

Adat Shalom's Curated Pesach Resources – 2020 / 5780

(see also the [Reconstructionist "Passover Box"](#) with many more great resources)

Friends – a unique Pesach is coming up. Most of us will lead or attend our first-ever *online* seders; some of us are still new at leading *ANY* seder. We'll be newbies next Wednesday (first night), but by the **Second Night** with **Adat Shalom's community seders** (5pm for a short family seder; 6pm for a fuller community-wide one), we'll be old pros. More tips are below, but here are three key considerations for starters, even before the annotated list of haggadot and seder supplements:

(1) This is NOT a year for traditional Pesach perfectionism! If your seder isn't perfectly planned or super-smooth, or if you didn't prepare for seder as thoroughly as you wished, or your menu is limited, **don't sweat it** – do what you can, and consider the rest "chametz" on the eve holiday – i.e., crumbs of no-longer-necessary stuff, that you didn't quite get to, traditionally nullified hours before seder.

(2) Do the most **basic coordination in advance** – maybe not a detailed seating chart across three time zones (!) – just enough for the evening to work. If you just know the Zoom link, plus where the laptop or phone goes to pick up the sight and sound of everyone at the table – (two screens, one muted, might help! – you're golden, and the rest will unfold as it will.

(3) **Count your blessings.** Remember the paradox of "Dayeinu" – would getting out of Egypt really have been "enough for us," without manna so we'd survive the desert? Maybe; maybe not -- but every good thing is still worth celebrating. Dayenu reminds us that *even amid challenge and limitation, we have to celebrate all that we have.* Without minimizing the very real privation and even suffering around us this Pesach, let the wisdom of *dayenu* encourage us toward "**less kvetch; more appreciation.**"

Below are a few **full haggadot** for your downloading pleasure; pick one, and share the link in advance. Consider having one muted screen for Haggadah-following, and a separate screen for eye-contact via Zoom or your online platform of choice. Following that are sources for a few **choice readings** (many more are embedded in whichever haggadot you're *not* using!), and activities you might use alongside your chosen Haggadah, to spice things up and bring them into 2020. Finally, here are a few sources of pro-**tips** you can consult, for more ideas on both kid-friendly and more in-depth sederim.

Enjoy! --Rabbi Fred, on behalf of all of Adat Shalom's clergy, staff, teachers and lay-leaders

FULL HAGGADOT

The venerable [A Night of Questions](#), the beautiful Reconstructionist Haggadah, has four tracks in one – "less is more" for families, "more is more" for intellectual and ethical exploration, interfaith-focused, and feminist-tinged. And it's now a **free download!** **Everything you need** for a great seder is inside – supplement it as you like from these other resources, but "dayenu" right there 😊 The full link is <https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/haggadah2020>; have everyone who'll be "at" your seder sign in, in advance, to download it.

Jewish Boston offers a short, accessible, [30-page "all-the-basics" seder](#), both in Word (for printing or further editing, sans illustrations); or as a ready-to-go illustrated PDF (for use onscreen) – it's light on telling the story, but does include "modern plagues" and some other updates to the traditional text.

This year's [HIAS Haggadah](#) is its own full 32-page online seder. It covers all the basics, with numerous powerful readings about the **refugee crisis**, our people's **history**, and **this moment** – do skim it in advance to pluck out a couple of readings, if you're not using it entire – a great resource.

If those are too long, how about a [two-page seder](#)?! This can be used as a basic outline within which you add as you see fit -- or as the whole thing, for the shortest possible seder! (Thanks to Barb Richman for the link)

Or, if you want to build your own from scratch – the great online Jewish learning portal [Sefaria offers a "DIY Haggadah"](#) (scroll down a couple screens, you'll see it), along with countless other Pesach resources. See also the many resources available for free, as well as purchase, at www.haggadot.com.

READINGS & EXTRAS

For families with kids at the seder (ages 6 to 66!) – a beautiful afikomen moment (requires pre-planning) from Moving Traditions – have a [family story of resilience](#) as, or to supplement, the afikomen 'reward'.

Fact: "This year's second seder falls on April 9, the date of the surrender at Appomattox which effectively ended the U.S. Civil War. In that year, 1865, the first seder fell on April 10..." (from an article in [Moment](#) magazine). At your seder, discuss the **history of slavery** on the very land we're sitting on in the DMV, up until just 160 years ago – and, the ways in which slavery is still a reality for many today (human trafficking, poverty wages, mass incarceration, etc).

Green Pesach Resource #1: [Urban Adamah offers 9 great pages of green supplements](#) – useful readings and reflections and meditations, plus a "homestead Passover" section on making your own matzah (it's kosher!), foraging for karpas and maror in your neighborhood, and more. For example, for the Z'roah (shankbone, or beet or mushroom, to evoke the paschal sacrifice), it asks: what are *we* sacrificing *this* year? -- "The **z'roa** represents the pass-over sacrifice which the Hebrew people (and Egyptians) slaughtered and processed. The divine instruction was to use the blood of this sacrificed animal to paint the doorways of each house so that G-d would know which houses to pass-over during the 10th and final plague, the killing of the firstborn sons. In this plague of COVID-19, we might feel a piece of the fear the Egyptians felt as the plagues, each as unusual a circumstance as the next, commanded their presence. *We* are being asked to make *sacrifices* right *now*, in order to ensure the collective care and healing of our communities. What are you sacrificing? Consider writing down on a note card or a piece of paper the sacrifices you or those you love are facing -- and use that ceremonially as your shankbone this year.

