

The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education

Celebrating Pesah with Your Grandchildren

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What are a grandparent's responsibilities?

- *Knowing how to be a grandparent while leaving parenting to the child's parents.*
- *Being strong for the grandchild – especially in holding to family values and morality.*
- *Providing family stability for the child.*
- *Serving as a role model.*

Adapted from *Welcome to the Club: The Art of Jewish Grandparenting* by Moshe Sonnheim. Jerusalem/New York: Devora Publishing, 2004, p. 30.

Preparations for Passover

A telephone call away

Preparations for the Seder can begin over the telephone.

- Ask children or their parents to fax or e-mail you a copy of any songs they learned in school. Plan ahead with your grandchild to jointly perform or study a certain section of the Haggadah. So you can be “on the same page,” try to get a copy of the Haggadah the child uses in school. Younger children will enjoy sharing the Frog Song, and other songs, while you and the older children can share research about the effects of the plagues on a society.



- Give your grandchild an assignment to read aloud a special section of the Haggadah, preferably one they have studied at school.
- Choose a part of the Haggadah to discuss during the next telephone conversation so both of you can prepare and then share your experiences together.
- Enliven the Seder with storytelling, drama, costumes, props, etc.

By mail or fax

Everyone loves to get mail and your grandchildren are no exception. Whether messages come by snail mail, e-mail, or fax, messages can be shared in words or pictures and re-read again and again.

- ❑ Share Passover web sites, including fun and games
- ❑ Compare Passover shopping lists.
- ❑ Find out what each grandchild's favorite Passover food is so that it can be prepared for the Seder.

Grandchildren visiting your home

- ❑ Ask your grandchildren to bring things for the Seder table that were made or used in their Jewish school or at home. (I.e.: Seder plate, hand washing towel, song sheets, school Haggadah, etc.)
- ❑ Designate each grandchild to contribute to the Seder by making him or her responsible for a special project. Placecards, pictures of the plagues, or a play about the Crossing of the Red Sea can be appropriate projects for different age children.
- ❑ If you are hosting a Seder, you may want to have some practice time with your grandchildren who will have a role in the Seder. You will get an idea of how much encouragement the child will need to participate. Some children love to be the center of attraction, but others may want a grandparent or parent to sit beside them or to chant together with them a part of the Haggadah, especially for the Four Questions.
- ❑ Favorite Passover foods can be prepared together. Share the stories of when you learned to make a certain Passover recipe and who taught it to you. While it is often very hectic getting ready for the Seder, it is important to remember safety when involving young grandchildren in the kitchen. Young children can pour pre-measured ingredients into a bowl, they can place their hand on your wrist as a signal to press mixer buttons, and they can call out "on" or "off" to start or stop an appliance. Older grandchildren can follow a recipe and make a special Passover breakfast or lunch together with you!
- ❑ Create a Passover Family cookbook. Include recipes for modern favorites that will become family traditions. If possible, include who likes the recipe and which relative started the tradition.
- ❑ Begin a video keepsake. Have your grandchildren video you cooking or preparing food for the Seder table, breakfast, or a special treat. You can then turn the camera on them while they are also cooking or eating! (Optional: Set up a video camera



next to the table and let it run during the Seder.) These videos can be a wonderful keepsake of you and your grandchildren and your role in passing on traditions.)

- ❑ Seating at the Passover table: seating arrangements at the Seder should involve a lot of thought. Do not play favorites, but have a rotation where different grandchildren are Seder seatmates for parts of the Haggadah or during several Passover meals.

Grandparents visiting grandchildren

Plan activities that will create bonding between you and your grandchildren.

- ❑ Ask your grandchildren if they would like something brought to their Passover celebration. Let them know if there are some family heirlooms or things their parents made when they were children that could be part of the Seder.
- ❑ Let your grandchild plan to show you his or her neighborhood at Passover time. Younger children may like to make a list or a picture booklet of everything that begins with 'P' for Passover.



- ❑ Bring or buy with your grandchild, seeds, containers, and potting soil to plant flowers or vegetables. Many seeds planted at Passover will sprout and can be used to decorate the home for Shavuot (50 days after Passover).
- ❑ Using the Seder table or Passover foods as a backdrop, take a photo of you and your grandchild. Share your pictures on the web.
- ❑ Bring pictures of relatives to be remembered at the Seder. Think of stories about this person, especially when they were about the same age as the grandchildren. This can be shared on-line for those who could not be with grandparents. Photos can be made in advance so a family Passover book can be prepared for the Seder.
- ❑ Create a family Passover blog. You and your grandchildren may have recollections associated with people not at this year's Seder or from many years ago. Share them at the Seder and compile them for a family Passover booklet or Passover blog.

If you will not be together at Passover

- ❑ You can provide stickers, stationery, and even create a Passover e-mail group for you and your grandchildren. Passover stationery that is already pre-addressed to you will make it easier to send pictures and messages from even young grandchildren.
- ❑ Make a pre-Passover list in a letter that your grandchildren can check off depending on their age. Leave enough space to allow your younger grandchildren to illustrate their return letter.

- Ask questions about their Passover preparation. You may have better luck getting responses if you include check-off boxes asking about Passover in school, what was done at home and with their friends, etc.
- Send Afikoman gifts in advance!

Afikoman Gifts

Volunteer to be in charge of Afikoman gifts. Plan for several different outcomes depending on a family's customs to reward one child or all the children.

- Jewish books or a subscription to a Jewish magazine are always appropriate gifts.
- If it is a family custom to give money as the Afikoman prize, offer a matching gift to a *tzedakah*/charity that is selected by both grandchild and grandparent. The choice of a *tzedakah*/charity can be a shared research project between grandparent and grandchild.
- Toys and Children's gifts
While these are widely available in synagogue gift shops, Judaica stores, and supermarkets, many craft shops or web sites will have all the supplies necessary to make your own.

1. Plagues in a Bag

Several manufacturers have packaged representations of the 10 Plagues in a convenient bag. Some of the plastic insects, balls, and pieces are very small and **not** recommended for children under 3 years. This can also be a homemade project.

<http://www.oytoys.com>



2. Story cards

Storybooks and Internet sites have the story of Passover, the plagues, and the different parts of the Seder ready to download. Children's illustrations can be prepared and laminated to keep from year to year. <http://www.joyofstorytelling.com/products.htm>



3. Finger Puppets

Look for cute finger puppets to help re-enact the telling of the Passover Haggadah. Some finger puppets represent Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, and the Israelites. There are others that represent the four Children, the plagues, or the ritual items on the Seder table.

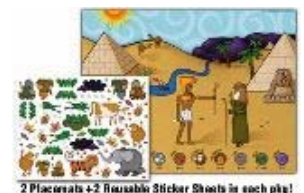
<http://www.judaicaworldwide.com> – click on holidays, Passover and then Passover kidstuff.



4. Place Mats

Passover-themed Place mats are available, but also can be made with pictures, fabric, and illustrations.

<http://www.chaikids.com/site/776828/page/324480>



2 Place Mats + 2 Haggadah Sticker Sheets in each pkg!

Hasal Siddur Pesah/Conclusion

L'Shanah Haba'ah B'Yirushalayim/Next Year in Jerusalem!

Learn each grandchild's hopes for the coming year.

Plan a family visit to Israel.

Jewish Grandparenting Bibliography

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