

Miriam's Cup: A Supplemental Reading for the Passover Haggadah

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: Miriam's Cup Supplement

This set of readings was formulated in order to highlight and celebrate Miriam's role in the deliverance from slavery and her leadership throughout the wandering in the wilderness. When the seder table is set, we place an empty cup alongside Elijah's cup. Each attendee at the seder then pours a bit of his or her water into the cup. This contribution symbolizes that, at every stage of her life, Miriam was integral in the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. We pour water, specifically, because it plays a recurring role in the Exodus – the rescue of Moshe, the first plague in Egypt when the water was turned to blood, the parting of the Red Sea, and so on.

Today, we continue the fight to protect women, to raise them up, and to honor their equality and agency. We take this moment to remember Miriam for the role model that she is, to honor the girls and women who are at the seder table, and to remember those who have touched our lives.

Reading: Exodus 2:1-10

1 A certain man of the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw how beautiful he was, she hid him for three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer, she got a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child into it and placed it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. 4 And his sister stationed herself at a distance to learn what would befall him. 5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile while her maidens walked along the Nile. She spied the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to fetch it. 6 When she opened it, she saw that it was a child; a boy crying. She took pity on it and said, "This must be a Hebrew child." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a Hebrew nurse to suckle the child for you?" 8 And Pharaoh's daughter answered, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10 When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who made him her son. She named him Moses, explaining, "I drew him out of the water."

Discuss:

Take a moment to honor the young girls who are participating in your seder. Share your hopes and dreams for them, and, if appropriate, have them share their aspirations with the seder guests.

Reading: Exodus: 15:20-21

20 Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her in dance, with timbrels. 21 And Miriam chanted for them, "Sing to God, for God has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver God has hurled into the sea."

Discuss: Take a moment to honor the women at your seder. Ask them what achievements in their lives give them the greatest sense of pride, and celebrate their contributions within the family and in the public realm.

Reading: Numbers 20:1-2 1

The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon, and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 The community was without water... [Rashi's Commentary: "From here we derive that all forty years they had the well in Miriam's merit."]

Discuss:

Take a moment to share a memory of a female role model in your life who is no longer with you, and reflect on what that loss has meant to your life.

For more information on women's rights, please visit rac.org/womens-issues.

For all Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism resources, please visit rac.org/Passover.