Green Pesach Resource #2: Rabbi Ellen Bernstein, the first professional Jewish environmentalist ever, out of the basement of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1987 (!), wrote the great new *Promise of the Land* Haggadah (available for purchase online by Friday). Using that Haggadah, she and other great leaders are offering a number of [Earth Seder gatheringss](#), as a fundraiser for coronavirus relief, all week long – model, family-friendly, adult-oriented, interfaith, etc.

Hadar.org has this year's [erudite and relevant Pesach resources](#), and more from previous years too – always a great source.

Every great **old Haggadah** in your collection – or saved emails from previous years, with links or inserts from feminist, LGBTQ+, civil rights, animal rights, workers’ rights, Israel-Palestine, immigration, and every-possible-good-cause haggadot – they’re all still good this year, too! Don’t go crazy, but do take advantage of the resources already in your inbox, on your hard-drive, or scattered around your house.

TIPS

Don’t-sweat-it #1– helpful tips, with lots of snark and GIFs, at Jewish Boston’s [“How to Host a Virtual Seder This Year.”](#)

Don’t sweat it, #2 – Rabbi Sue Fendrick, a friend of many in this community, hilariously and poignantly reminds us to [just let it go this year](#) – yes, you ARE allowed (even encouraged!) to “have a shvach [so-so] seder this year!”

[Tons more resources, ideas, and haggadot](#) – some explicitly for interfaith families or multi-faith seder settings, but most accessible to all – are available from 18Doors (formerly InterfaithFamily.org)

Finally: some crowd-sourced **suggestions for Zoom seders**, mostly from Rabbi Elisa Goldberg of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, follow. Enjoy! Chag sameach!

PRACTICAL TIPS

General

- Focus on goals for the gathering and create content that reflects them.
- In account settings, you can enable many features (on Pro); including: creating co-hosts, saving chat, polls, hand raising, and creating breakout rooms.
- Useful to have a second person monitoring the chat box
- Good to review early-on the session tools: chat, mute, and screen display (gallery vs speaker view), at least
- Consider having a co-host to manage the technical aspects - muting and unmuting people, setting up breakout groups, adding words for groups singing into the chat, and monitoring chat for problems.

Sound

- Beside the microphone on the lower bar of the zoom video-conference screen is a little hat/carrot symbol. This takes you to where people can check the audio settings for their system.
- Make sure everyone stays muted at all times (save the leader) until called upon to speak. Especially for singing – one leads, with everyone else singing robustly to their muted screens 😊
- Feedback is the number one sound problem. To prevent this, *only one person can have their speakers on in one room*. People need to sit in a cluster around one screen, or mute all devices but one, or each need to be in separate rooms behind closed doors. Sometimes everyone wearing a headset works to mitigate feedback, not always.

Visual

- Pay attention to what is in your background--for a seder something bland that doesn't draw attention to itself is good, a simple wall or curtain is fine. Less may be more, when there will be many images as people sign in.
- Try not to have yourself back lit – be conscious that others can see you, as you can see them, to encourage intimacy across the miles.
- A desk lamp in front of you that you can adjust to get the lighting right is very helpful.
- Don't set the camera up in a way that a ceiling light or ceiling fan is on and visible; makes it hard for people to stay focused.
- Another approach to creating a fitting background (for those who have a fairly new computer) is to take advantage of Zoom's **virtual background** feature. (The settings can be adjusted as part of the video settings; look for the camera icon.) By importing a backdrop image from an illustrated Bible scene that's in the public domain (e.g., *The Dore Gallery of Bible Illustrations* from Project Gutenberg), you can show yourself as, say, standing in Pharaoh's court while Moses says, "Let my people go!", or with the Israelites in the middle of the parted Red Sea. This is one way to illustrate that we "see ourselves as having personally gone forth from Egypt." (Need a good green screen for this to work smoothly though!)

BY FEATURE

Chat

- Instead of screen share, use the chat function to share words for songs and prayers. Allows people to continue to see each other. (EG)
- Another related tip, if you will be pasting a lot of words in to chat, consider pre-typing them into a document, so you can cut and paste, as you go. (EG)
- Better than in chat, share a PDF of the seder that people can print out before hand and use during the seder.

Polls:

- Ask questions about the seder and share answers.

Hand Raise:

- If your version has the hand raise feature, show people how to use it and ask them to use it to call on them to speak. Otherwise, go around the screen in order to call on people.

Breakout groups:

- During "Maggid" (the long story section, use breakout groups to have smaller groups discuss a topic such as: how is this Pesach different? What is one challenge and one blessing you are noticing in this moment? (EG)

RELATED ARTICLES / OTHER RESOURCES

[How to Host a Virtual Passover](#)
[Virtual Worship](#)