

# A Modern Take on The Four (or Five) Children

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Source:

You can look at the four sons as four generations of Jews in America today.

**The first generation** of eastern European Jewry who emigrated to America at the turn of the century are represented by THE WISE CHILD. This is the Jew who grew up with a strong connection to the Jewish way of life. His commitment to Judaism is unshakable.

His son, **the second generation**, is represented in the WICKED CHILD. This is the rebel who wants to succeed in his new life and take on Western values. Although he has grown up in a home full of Jewish values and an integrated Jewish life, he rejects this in favor of integrating into Western society and becoming accepted as the new American.

His son, **the third generation**, is represented by the SIMPLE CHILD. This child has spent Seder nights at his grandparents' table and has seen his grandmother light the Shabbat candles. He has a spattering of knowledge picked up at Hebrew school, but he doesn't know the meaning behind any of the symbols and is not very motivated to go beyond what he sees.

His son, **the fourth generation**, is represented in the UNINFORMED CHILD, who doesn't know how or what to ask. This child does not have memories of his great grandparents. He celebrates the American holidays and other than knowing that he is a Jew, has no connection whatsoever to Judaism. He sits at a traditional Seder night and does not even know what to ask because it is all so foreign to him.

Today there is a fifth son, the ABSENT CHILD, who is off in India or out at the movies on Seder night, not even aware that Passover exists. Anyone sitting at the Seder table is still connected to the Jewish people and heritage just by being there. We just need to get him interested enough to ask a question so a door can be opened for him