

Dos and Don'ts at the Seder

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DO start your preparations early enough. Make sure your house is sparkling clean, and your table as beautiful as possible. Invite as a guest someone who is far from his own home.

DO have uniform Haggadot with good translations and perhaps transliteration for everyone at the table, in order that all can participate in the Seder without difficulty. These Haggadot are in addition to the decorative ones, or ones of special historical interest. Select, in advance, sections of the haggadot to be assigned for individual reading in English by those who may not be able to follow the Hebrew. Rehearse MAH NISHTANAH with the child who will ask the Four Questions, and also for other special parts given to individuals.

DO plan different wines, especially Israeli wines for the four cups. You may want to place a saucer under each wine cup to prevent excessive stains on the tablecloth. Arrange a cushion or pillow for the master of the house to recline on during the meal in the style of the "freemen" in ancient times. Remember to arrange for different red and white grape juices, including Israeli juices, for the children and those who do not drink wine.

DO remember to provide an appropriate small reward for the child who finds the AFIKOMAN. During the Seder the father hides a part of the middle matzah to be distributed and eaten later by all present. Toward the end of the meal, the father pretends not to notice that the children hid it. He offers a reward for its return, since the meal cannot be properly concluded until each person has tasted a piece of the AFIKOMAN. In some homes, the father will hide the AFIKOMAN and after the meal, they will search for it; in some homes, they are instructed "hot and cold."

DO suggest that one of the children prepare a talk for the Seder on freedom in modern times.

DON'T rush through the Seder; it is time that is being invested in your family and a family tradition for future generations. Plan ahead for the meal such that you have time for the traditional family songs and hymns at the end of the Seder.

DO use an attractive, different "Pesachdik" set of dishes which are used annually only for the holiday; they add to Seder beauty and dignity. Invest in different Passover plates, Matzah covers, Elijah cups, bowls for washing and similar ritual items that become family heirlooms.