

Yachad

Pesach 2023 Activity Packet



PESACH HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

FROM <https://www.lookstein.org/resources/holidays/pesach-resources/>

- **What:** Pesach, or Passover, is the Jewish holiday celebrating the exodus from Egypt described in the Torah. It is also called the *Chag HaMatzot* (the holiday of matzah), *Chag HaAviv* (the holiday of Spring), and *Chag HaCherut/ Zman Cheruteinu* (the holiday of freedom/ the time of our freedom).
- **Where:** The story of Pesach takes place in ancient Egypt, and has been told throughout the centuries at the Seder table of Jewish homes.
- **When:** In the Hebrew calendar, Pesach begins at nightfall of the 14th of Nissan to the 22nd (or the 21st for those celebrating in Israel).
- **Why:** Pesach commemorates the exodus from Egypt, the freedom of the Israelites from slavery, and the birth of the Nation of Israel.
- **How:** Pesach is celebrated for eight days (seven days in Israel), during which many Jews eat matzah and refrain from eating leavened foods. The Pesach Seder takes place on the first two nights of the holiday (and only the first night in Israel) where the story of the exodus is recited and experienced.

PESACH MITZVOT AND CUSTOMS

- **Checking for *Chametz* (unleavened bread)** (חמץ בדיקת): The search for *chametz* takes place the night before the start of Pesach (the 14th of Nissan). During the search for *chametz*, it is customary for a person/family to turn off all the lights in the house and use candles (or flashlights) to search throughout the home in order to thoroughly rid the home of *chametz*. Many people “hide” ten pieces of bread throughout the house in order to ensure that they find *chametz* to burn the next day. A blessing is recited before beginning the search.
- **Burning/Destroying *Chametz*** (חמץ ביעור): *Biyur Chametz* takes place the following day in the morning. The *chametz* that was found in the search of the previous night is burned and it is declared that any *chametz* not found is “nullified like the dust of the earth.”
- **Retelling the Story of the Exodus** (מצרים יציאת סיפור): Throughout the Seder, we tell the story of the exodus from Egypt through the use of the *Haggadah*. A central idea is to relive the story of the exodus and appreciate what it means to leave slavery and become free.

- **Eating Maror (Bitter Herbs)** (מרור אכילת): At the Seder, *maror* is eaten to symbolize the bitter experience of servitude.
- **Eating Matzah** (מצה אכילת): Matzah, which is also called “the bread of affliction,” is unleavened bread which is eaten throughout the eight days of Pesach, but specifically at the Seder night. This is reminiscent of the matzah that was baked by the Israelites as they left Egypt since their departure was so swift that there was no time to allow the bread to rise before baking.
- **The Four Cups** (כוסות ארבע): Throughout the Seder, 4 cups of wine (or grape juice) are drunk.
 - **Leaning** (הסבה): The 4 cups of wine and eating of matzah are to be consumed while leaning to the left, as a symbol of relaxation and freedom.

PESACH TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

- Among Persian Jews, it is common to use scallions to act out the whip of slavery.
- Syrian Jews and Jews from other communities in North Africa may break their matzah into the shape of Hebrew letters during *Yachatz*.
- It is a custom among Jews from Gibraltar to put brick dust in their *charoset*.
- Jews from many regions take pieces of the *afikomen* and save them in their pockets or home throughout the year for good luck.
- Many Moroccan Jews celebrate Maimuna the night after the final day of Pesach during which they invite family and friends to eat sweet pastries.
- People also like to personalize their Seder plates with symbols of modern issues that they find meaningful.

THE OBLIGATION TO GET RID OF CHAMETZ

From [Passover Cleaning: How to Guide - aish.com](http://aish.com)

In cleaning for Passover, we are first and foremost fulfilling the mitzvah of *biur chametz* -- getting rid of chametz. *Biur chametz* is actually quite an easy mitzvah in terms of physical exertion. The Torah says: "*tashbisu se'or mibateichem*" -- make all your sour dough rest. The Torah commandment is that you can possess all the chametz you want, but in your mind it must be dust -- ownerless and valueless.

Now obviously we are dealing with something subtle and vague. What goes on in your mind, no one knows except you and God. It's quite easy to think you have considered everything "null and void," when in truth you can't wait for Passover to be over so you can partake of all those goodies!

