



WEEK 1
The Passover

PREPARATION



Exodus 12:1-28,
Matthew 26:17-30

LESSON AIMS



To see how the Passover points forward to God's plan of salvation through Jesus.

This study looks at the institution of the Passover. The Passover Feast was linked with the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-6) and was the time when the Jewish people remembered their deliverance from Egypt.

During the months of the plagues Pharaoh had been given every opportunity to repent of his arrogance and acknowledge God, but had refused. This refusal caused judgment to fall on the entire nation of Egypt. Unlike the other plagues, when God had used natural phenomena in supernatural ways, the death of the first-born was by direct intervention. Moses and Aaron were not told to call up this plague - God stated the time and way he was to act. In order to escape, the Israelites had to follow the specific instructions God gave to Moses.

The group needs to look at how the Passover foreshadows Christ's death (John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7) - the lamb had to be male, without defects, and its blood had to be shed and applied to the house; the people had to remain within the house if the blood was to be effective. By the time of Jesus, (about 1300 years later), the Passover lambs were killed in the Temple in Jerusalem and the blood was poured out onto the sides of the altar. The lambs were eaten as a kind of fellowship offering. At the Last Supper Jesus, by talking about **his** blood being poured out (Matthew 26:27-28), was telling his disciples that he was going to be a sacrifice like the Passover lamb. Whereas the sacrifice of the Passover lamb brought about the rescue of God's people from slavery in Egypt, Jesus' death rescues people from their sinfulness and enables them to live in fellowship with God.

Exodus

12:2 Previously the Jewish year had begun in what is our September. From that time on it was to start in our mid-March. The Jewish religious year still starts at this point. Note that God gave Moses instructions for remembering the Passover **before** the death of the first-born took place. There was no doubt in Moses' mind that God would rescue his people in the way he had determined

- 12:5 The lamb had to be male and without defect.
- 12:8 Bread baked without the yeast - i.e. baked in haste.
- 12:11 Shoes were not normally worn inside.

Matthew

- 26:17 The lambs were ritually slaughtered in the temple precincts and the meal took place in any house within the city bounds and in small companies. It was only following the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 that the ceremony reverted to a domestic one.
- 26:19 Preparation included checking that no leaven was present, providing a basin and towel for hand washing, and preparing the lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread and 4 cups of wine.
- 26:20 The Passover Meal. Before the meal ritual hand washing was strictly observed. The meal consisted of roast lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and 4 cups of wine at specified points. Prior to the 2nd cup of wine all the food was cleared from the table and the story of the Exodus was recounted as a dialogue between father and son (or suitable substitutes). The food was then brought back and part of the Hallel (Pss.113-118) was sung. This was followed by the 2nd cup of wine. Then came the breaking of the bread. (This was probably the point when Judas received his sop and disappeared, John 13:30.) This was followed by the 3rd cup of wine. The singing of the Hallel was then completed and the 4th cup of wine drunk (26:30).

Originally the meal was eaten standing, dressed ready for a journey (Exodus 12:11). That custom had been abandoned as a sign that the Jews were no longer slaves but free.





- 26:26 Jesus uses the bread to point forward to his coming death; in the Passover meal it was normally used to point backwards to the Exodus.
- 26:27 The 3rd cup of wine. For the new covenant see Jeremiah 31:31-34.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the similarities between the Passover story and Jesus' death on the cross?
2. What other Old Testament stories do you know that are pictures of salvation? (Genesis 6-9; 22:1-19; 37-46, Exodus 13:17 - 14:31, Ruth 1-4)

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Pointing Forward Clear space in the middle of the room and ask for a volunteer. The volunteer stands in the centre of the space and places a broom on their forehead, standing upright. Looking up towards the head of the broom, the person spins round 20 times, with the rest of the group counting. After 20 turns the person has to drop the broom and try to point forward. (Needless to say, the results are often hilarious.) Repeat with other volunteers as time allows.

Use this activity to introduce the idea of pointing forward. Today's Bible passage also points forward. Can you work out what to?

ACTIVITY

Photocopy page 11 for each group member. The Bible verse is Hebrews 9:22.

If time permits celebrate a simplified Passover meal. The time required is 15-20 minutes.

Each small group requires:

- 1 candle plus matches
- 3 pieces of unleavened bread (Matzot, or pitta

bread if Matzot unobtainable), placed one on top of another, separated by paper napkins

- Bitter herbs - use watercress or flat leafed parsley
- Small bunch of parsley and bowl of salt water
- Charoset - use applesauce mixed with cinnamon and raisins. It represents the mortar used in slavery in Egypt.
- Roast lamb (obtainable pre-packed from some supermarkets)
- 4 cups of wine - use red juice.
- Plastic plates, napkins, paper cup.

Sit in groups of 10-12 in a circle, with the candle in the centre. The leader's comments are in italic.

1. Recall the search for leaven and its removal.
2. Light the candle.

Blessed are you, Lord God, who created light.

3. Fill the cup with red juice (first cup).

God said: 'I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.' Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe.

Pass round the cup.

4. Dip parsley in the bowl of salt water.

Remember the hyssop dipped in the blood of the lamb, which was painted on the lintel and doorposts.

5. Break the middle matzah in half and put half to one side on a napkin. Hold up the other half.

This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt.

Replace with other 2 matzot.

6. Fill the cup with red juice (second cup).

God said: 'I will deliver you from out of their bondage.'

7. Youngest present asks -

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Reply - *We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord our God brought us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. If God had not brought us out we would still be Pharaoh's slaves.*





8. Point to the various items on the table.

What is the meaning of the lamb? It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover when he passed over our houses and slew the Egyptians.

