

Holy Week Ideas for Families at Home

Holy Week Activities: Maundy Thursday

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Celebrate Holy Week with family devotions, service projects, easy crafts, yummy snacks, fun games, Seder meal plans, and more—just for Easter! Every idea you're looking for is here!

Holy Week Activities: Maundy Thursday

The Thursday before Easter is called Maundy Thursday. The name Maundy is Latin for "command," and it refers to the new commandment Jesus gave his disciples to love one another. Many people celebrate this day with an Agape Feast, foot washing, or communion. As an option, your family can use this Seder meal to celebrate Passover as Jesus did with his disciples on this night.

1. Family Activity: A Simplified Seder

Preparation

Supplies per table:

- Bowl of salt water
- Celery sticks (*one per child*)
- Three matzo crackers
- Paper cups of water for children (*half full*)
- Small bowl of horseradish
- Small bowl of haroseth
- Hard-boiled egg
- a lamb bone (*call a butcher in advance!*)

Haroseth Recipe

Finely chop two large apples and place them in a bowl. Add 1/3 cup chopped raisins and 2 teaspoons of cinnamon. (Walnuts would normally be used, but substitute raisins to avoid allergy concerns.) Mix.

Pronunciation Guide

- Haroseth (kha-RO-seth)

- Matzo (MAT-se)
- Seder (SA-der)

What is a Seder?

The Passover meal is a powerful experience to give children. It honors God by highlighting his power and love for his people. It connects Bible events for children—and because kids know Jesus for who he is, they can see God's plans from the beginning for Jesus to be our Savior.

Get Started

Arrange a low, round table (or seating on the floor around a tablecloth). Place several candles on the table, and put all supplies on each table, ready for use.

Light the candles and dim the lights before sitting at the table.

Host Your Seder

Say: **Each spring, Jewish people eat a Passover meal called the Seder. It's a reminder that God called Moses to lead their people out of Egypt.**

The word Seder means order because everything you eat and drink at a Passover meal is in a special order. We won't serve all the Passover dishes because that takes hours. Instead, we'll try a few and I'll tell you about the rest.

Celery Stick and Salt Water: Ask everyone to take a celery stick. Say: **First dip your celery stick in the bowl of water, then take a bite.**

Ask:

- **How does it taste?**

Say: **The salty taste reminds the Jewish people of tears they cried in Egypt while they were slaves.**

Ask:

- **Why do you think the Jews in Egypt were sad and cried?**

Matzo Crackers: Pass around the matzo crackers. Say: **When God gave instructions for the first Passover meal, there wasn't time for the Jews to let their bread rise to**

get nice and fluffy. So at the Passover, we serve matzo—bread without yeast. We have matzo here. Let's each break off a piece and eat it. Pause to eat matzo and drink water.

Horseradish and Haroseth: Pass around the bowl of horseradish. Say: **At a Passover meal the Jews also taste a bitter herb. We won't taste this one—just sniff it. This is horseradish, and not everyone likes the taste.**

Say: **Bitter herbs remind the Jews of how bitterly they suffered while they were slaves in Egypt. They had very difficult lives.**

Say: **Here's another food served at Passover: haroseth.** Sample the haroseth on a matzo cracker.

Ask:

- **What does it smell like?**
- **What does it look like?**

Say: **Haroseth looks like mushy cement. The Jews used mushy cement as mortar when they built brick buildings in Egypt. Haroseth reminds them of the hard, hard work they did.**

Hard-Boiled Eggs: Set aside the haroseth, and pass the hard-boiled egg.

Ask:

- **Do you dye eggs at Easter?**

Say: **Eggs are a symbol of springtime and new life. Roasted eggs reminded the Jews that Passover comes in the spring, and of a special festival.**

The Lamb Bone: Pass the lamb bone.

As the bone is passed, say: **At the Passover, lamb is served. It's a reminder that spreading lambs' blood on their doorposts kept the Jews safe in Egypt. God saved his people from the plague because he loves them!**

Say: **The Seder is a reminder of a mighty thing God did for his people. They were slaves and they couldn't escape. Their lives were hard. They cried. They had to**

make bricks and build huge buildings for Pharaoh. But then God set them free! God brought them to a Promised Land. But he gave them something even more precious than the new land—the promise that a Savior was coming!

John the Baptist confirmed who that Savior was. Read aloud [John 1:29](#).

