

Introduction

Contributed by [Spencer Ruskin](#)

Source: Based on OurJewishCommunity .Org

Leader: Tonight, we celebrate the Passover holiday, one of the major festivals of Judaism. The long history of the Jews is one of contrasts – freedom and slavery, joy and pain, power and helplessness. The celebration of Passover reflects these contrasts. Tonight as we celebrate our freedom, we remember the slavery of our ancestors, and reflect upon the fact that many people are not yet free.

Leader: Each generation changes – our ideas, our needs, our dreams, our celebrations. In this way, Passover too has changed over many centuries. Our nomadic ancestors gathered for a spring celebration when the sheep gave birth to their lambs. Theirs was a celebration of the continuation of life. Later, when our ancestors became farmers, they celebrated the arrival of spring in their own fashion. Eventually these ancient spring festivals merged with the story of the Exodus from Egypt and became a new celebration – a celebration of life and freedom.

Leader: As each generation gathered around the table to retell the old stories, the symbols took on new meanings. New stories of slavery and liberation, oppression and triumph were added, taking their place next to the old. Tonight, we gather in remembrance not only of our people's ancient enslavement and liberation, but also in remembrance of the countless generations who have maintained this memory – who have passed it on to their children, and they to children of their own; we celebrate those who followed Moses and those who have kept the tradition alive these thousands of years.