



4 Questions, 10 Plagues, Multiple Intelligences

Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that learners approach content through a variety of modalities. Gardner asserts that the realization of different approaches to learning should empower learners to explore the world through multiple avenues. Use the following activities to celebrate Passover in a variety of ways.



Logical / Mathematical

The Famous Fours—The number four is a major numerical theme throughout the Haggadah (4 children, 4 questions, etc.). Count how many sets of four there. (Are there more than four fours?) Create a chart that demonstrates the frequency of the fours. What other numbers do you notice in the Haggadah? Which appear the most?

A Plethora of Plagues—For little ones, count the number of plagues. For older ones look at the [Midrashim](#) that multiply the plagues to be 50 (Rabbi Yossi), 200 (Rabbi Eliezer), or even 250 (Rabbi Akiva). Connect this to the Existential intelligence to discuss why the plagues would be so powerful.

What's a Kezayit?—כֵּזַיִת (literally "like an olive") is the measurement of the size of a regular olive. It is also the baseline measurement for how much of a food needs to be consumed for it to actually be considered eaten. Determine the volume of a *kezayit*. Then figure out how much *matzah*, *maror*, etc. one needs to consume at the Seder. Compare results with [this](#) chart or [this](#) one. Check out [this](#) article on how big an olive is as well.

Which Way Did They Go?—Map out the route that *B'nei Yisrael* (the Children of Israel) took on their way out of Egypt. Check out [this](#) activity for older learners or [this](#) one for slightly younger learners for some help.

The 15 Steps of the Seder

1. קִדּוּשׁ
Kadesh (*Kiddush*—The first cup of wine)
2. וְרַחַץ
Urhatz (Washing Hands without a Blessing)
3. כַּרְפָּס
Karpas (Dipping)
4. יַחַץ
Yahatz (Breaking the Middle *Matzah*)
5. מַגִּיד
Maggid (Telling about the Exodus from Egypt)
6. רְחִיצָה
Rahitza (Washing with a Blessing)
7. מוֹצֵיא
Motzi (The Blessing for Eating Bread)
8. מִצָּה
Matzah (The Blessing for the *Mitzvah* to Eat *Matzah*)
9. מְרוֹר
Maror (Eating the *Maror*)
10. כּוֹרֵךְ
Korech (Eating Hillel's Sandwich)
11. שְׁלֵחַן עוֹרֵךְ
Shulhan Orech (The Meal)
12. צִפּוֹן
Tzafun (Dessert, i.e. the *Afikoman*)
13. בְּרָכָה
Barech (The Blessing after the Meal)
14. הַלֵּל
Hallel (Words of Praise for God)
15. נִרְצָה
Nirtza (Concluding Songs)



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Verbal / Linguistic

Found in Translation—Compare the language in different *Haggadot*. How are the translations different? Why might the different translators have chosen the words they did? Try finding differences in the Hebrew as well. How do those alterations change the meaning of the *Haggadah*?

Different Language, Different Sound—Many *Haggadot* contain at least three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic (*Ha Lahma Anya*, and *Had Gadya*), and the language into which the *Haggadah* has been translated. Explore how different languages are constructed and how they sound similar or different.

Ich Vil d’Fraigen de Fir Kashes—Say the *Mah Nishtanah* (aka the Four Questions) in [different languages](#). Try Hebrew, English, Yiddish, even Tagalog.

Thank You Sir, I Don’t Need More—*Dayenu* is a song which suggests that “it would have been enough” if God had given us only x, but God gave us more. Compose your own version of *Dayenu*. What do you feel fortunate to have or experience?



Visual / Spatial

Table It—Make the Seder table a part of the retelling of the Exodus narrative. Scatter art sand or brown sugar to turn the table into a desert. Cut blue paper and/or cellophane and add Lego figures to recreate the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. Pick another element from the *Haggadah* and come up with your own scene.

A Meme-ingful Seder—Prepare for Seder by creating memes that can be used to encourage lively discussion about each part of the Seder.

An Artful Approach—Use different *Haggadot* at the Seder. Look at how the art in the *Haggadot* helps to explain the Passover narrative. Compare the art from the different *Haggadot* and how the art presents different understandings of the narrative.

A Shapely Plate—Search online for examples of traditional and modern Seder plate arrangements? How are items on the plates ordered? What shape do they make as group? (Note that [different](#) people have [different](#) customs about how to arrange the Seder plate.) What is the shape of each individual item? Discuss what these different shapes and forms mean. Why might there be different shapes on the Seder plate? Consider making a PowerPoint or collage of a wide range of artists’ interpretations of this classic ritual.



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Musical / Rhythmic

Variations on a Theme—Sing different versions of favorite Passover songs. How many [different tunes](#) of [Kadesh Urhatz](#) can you sing? How [many for Had Gadya](#)? If it is your practice to do so, consider including instrumental backing.

Sound Effects—Imagine a movie sound-effect for each of the plagues. Record these before Passover or share them, using your voice, during the Seder.