So the Sages instituted a requirement to physically destroy chametz. This mitzvah is known as *bedikat chametz*. The Sages say it is not enough to emotionally write the chametz off as "dust"; you must actually search out any chametz you can find -- and physically destroy it.

A final word on Cleaning:

from [How to Clean for Passover \(in 10 Days or Less\) - Organizational & Cleaning Tips \(chabad.org\)](#)

Remember, we are not trying to recreate the feeling of slavery. We are trying to prepare for a holiday that celebrates freedom. While it's nice to sit down to a Passover Seder in a house where everything is clean and shiny, it's even nicer to sit down to a Seder and stay awake for it. Reschedule your superfluous spring cleaning to the fall, and Passover cleaning will not wind up to be such a crummy job.

18 Matzah Facts Every Jew Should Know

By [Menachem Posner](#) from [18 Matzah Facts Every Jew Should Know - Passover \(chabad.org\)](#)

1. We Eat Matzah at the Seder

The [Seder](#) (Passover Feast) is a highlight of the Jewish calendar, when Jews of all backgrounds and levels of observance gather with family and friends to celebrate our nation's miraculous Exodus from Egypt. This feast includes drinking four cups of wine, retelling the story of the Exodus, and eating certain ceremonial foods. The most important food of all is the [matzah](#), which is eaten at several key points during the evening.

2. We Ate Matzah During the Exodus

Even before our ancestors left Egypt, they were told to prepare a lamb to be eaten together with matzah and bitter herbs. The following morning, they finally left Egypt. They departed in such a hurry that there was no time to wait for their dough to rise, so they ate matzah, unleavened bread. With only this food (but with great faith), our ancestors relied on the Almighty to provide sustenance for the entire Jewish nation—men, women and children. Each year, to remember this, we eat matzah on the first two nights of [Passover](#), thereby fulfilling the Torah's commandment, "Matzahs shall you eat . . ." ¹

3. It Used to Be Eaten With Passover Lamb

From the time of the Exodus until the destruction of the Second Temple, with brief breaks in between, matzah was enjoyed together with the Passover lamb, which was sacrificed that afternoon. As recorded in the Haggadah, the great sage Hillel would wrap his lamb together with matzah and bitter herbs, an act we recreate every year (sans the lamb) when we eat the *korech* sandwich.

4. Matzah Has Just Two Ingredients

On Passover, we eat nothing that contains grain that has risen through contact with water (*chametz*). Matzah is something that can theoretically become *chametz* but did not, since we took care when baking it to prevent it from rising. Classic *matzah*, the kind we eat at the Seder, contains just two ingredients: wheat flour and water.

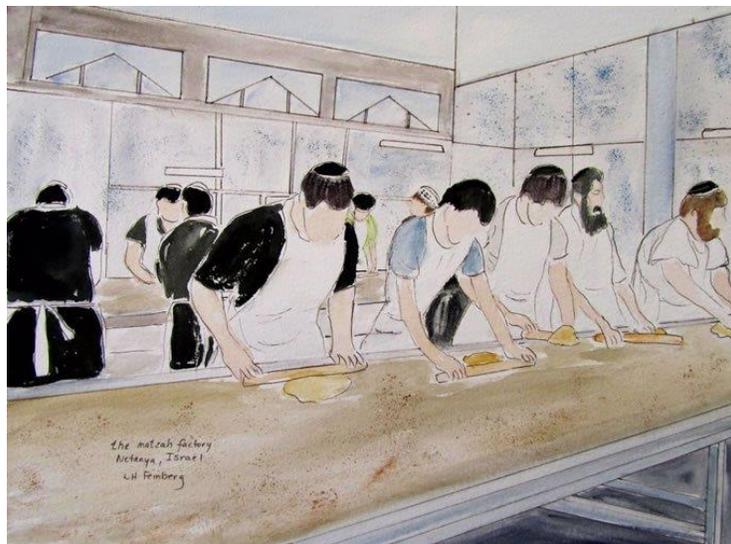
5. Matzah Made With Egg or Juice Is Not Ideal

The matzah eaten at the Seder is referred to as “poor man’s bread.” If the mix contains egg, juice, etc., it is no longer poor, but rich, and not fit for Seder use. An additional issue with matzah that contains anything other than flour and water is that it may rise and become *chametz* quicker than the flour-and-water variety. For this reason, Ashkenazim only use such matzah for the elderly or infirm on Passover (and not for the Seder).

