

The Four Children - AJWS

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At Passover each year, we read the story of our ancestors' pursuit of liberation from oppression. When confronting this history, how do we answer our children when they ask us how to pursue justice in our time?

WHAT DOES THE ACTIVIST CHILD ASK?

"The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice you shall pursue,' but how can I pursue justice?" Empower him always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As Proverbs teaches, "Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."

WHAT DOES THE SKEPTICAL CHILD ASK?

"How can I solve problems of such enormity?" Encourage her by explaining that she need not solve the problems, she must only do what she is capable of doing. As we read in Pirke Avot, "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

WHAT DOES THE INDIFFERENT CHILD SAY?

"It's not my responsibility." Persuade him that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, "The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

AND THE UNINFORMED CHILD WHO DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK...

Prompt her to see herself as an inheritor of our people's legacy. As it says in Deuteronomy, "You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." At this season of liberation, join us in working for the liberation of all people. Let us respond to our children's questions with action and justice.