What is the meaning of the unleavened bread? Our fathers baked unleavened bread because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait.

What is the meaning of the bitter herbs? The Egyptians made our fathers' lives bitter with all kinds of hard work.

9. Raise the second cup of red juice.

We thank you, O Lord, for delivering us from bondage.

Pass round the cup.

10. Break the upper and middle half matzah into the required number of portions for each person in the group.

Bless you, O Lord our God, King of the universe.

Pass round.

11. Pick up bitter herbs and charoset.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe.

Dip watercress into the charoset, passing from person to person.

12. Break the lower matzah into the required number of portions and distribute with the remaining watercress. Pass round the lamb.

13. Break the remaining half matzah and distribute.

14. Fill the cup with red juice (third cup).

God said: 'I will redeem you with an outstretched arm'. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe.

Pass round the cup.

15. Fill the cup with red juice (fourth cup).

God said: 'I will take you to me for a people'. Thank you, Lord God, that you are our King and our Saviour.

Pass round the cup.

16. *The remembrance of the Passover is now complete.*

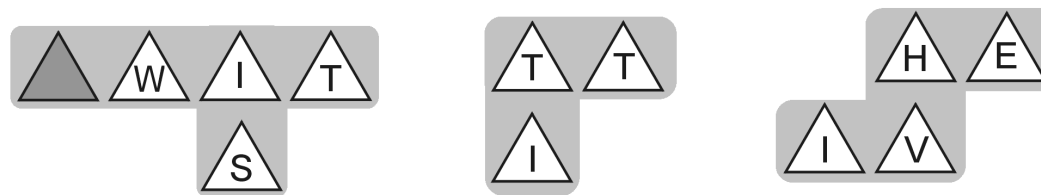
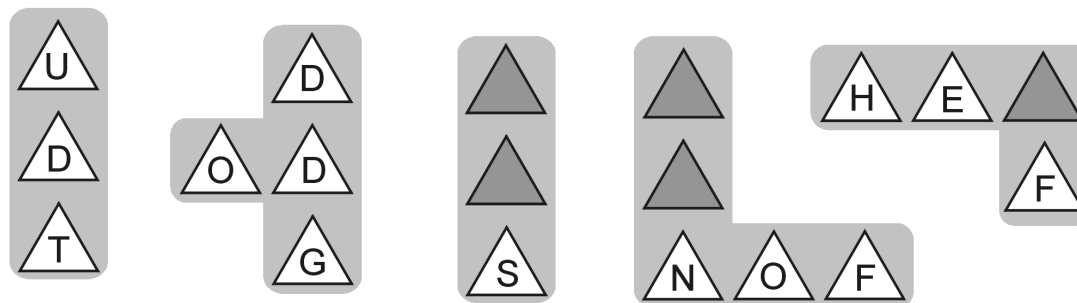
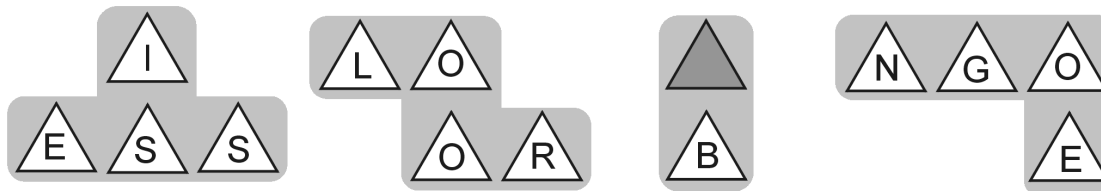
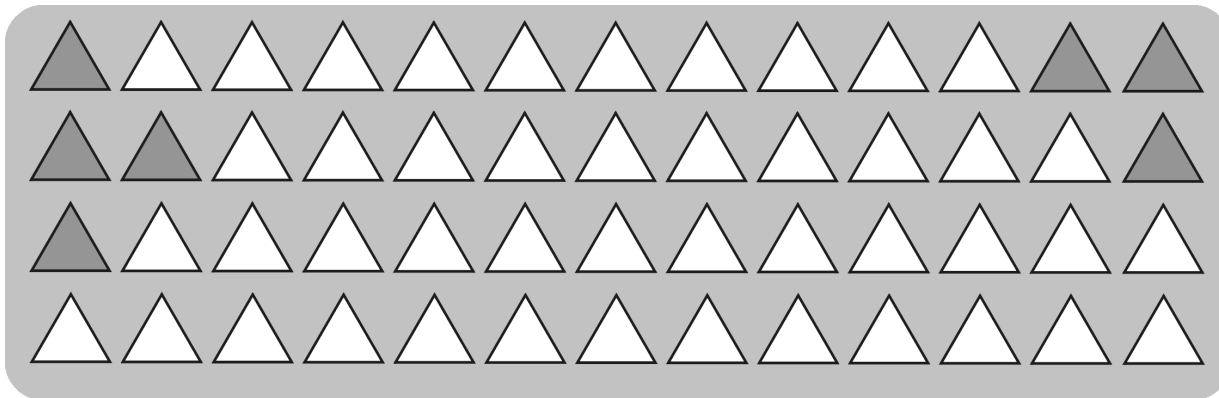




The Passover

Exodus 12:1-28, Matthew 26:17-30

Fit the jigsaw pieces into the grid to discover an important statement. There are no gaps between the words and the shaded squares in the jigsaw pieces correspond to the shaded squares in the grid.



The text is from Hebrews chapter 9. Which verse is it?