6. It’s the “Food of Faith” and “Food of Health”

The Zohar refers to matzah as both the “food of faith” and the “food of health,” implying that eating matzah actually improves your physical health and bolsters your faith in G-d. The first Chabad rebbe would say: The matzah of the first evening of Pesach is called the Food of Faith; the matzah of the second evening is called the Food of Healing. When healing brings faith (“Thank you, G-d, for healing me”), then clearly there has been illness. When faith brings healing, there is no illness to start with.

7. Round, Handmade Matzah Is Ideal



Matzah Bakery by Linda Feinberg

Commonly known as *shemurah* matzah, round, handmade matzah is preferable for the Seder (or for the entire Passover). In addition to being traditional, it has the important benefit of having been made by an actual human being who baked it with holy intentions and took care to ensure that it did not rise—a requirement for the matzahs used at the Seder.

8. Not All Matzah Is Kosher for Passover

This may come as a surprise, but not all matzah is [kosher](#) for Passover. The box may look similar, and it may even have Hebrew letters all over it, but if there is no seal from a supervising rabbi or organization stating that the matzah is actually kosher for Passover, you can assume that no care was taken to ensure that the dough did not become *chametz*, and it may not be eaten on Passover.

9. Matzah Was Once Thicker and Softer

Did you know that the word [korech](#) (which we translate as “sandwich”) actually means “wrap”? That’s because until a few hundred years ago, matzah was thicker and softer than our thin, cracker-like matzah and was easily wrapped around the bitter herbs (and lamb).

10. Soviet Jews Clung to Their Matzah



Baking matzah in the shtetl (photo: Yad Vashem)

Many Jews from the Former Soviet Union can attest that their parents and grandparents went to great lengths to procure matzah for Passover. Even as successive generations of Jews knew less and less about their Jewish heritage and observance due to Communist suppression, they clung tightly to the mitzvah of eating matzah on Passover.

11. You Can Get Oat and Spelt Matzah

While traditional wheat flour is preferred, those with celiac and other conditions can use matzah made from spelt or oat flour, which generally costs more (it is a specialty item) and is not advisable for those who can eat regular matzah.

12. It Is the Only [Mitzvah](#) You Ingest

In today’s era, when there are no longer Temple sacrifices, the only thing we eat to fulfill a biblical commandment is matzah. So savor the moments you spend eating matzah, recognizing that doing so gives pleasure to your Creator.

13. It Must Be Eaten After Nightfall

We eat matzah during the Seder, after night has fallen. This is in accordance with the verse, “In the evening, you shall eat unleavened cakes.”² Practically, this means that the entire Seder, which centers around the consumption of matzah, must begin after night has fallen.

14. Matzah Was Offered in the Holy Temple

While many of us are familiar with animal sacrifice, the fact is that wine libations and stacks of matzah (!) were regularly offered in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

15. We Stop Eating It a While Before Passover

The long-established practice is to not eat matzah on the day before Passover, so that when we eat it at the Seder, it feels new and exciting. Some stop eating it two weeks or even a full month in advance, giving plenty of time to build up our matzah appetites.

16. It Has the Same Blessing as Bread

While matzah is very different from puffy bread, it is essentially . . . bread. That's why before eating matzah, you wash your hands and say the same blessing you would say before eating bread, acknowledging G-d, "Who brings forth bread from the earth."

17. Matzah Meal Has Mixed Reviews

Crushed matzah can become a type of flour, which can then be used to make kosher-for-Passover cakes and, of course, matzah balls. Note: Many (including [Chabad](#)) are particular not to eat anything that is made with matzah that has become wet. The exception is the eighth day of Passover, when *gebrochts*, wetted matzah, is a welcome addition to the Passover menu.

