israelites prepare for Passover by putting lamb's blood on their doorposts

Page 13: Pharaoh lets the people go!

Page 14: The Israelite leave Egypt and are finally free!