Jesus Christ is our Passover. Read aloud [1 Corinthians 5:7](#).

Close in prayer, thanking God for his love.

2. Family Activity: An Ice Cream Seder

Copy this version of the Seder meal to share with your families.

Supplies:

- Mini marshmallows
- Nuts (*If you have kids with nut allergies, substitute unsweetened chocolate chips*)
- Brightly colored sprinkles
- Sweet syrup toppings such as chocolate, fudge, butterscotch, or caramel
- Fruit: banana pieces, strawberries, blueberries, or other fruit
- Shredded coconut
- M&M's candies
- Whipped cream
- Vanilla ice cream

Seder Introduction

The Passover meal is all about remembering: remembering God and remembering what God has done for his people.

Ice Cream Seder

Place the listed items (except the ice cream) in separate bowls, and place them on a table.

Gather your family together and say: **It's easy to forget what God has done for our family. We're so busy getting ready for school, work, or extra activities that we forget to remember all God does for us. Let's see how these foods can remind us of God's love and how he's touched our family.**

Mini Marshmallows: Pass around the bowl of marshmallows. Say: **Let's each eat a mini marshmallow. They look like baby marshmallows, don't they? When I remember you as a baby, I always thank God for you. Let me tell you why.**

Share a brief story about each child and how he or she has been a blessing to your family.

Bowl of Nuts or Chocolate Chips: Pass around the bowl of nuts and ask each person to taste one. Say: **Nuts aren't usually sweet. They often taste bitter, and most nuts come in hard shells.** (If using chocolate, say: Chocolate isn't always soft and sweet; sometimes it's hard and bitter.) **Let's think about some hard or bitter things that have happened in our family.**

Share a brief story of a difficult period for your family and how God helped you through it. Invite others to share their stories.

Bowl of Sprinkles: Pass around the bowl of sprinkles. Say: **Pick your favorite color of sprinkle out of the bowl. Sprinkles always look like a fun party to me! What's something fun that's happened in our family—and how did God help that happen?**

Let each family member share a story about a fun family time and how God was present during that time.

Syrup: Invite each person to dip a finger in the syrup topping and lick it.

Say: **These toppings cover ice cream. God's love covers our family, too.**

Share a brief story of a time you felt God's love bringing peace or comfort to your family. Invite other family members to share their stories.

Fruit: Pass around the fruit and invite each person to enjoy a piece. Say: **Fruit is a healthy snack to eat. God has helped bring health to our family, too.**

Remember and share different times God brought health or healing to someone in your family.

Shredded Coconut: Pass around the bowl of shredded coconut and invite everyone to take a pinch and eat it. Say: **Coconut reminds me of snow—and winter. Each winter we celebrate Jesus' birth. I'm grateful God sent his Son, but sometimes I forget to thank God for that gift. What's something you want to thank God for?**

Pause while family members respond.

M&M's: Pass around the bowl of M&M's candies. Ask each person to take his or her favorite color of candy and then look at it. Say: **Turn your candy upside down. Now**

instead of "M&M" it's "W&W"—that reminds me of "Wants & Wishes." God has given our family lots of things we've wanted and wished for, things that go far beyond what we actually need.

Tell a brief story of something you wanted for your family that God provided, and have family members share similar stories.

Whipped Cream: Place a small dollop of whipped cream on family members' index fingers and invite them to lick off the whipped cream. Say: **Whipped cream is so sweet—and so is God's love.**

Share a story about how God's love has sweetened your life, and let others share their sweet stories as well.

Say: **It'd be a shame to have all these toppings and not enjoy them with ice cream!**

Give each family member a bowl and spoon, and reveal a container of vanilla ice cream. Invite family members to cover their ice cream with their choice of toppings. Before you eat, offer a prayer of thanks to God for your family, and for God working in and through your family.

3. Family Activity: Spring Cleaning

Long ago, Christians spent Maundy Thursday washing and sweeping their homes. Lead your kids in spring cleaning projects around your house on this day.

4. Family Activity: Freeze Frame

Lead children in studying the stories of Palm Sunday, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. Choose several elements of the story to re-enact in friezes, or stop-action scenes. Together, pose as soldiers arresting Jesus or as the women peering into the empty tomb. Dress for your parts using household items, practice your frieze poses, then photograph your efforts. For added fun, share your Holy Week pose on social media!