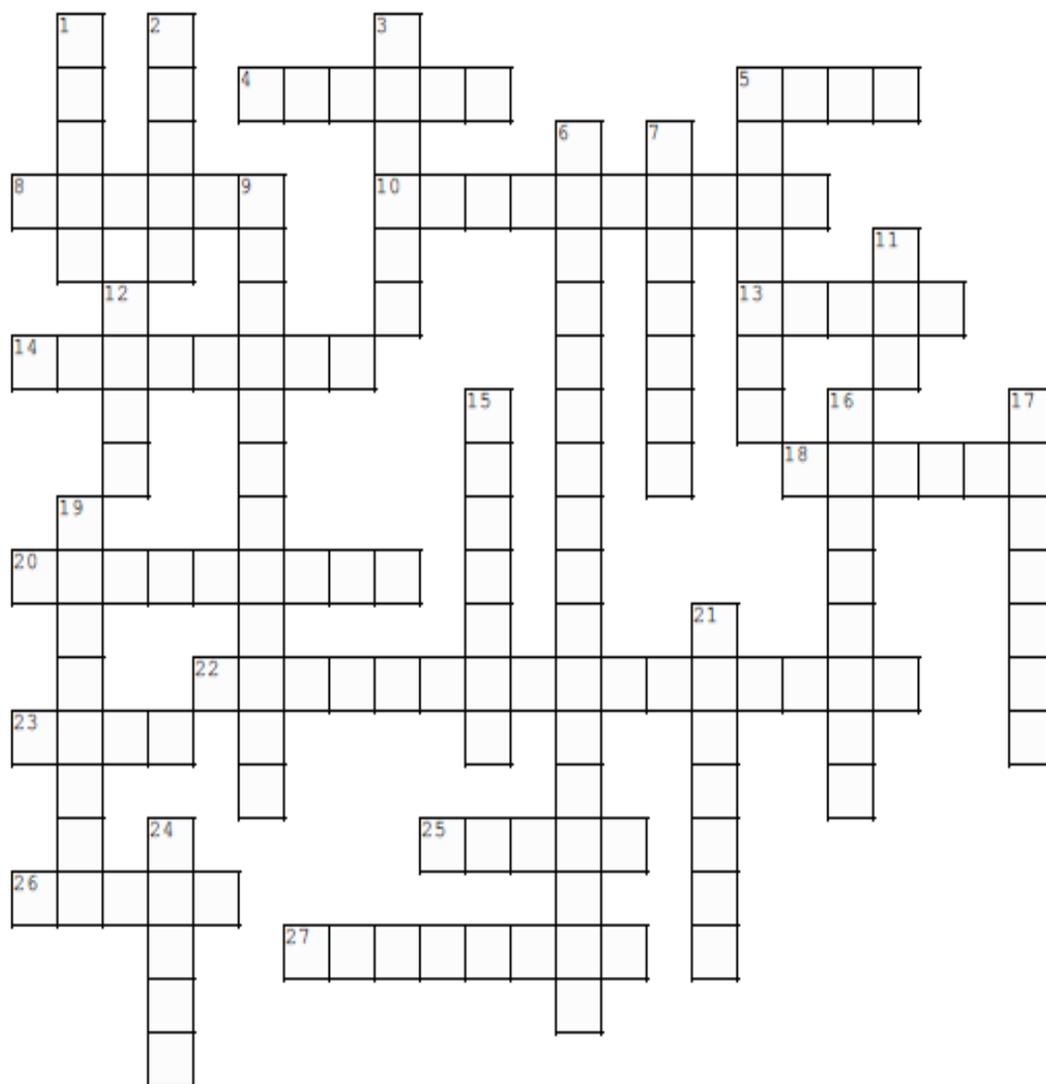
18. We Eat Matzah Again on [Pesach Sheni](#)

A month after Passover, we celebrate Pesach Sheni (Second Passover), which was the day that those who missed bringing the Passover offering in [Jerusalem](#) were able to make up for their loss. Today, it is marked primarily by eating matzah and reliving the day's message: it's never too late to make up for a missed opportunity.



