

# PASSOVER

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- A ball, beanbag, or other small object that can be thrown
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY

This is a storytelling improvisation game. Have the teens sit in a circle. One person begins by holding a ball (or another object that can be thrown) and telling a story until they reach a natural break point, usually a few sentences. Then the first storyteller throws the ball to someone else in the circle, who must continue the story beginning with the word, “fortunately”. The next person to continue must begin their part of the story with “unfortunately”, and so on.

*For example: (1) There once was a boy who lived on a farm with his grandparents. (2) Fortunately, they all loved each other and had everything they needed to live and be happy. (3) Unfortunately, one day a hurricane hit the farm, picked up the boy, and dropped him in a desert. (4) Fortunately, at just that moment a caravan came into view and stopped to help the boy by putting bandages on his scrapes and giving him water to drink. (etc.)*

DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP, YOU MAY HAVE ONE LONG STORY OR SEVERAL SHORT ONES. FOR LARGE GROUPS, ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO THROW TO SOMEONE WHO HASN’T HAD A TURN UNTIL EVERYONE HAS PARTICIPATED.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: LOW-POINT LESSONS

As an introduction to the lesson ask the group members to read together the following quote, and then invite them to comment on it. Use the questions below to draw out further discussion.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

**“God allows us to experience the low points of life  
in order to teach us lessons that we could learn in no other way.” - C.S. Lewis**

- Do you agree with the quote?
- Can you think of a time when you were in such a “low” place that you were praying for God to rescue you? What happened?
- What kind of lessons do you think we might only be able to learn by going through a difficult time? (How might facing difficulty affect your prayer life?)

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*A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *(Try to focus discussion in a way that will prepare the teens to sympathize with a group of people who are desperate for deliverance from an intolerable situation.)*
- *The second question may prompt confidences that require pastoral attention. Try to be sensitive to the occasion, and if necessary pause the lesson to pray for any current needs raised. Come equipped with a story you can relate in the event that your teens are uncomfortable sharing something this personal.*
- *Sometimes our “low points” may last for a long time. We don’t always get rescued in the time or the way that we would wish. That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t hear, or care, or that he isn’t working in ways that we can’t see at that moment. For example, sometimes it is in the difficult times when we learn to pray more sincerely, and more humbly, and when we learn to depend upon and draw closer to God. It is often the difficult times that remind us that “our citizenship is in heaven”. (Philippians 3:20)*

## THE LESSON: EXODUS 12

The first part of the lesson gives a bit of context to the Passover story in Exodus. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND “DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 2: OUR LIFE IN THE CHURCH” BY SUE CARELESS.)

Our Christian faith and history are rooted in the Jewish faith and history that we find in the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament. This means that to better understand some of our practices, we have to look back.

Consider this: on the night of the Last Supper, when Jesus introduced to his disciples what we now call “Holy Communion”, they were eating the *Passover* together. So in order to dive into the meaning behind Holy Communion, we need to take a look at where the feast of the Passover comes from.

Here’s the background: there had been a great famine and the people of Israel had gone to live in Egypt, where there was food. But while they were welcomed as guests when they arrived (during the time of Joseph), a few centuries later they had become slaves to the Egyptians and their suffering was great. The second chapter of Exodus tells us that “the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help... And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew”.

What followed was a long process during which God, through Moses and Aaron, told the Egyptian Pharaoh to let his people go. God sent plagues, but Pharaoh remained obstinate until the final tenth plague, at which point the people of Israel were finally freed.

As we read through this passage that describes the very first Passover, keep in mind that this was the memorial that Jesus and his disciples were observing on the night before the crucifixion, when he said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me... This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Refer to Exodus 12:1, 3-14, 21, 28-31, 50-51.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: EXODUS 12:1-51.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE.)

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What were the requirements for the Passover lamb? How does this point to Jesus?

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- What had to happen to the Passover lamb? How does this point to Jesus?
- Every year after the Exodus, the Israelites were commanded to keep the feast. Why? How does this point to Holy Communion?
- How does the idea of slaves being freed relate to what Jesus has done for us?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *The Passover lamb had to be a male “without blemish”. Jesus, our Passover lamb, was without sin. Hebrews 4:15 describes him as “one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”.*
- *The Passover lamb was killed, its blood was spread to protect the Israelites, and they were commanded to eat the flesh of the lamb. In a similar way, Jesus was killed, and we are saved by his blood. In Holy Communion we eat the bread and wine as his body and blood. Revelation 1:5 describes Jesus as “him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood”. Hebrews 10:10 says, “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...”*
- *The Israelites were commanded to keep the Passover as a never-ending memorial, a day of remembrance to be passed from generation to generation. Jesus gave us a new covenant and a new Passover, which we were commanded to keep as a memorial by his words, “Do this in remembrance of me”.*
- *Scripture describes us as “slaves to sin”, until we were freed by the work of Christ so that we could be in a right relationship with God.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the prayer plan that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families”, which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Set aside a few moments when you pray, to quietly reflect upon this verse from scripture (John 1:29):  
**“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”**

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this intercession, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*Almighty God, who art afflicted in the afflictions of thy people: Regard with thy tender compassion those in anxiety and distress; bear their sorrows and their cares; supply all their manifold needs; and help both them and us to put our whole trust and confidence in thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(INTERCESSION FOR THOSE IN ANXIETY, BCP PAGE 54)

## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS



HOLY COMMUNION:

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COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

## EXODUS 12: THE FIRST PASSOVER

<sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt... <sup>3</sup>Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup>And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbour shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup>Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, <sup>6</sup>and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

<sup>7</sup>"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. <sup>8</sup>They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup>Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts.

<sup>10</sup>And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. <sup>11</sup>In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. <sup>12</sup>For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. <sup>13</sup>The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt... <sup>14</sup>This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast..."

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb..." <sup>28</sup>Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

<sup>29</sup>At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock.

<sup>30</sup>And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. <sup>31</sup>Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said..."

<sup>50</sup>All the people of Israel did just as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron. <sup>51</sup>And on that very day the Lord brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.