

Four Children

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QUESTIONS

Leader: On Passover we tell our freedom story so that we can pass it on to new generations. Jewish tradition teaches that it is important to ask questions. We are often taught that the questions are more important than the answers, for it is only through inquiry that we can truly understand ourselves and the world around us.

On Passover it is traditional to recite four questions. One key question is: Why is this night different from all other nights?

All: Because tonight we remember that the things that divide us – race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, among others – also have the power to unite us.

Leader: Whether it be questions about this ritual or story, or questions about the experiences of others at our communal table, tonight is an opportunity to learn.

All: Tonight we pledge to engage with openness, understanding, and respect for all, because we learn and grow from many points of view and a variety of experiences and understandings strengthen the conversation about Jewish ideas.

And we also pledge to share the values expressed in the answers to our questions and pledge to live them out for all the rest of our days.

THE FOUR CHILDREN

Leader: At Passover we speak of four children. The **wise child** asks: Why do we ascribe privilege to some racial groups? Why do we elevate the traditions, foods and languages of some ethnic groups and not others?

Reader: School the wise child in the history of slavery and hatred, as it existed in ancient times, about the role of slavery in building the 'New World.' Teach them about the patterns of migration, the exiles, the hard choices and the lack of choices and how they shaped the ways we see each other. Teach them that beyond the history and institutions there are individuals, each with their own experiences. Help them to learn how to recognize what they do not know, how to respect the needs of others, and how to find strength from the diversity of humanity.

Leader: The **wicked child** says: You are much too sensitive. You make too much of this. There are always winners and losers in every society and in every era, we cannot expect to all have the same experiences.

Reader: Take a deep breath and remember that a closed mind is often attached to a closed heart. Engage this child by asking open ended questions with curiosity and compassion. Listen for the places of fear. Ask questions that may widen the narrow spaces that they may expand, if not now, then in the future.

Leader: The **simple child** says: I am colorblind. We are all human. I do not see the differences between people, I just see our humanity.

Reader: Gently teach the simple child of the value of color and difference. Teach them the value of their own experience that they may see the value in the experiences of others. Help them celebrate the many ways we can be human.

Leader: The child who cannot ask says: nothing.

Reader: With the child who cannot ask, share generously of the world. School this child in their own heritage but also in the heritage of others. Expose this child to many kinds of people, cultures, and customs. Let them taste many dishes, hear many types of music, and see a variety of arts and crafts so that they may build a broad and bountiful understanding of all that is beautiful in the world.

All: All of us are created in the image of God. Let us remember this as we move through the world. And with friends, family, in our conversations with others in school, let us talk about the many ways that hatred and assumptions diminish the holiness of others. Let us remember as we move through the world that we cannot know everything about others—until we begin to ask them questions.

The Racial Justice & Inclusivity Haggadah

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