

Revenge of Dinah: Introduction

Contributed by [JUF Chicago / DePaul - Research Training Internship](#)

Source: Revenge of Dinah: A Feminist Seder on Rape Culture in the Jewish Community

This haggadah is brought to you by Cohort 3 of the Research Training Internship (RTI), which consists of 10 female identifying Jewish teens from the Chicagoland area. RTI was initially inspired by the New York based Jewish feminist and social justice group Ma'yan. After their initial success in New York, Ma'yan partnered with the Jewish United Fund and the Beck Research Initiative for Women, Gender & Community at DePaul University to bring the program to Chicago. Through intensive political education, open conversations around complicated yet important political and social issues, and ultimately the creation of a project, RTI hopes to give teens girls a space to become more aware and engaged members in their Jewish community. We spent the majority of our time learning about the various intersections of race, class, gender, and other aspects of one's identity, which all ultimately play a role in how rape culture affects each individual. In order to fully understand the implications of rape culture, we had to recognize that no person is affected in the same way. Rape culture does not affect any one community or one type of person, rather it impacts every one of us in different ways.

Throughout our research, we have found that rape culture is not talked about enough in the Jewish community. For this reason, we have chosen to target this haggadah towards an audience of primarily Jewish teens. Though not all those who read this haggadah may be religious (or even Jewish), we hope that they will find meaning and connection in the intersection of rape culture and Jewish rituals. We also would like to start a conversation about rape culture in our Jewish community, and dispel the myth that Jews aren't oppressed or that Jews are somehow exempt from experiences or perpetuating cultures of permissiveness around violence. In addition, we want to name that Jewish ritual can be done at any time. Traditionally, Seders are conducted in the spring during Passover. However, as young Jewish feminists, it is really powerful for us to imagine these rituals being used at any time of the year. Whether done "by the book" and in order, or selected piece-meal, the rituals we created can and should be used whenever our readers need to take up some space, heal, or just think through the complexities of rape culture and how they are implicated in it. Hopefully, it can be used as a part of our readers' life long learning and evolving commitment to social justice work in and out of the Jewish community.

Lastly, we want to give some attention to our decision to use "victim/survivor" to describe people who have been raped and/or experienced sexual or gender-based violence, whether physical, psychological, nancial, or social. We recognize that all such designations are inherently limiting and generalizing, and can never accurately capture the experiences or perspectives of everyone. We chose "victim/survivor" based on our own positionalities as young, feminist researchers who understand that some people do (understandably) feel victimized by sexual and gender-based violence, and some can reclaim power from it. We encourage our readers to replace "victim/survivor" with any language that fits your experiences and makes these rituals more authentic.

So if you have never heard the words 'rape culture' or you are new to the concept, our goal for this haggadah is simply to get you thinking. We urge you to take a good look at your lives and the lives of those around you and think critically about the ways in which rape culture leaves its mark. Rape culture impacts all of our lives differently, so it can be hard knowing where to start. Check out our 10 Commandments of Being An Accomplice, Fighting Patriarchy, and Shutting Down Rape Culture, and in the back of the book, we have provided a list of incredible local and national organizations you can get involved with, as well as some great media resources. While we hope these resources can help guide you in the right direction, they are by no means a comprehensive list. Enjoy, and selah.

-The RTI Chicago Cohort 3 Interns

Download the full haggadah here: <https://jufwebfiles.org/pdf/teens/RTI-Haggadah-Final.pdf>

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