

Clergy Task Force

TO END DOMESTIC ABUSE
IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



JWI Pesach Table Tents

The Passover Seder celebrates the art of asking questions. Our table is filled with symbolic foods and objects that are meant to peak curiosity, inspire communal memory, and invite personal introspection.

The JWI Table Tents project is intended to be another vehicle to surface important questions and reflections at the Seder. The questions here can open up important conversations about relationships - what it means to love, to value, to support. What it means to be vulnerable. What it means to protect and to cherish. It is our hope that these conversations can help create homes and relationships that are safe and loving.

Enclosed are three pages that can be printed on 8.5x11" stock paper, cut in half vertically, and then folded in half to create six table tents (with a total of 12 sides of content). Each tent side corresponds to one part of the Seder, and is meant to either be a kavannah/meditation suggested by the Seder leader, a subtle invitation to the Seder participant to consider in their hearts, or a conversation starter at the table.

For example, the picture of the four children represented by four books can be used as a guided exercise by the Seder leader asking participants to choose which book they imagine to best represent each of the four children. (HINT: A creative mind might connect each book to each child) The conversation could also continue with how these "books" might represent the various relationships in our lives.

Similarly, the table tent with a Pesach prayer for bread in Bergen Belsen could be recited by a Seder participant before the traditional blessings are recited over Matzah. The Seder leader could invite everyone to reflect on what it means personally to "live by Torah, and not die by it." Alternatively, after reciting the prayer, this tent could simply be passed around. An unsuspecting individual might feel deeply validated to know that difficult compromises are sometimes necessary in order to lead healthy lives.

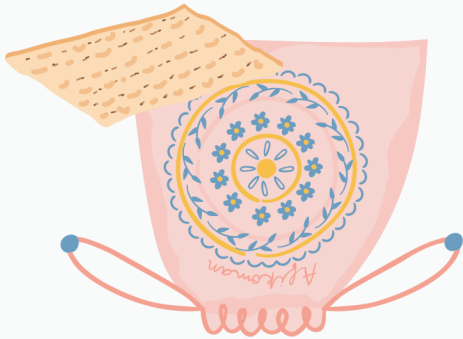
*This year we are here, next year we will be in Israel.
This year we are slaves, next year we will be free.*

hidden away?

We look forward to searching for and finding the Afikoman. Are you looking forward to revealing or hearing a revelation about something that has been

Even the hidden becomes revealed at the Seder, when we eat from the Afikomen matzah for dessert.

אפיקומן/Afikoman



Do you feel that it is helpful to recall the bitter moments in your personal history?

מָרֹר יִרְרָה לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת הַיָּדָיִם, עַל שֵׁם מָרֹר? Eating Maror at the Seder helps us lean into the bitterness of our national history.

מרור/Bitter Herb



וַיִּרְחֹץ-וַיִּרְחֹץ/Washing



קִדְשׁ יִרְחֹץ. כַּרְפָּס יִחַץ. מִגִּיד רְחֹץָהּ. מוֹצֵיא מִצָּא.
We wash our hands twice at the Seder to prepare for eating.

What rituals might help you prepare for more nourishing conversations with loved ones?

הסבה/Reclining



מֵה זְשׁוּתָנָה...הִלְיָלָה הַזֶּה כְּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין.
For many centuries, reclining at a banquet was a sign of freedom and nobility. The seder invites everyone present to leave 'mitzrayim' (our narrow places & the word for Egypt) behind.

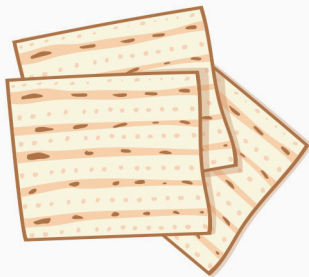
Who or what awakens your sense of freedom and nobility?

Which book best represents the various relationships in your life?

These books represent the 'wise,' the 'wicked,' the 'simple,' and the 'one who doesn't know what to ask.'

ארבעה בינה / The Four Children

Art by David Wander



מוציא מצה / Motzi Matzah

There were no matzot in Bergen Belsen for Pesach 1944. It was decided that bread could be eaten preceded by this prayer:

Our Father in Heaven: You surely know that it is our desire to do Your will, and to observe Pesach by eating matzah and by observing the prohibition concerning chametz. But to our great distress, our situation prevents us from doing so, and our lives are hanging in the balance. As such, we are hereby prepared and ready to fulfill the mitzvah of "living by Torah, and not dying by it." And so our prayer before You is that You allow us to live on, and that You redeem us, so that we can soon fulfill Your laws and serve You with a fuller heart. Amen.

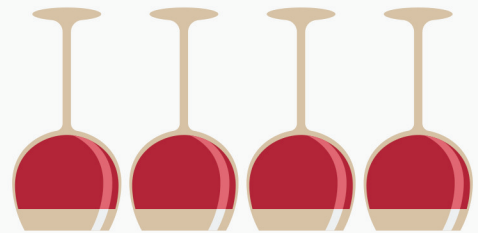
As you crunch your matzah, reflect on what it means personally to "live by Torah, and not die by it."

As you drink the four cups, reflect on these points in your own character, and as they characterize your relationships.

Rabbi Elai punned: In three matters a person's true character becomes clear - With their Kos, Kis, Kas - wine cup, wallet, & anger. And some say, also with their laughter. (Talmud Bavli, Masechet Erubin 65b)

בְּכֹסֵי וּבְכִסֵּי וּבְכָסֵי וּבְלַחְתֵּי!

ארבע כוסות / The Four Cups



עבדים היינו / Avadim Hayinu

We were slaves...

What would you add to this list of what makes you feel free?

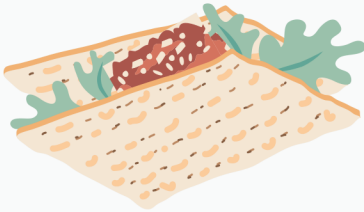
- I have the freedom to express my feelings.
- My boundaries are respected.
- I feel free to be myself.



Who or what has helped you hold happiness and sadness at the same time?

A sandwich is key to the Seder, as long as the 'bread' is Matzah with a filling both bitter (Maror) and sweet (Charoset), a taste of both slavery and freedom. Eating them together challenges us to accept both life's joyous and difficult parts.

חניך/Hillel Sandwich



דיינו/Dayeinu

Each line of Dayeinu expresses the idea that we should appreciate each aspect of our life's journey.

After singing this song, say "Thank You" to different people at your table, and tell them why they should be thanked.



If this part of the Passover story feels personal, what are some steps you could take to restore your dignity?

This month shall be for you the beginning of [keeping time according to] months [Exodus 12:2] After the final plague is announced in the Torah, our ancestors were given their first mitzvah as a nation - to take control of their own time by establishing a calendar. Having lived by the demands of a controlling personality, time had not been our own.

הַחַדָּשׁ הַזֶּה הוּא רֵאשִׁית הַחַדָּשׁ

עשר תוכות/Ten Plagues



שלחן עורר/The Set Table

וחייבנו לאכול בהסבה כדי שיאכל כדרך שהמלכים והגדולים אוכלים עד שיהיה דרך חרות

"We are obliged to eat in a relaxed way, leaning to the left, just like royalty and other important people do, so that we act like truly free people." (Maimonides' commentary on Mishna Pesachim 10:1)

In your own relationships, are you invited to express yourself freely and use your natural gifts to the fullest? Do you offer that same freedom to the people closest to you?