



# The More Things Change

## Topic

Passover

## Relevant Vocabulary

## Grade Level(s)

Families

פסח ( <i>Pesah</i> )	Passover
יום טוב ( <i>Yom Tov</i> )	Jewish Holiday

## Big Ideas

- Even when life includes big changes, there are rituals and traditions that connect us as families and as a people.
- Ritual can be an important part of making connections through time and distance.

## Learning Targets

Families will:

1. Acknowledge the big changes at their Passover Seders.
2. Answer big questions about how Passover remains the same even when there are big changes.
3. Reflect on what traditions are most meaningful to them, their families, and the Jewish people as a whole.

## Prepare in Advance

- Print Same/Different Cards. Either cut them out for participants to pick or leave them as a sheet for the Seder leader to read out.

## Background for Leaders

One of the major themes of *Pesah* is asking questions. Questions are such an important part of the Seder that *מה נשתנה* הן (Mah Nishtanah, commonly known as the Four Questions) has become one of the highlights of the evening's events. This series of observations about how different the night of *Pesah* is from all other nights was first codified as part of the Seder as far back as the Mishnah ([Pesachim 10:4](#)). As put forth in the Mishnah, *Mah Nishtanah* is acknowledgement of how the structure of the meal is so different from a typical *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov* meal.\*

Even with all the encouragement to change things up in order to promote questions and discussion, there are many aspects of the Seder that remain the same. The theme of freedom from slavery runs through the Seder. The Haggadah [quotes Rabban Gamliel](#) that one has not fulfilled the obligation of the Seder unless they speak about the *Pesah* (in this case, the shank bone), *matzah*, and *maror*. Many people have traditions to eat the same foods each year at their Seders. In some ways, this is one of the great ironies of the Seder. While there



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is an injunction to change things up in order to get people, especially children, to ask questions and discuss the Exodus from Egypt, the night does follow a Seder, an order, that Jewish people have been following for thousands of years.

\*Note that the *Mah Nishtanah* comes directly after pouring a second glass of wine but before *Motzi* whereas normally one says *Motzi* and eats bread after saying *Kiddush* and drinking the first glass of wine.

### Description of Activities

Note that this activity can be done right after saying *Mah Nishtanah*, at the beginning of the Seder, or at any point during the Seder that seems appropriate. The cards could even be used at different parts of the Seder and then the big discussion held later.

1. Play the Same/Different Game.
  - a. Participants take turns picking cards and reading them out loud. (The Seder leader can also be in charge of reading the various items from a sheet.)
  - b. Whoever picked the card declares whether they think the answer is the same or different from last year and explains why. If the Seder leader is reading all of the possibilities, participants take turns responding.
  - c. Other participants get the opportunity to agree or respectfully disagree with the person who picked the card.
2. Ask Seder participants to focus on the big differences between Seder this year and past years. Discussion might range from the number of people who are not physically together at Seder and how people are connecting over Zoom instead of physically in person to how participants feel more fear or uncertainty this year than in past years.
3. Discuss how these differences affect the Seder experience.
4. Ask participants to focus on the major items that have remained the same about Seder this year even though there are such major changes. Discussion might range from the physical Haggadah that is being used to the content of the Haggadah to the meal being eaten.
5. Explore that, while there might be big changes this year, there are many aspects of the Seder that remain the same and that have been the same for more than 2000 years. The telling of the Exodus from Egypt has remained the centerpiece of the Seder and the thing that has tied together Jews around the world and across generations.
6. Ask participants to share favorite memories of past Seders and what they would like to see repeated in the future.
  - a. Optional: Participants can get up from the table to retrieve items that spur memories and share those items.
7. Discuss what parts of the Seder tie the Jewish people together as a whole and why it is important for there to be rituals that tie not only individual families together but also larger communities.



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### Same/Different Cards

<b>The Decorations on the Table</b>	<b>Getting Your Cheeks Pinched</b>	<b>What You Dip the <i>Karpas</i> Into</b>
<b>Who Searches for the <i>Afikoman</i></b>	<b>The Weather Outside</b>	<b>Which Dishes Are Being Used at Seder</b>
<b>The Food on the Seder Plate</b>	<b>The Food Being Eaten for the Seder Meal</b>	<b>How Many Cups of Wine/Grape Juice We Will Drink for the Seder</b>
<b>The Tune for <i>Mah Nishtanah</i></b>	<b>Where People Are Seated at the Table</b>	<b>Your Hair</b>
<b>The Cost of a Kid Goat</b>	<b>Your Outfit</b>	<b>How Bitter the <i>Maror</i> Is</b>
<b>Whether Simply Being Taken out from Egypt Would Have Been Enough</b>	<b>How You Feel about the Plagues against Egypt</b>	<b>The Seder Plate</b>