Passover Cross Word

Complete the crossword below



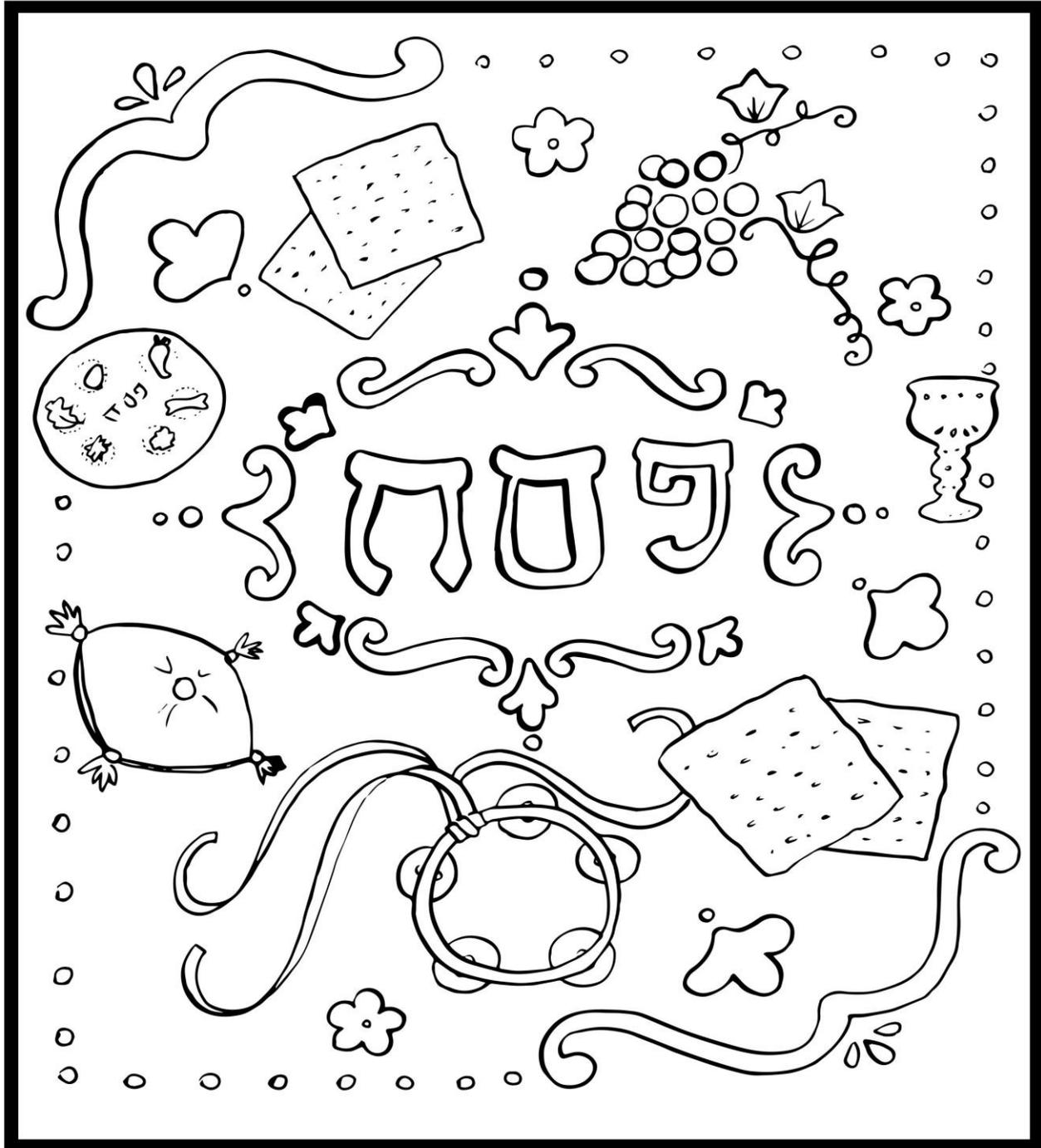
Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](http://TheTeachersCorner.net)

Across

- 4. Jewish holiday celebrated about Freedom (Hebrew)
- 5. Plague 3
- 8. Item on Seder Plate
- 10. Plague 5
- 13. Order of Passover service
- 14. Item on Seder Plate
- 18. Bread that didn't have time to rise
- 20. Book used to conduct Passover Seder
- 22. Amount of time matzah can be made in
- 23. sons
- 25. Plague 6
- 26. Plague 2
- 27. Item on Seder Plate

Down

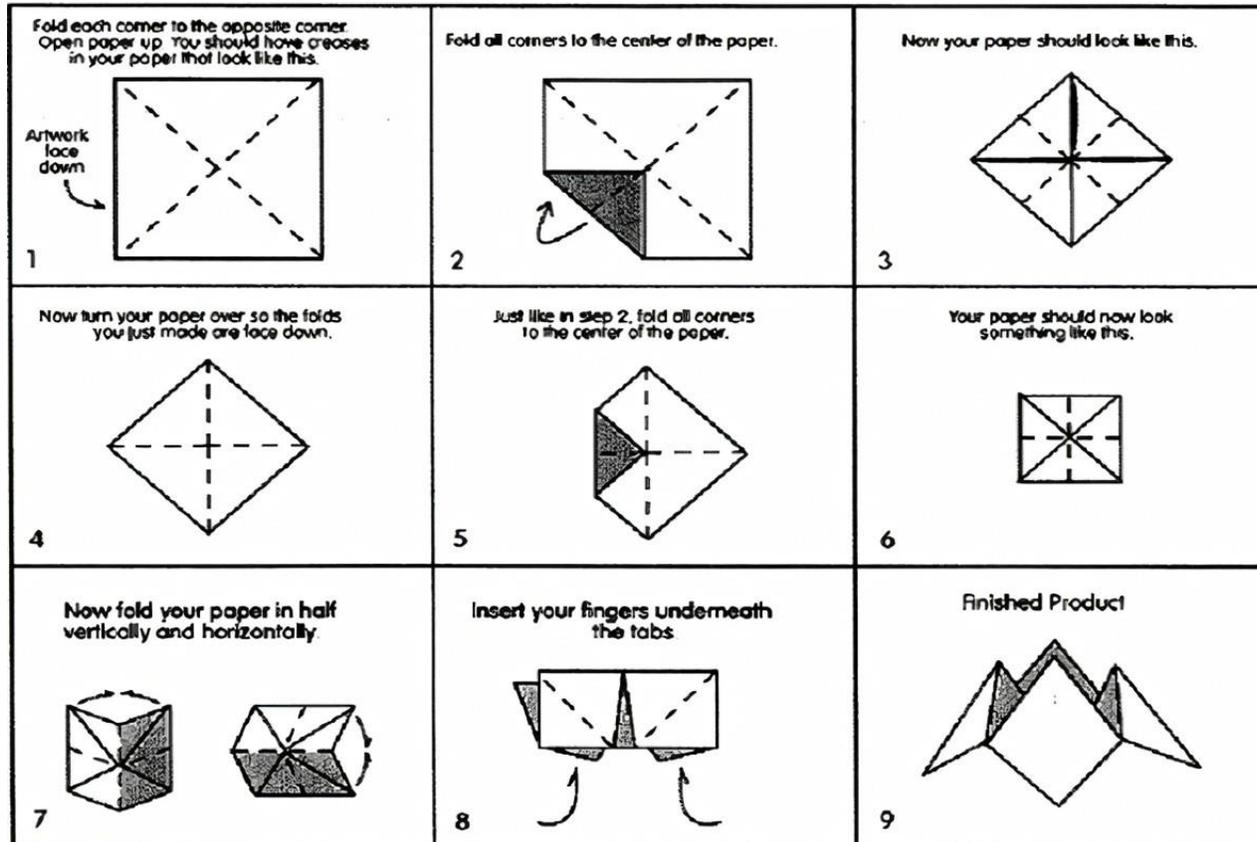
- 1. Person who took Jews out of Egypt
- 2. Plague 1
- 3. Item on Seder Plate
- 5. Plague 8
- 6. Plague 10
- 7. Item on Seder Plate
- 9. Item on Seder Plate
- 11. Number of plagues
- 12. Plague 7
- 15. Things that occurred to those oppressing the Jews
- 16. Plague 9
- 17. Food Jews can't eat on Passover
- 19. Jewish holiday celebrated about freedom (English)
- 21. Plague 4
- 24. Place where the Jews left from



www.shalom-living.com - art by Gracey Levine

How to Make a Pesach “Cootie Catcher / Fortune Teller”

based on [Passover Cootie Catcher Passover Pesach Card Decoration | Etsy](#)



Works best with light colored, thick cardstock paper. Customize with Pesach traditions, trivia and phrases. Decorate the outside panels. You can use during seder with different prompts and questions about the holiday.

Pesach Playlist

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL87G1M57Lnrik2wq7w0ct80qUrvCAbNw3>