Seder Original Soundtrack—Create a soundtrack for the Seder. Intersperse the various parts of the Seder with your favorite songs or write something original. Make sure to have song sheets ready so that everyone can join in.

You Were There—Create a guided meditation: What did it sound like on the shores of the Sea of Reeds, when the sea parted, when it crashed down on the Egyptians, and when the Israelites celebrated?



Body / Kinesthetic

Search and Destroy—Many people have the custom to search for *hametz* (leavened food) on the night before the Seder. Take a flashlight and search your home for any *hametz* that you might have. Put away (or burn) that *hametz* before Passover begins.

Travel the World at Your Table—Different cultures often incorporate different types of movement into the Seder. For example, Persian Jews whack each other with scallions during the singing of *Dayenu*. Explore other [cultural traditions](#) and incorporate them into your own Seder.

The Feeling of Food—The foods on the Seder have different tastes and textures. While partaking of the various Seder foods, focus on how the foods feel in your hands and in your mouth. How does the texture of the foods fit with what the food is meant to represent?

An Epicurean Feast—At the time of the Sages, the Seder was conducted with participants reclining on couches and/or pillows. At your own Seder, instead of sitting at a table, consider experiencing your Seder meal on blankets using pillows to recline as did our ancestors.

Sit Back and Relax—We recline during the Seder because that is how free people would eat. Do you feel more relaxed reclining at the table or sitting up? How is your body most relaxed? What would be your ideal way to be at the Table?

A Tented Seder—After leaving Egypt, *B'nei Yisrael* spent 40 years wandering in the desert. If you have space, [pitch a tent](#) and conduct your Seder (or at least part of it) inside.



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Naturalistic

From the Ground Up—*Karpas* is the food that is dipped in salt water during the Seder, though it is not one particular food. Many people use parsley, with celery and potatoes also having a place on the list. Gather a collection of foods that grow in the ground to use for *Karpas* at your Seder.

Matzah Missing—Most *matzah* is made out of flour, which has gluten in it. Explore how a person who follows a gluten-free diet can fulfill the mitzvah of eating *matzah*.

What's Cooking—Many people have the tradition not to eat roasted meat at Seder because the Passover offering, which is no longer offered, was roasted. Explore the difference between roasting, braising, and baking meat. Do an experiment with different cooking techniques to see how liquid affects how meat cooks.

Burn Baby Burn—Many have the tradition to burn *hametz* before Passover begins. Investigate what makes bread burn. With adult supervision, burn different types of bread. How long does it take for a slice of white bread to burn? What about a slice of wheat bread?

Rise Up—The early Egyptians developed [bread](#), one of the reasons given for the importance of *matzah* on Passover. Explore different bread-making techniques. What is different between adding yeast and not adding yeast? Try making traditional flat bread and loaf of white bread. What makes them different?

Picture This—During the Seder we make mention of spring and rebirth. Take a walk outside and make note of the signs of spring. Consider bringing a camera, taking pictures and printing them to decorate your Seder table.

On Shaky Ground—As *B'nei Yisrael* fled, they were hurrying from the dry climate of Egypt to the sands of the Sinai desert. Try running on different terrain and note the experience.



Interpersonal

More Than Four—At the Seder we ask many questions. In addition to the traditional questions, prepare questions that will help your guests know one another better or will allow guests to share their views on texts and traditions.

Good Times—The Passover meal is an opportunity to eat and celebrate together. While eating, share stories, ask each other what people plan to accomplish in the coming months, and rejoice in each other's company.

What Color Is Your Brick?—Prepare and sample *haroset* from countries such as Israel, Iraq, Spain, and Germany. What do these different types of *haroset* say about the people from the countries where they originated? Consider how food can connect you to people from other lands.

The Play's the Thing--Use Bibliodrama to explore various biblical relationships: Yocheved and bat Pharaoh, Moses and Miriam at various points in their relationship, Moses and the Pharaoh in whose house he was raised, etc.



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Intrapersonal

Leaving Egypt—The *Haggadah* states, “In every generation [each] person is obligated to view themselves as if they [personally] left Egypt.” How can you do this? What is your personal Egypt?

All by Myself—The Talmud posits that even someone who is by themselves is obligated to participate in a Seder, even going so far as to ask questions to oneself. Try taking a few minutes before the Seder to sit by yourself and think about what questions you have for yourself. What will you do to answer yourself?

Who I Am—Before the Seder, reflect on which of the four children you are and write why you feel that way. Many people posit that the four children represent an aspect inside each person. How does each child exist inside of you? On an interpersonal level, share your reflections at the Seder if you feel comfortable doing so.

The Strait and Narrow—The *Zohar* suggests that the Hebrew word for Egypt (מִצְרַיִם, *Mitzrayim*) is derived from the word for narrow places (מְצָרִים, *metzarim*). *B’nei Yisrael* leave *Mitzrayim* and find freedom. What “narrow place” or challenge would you like to overcome at this season?



Existential

Avadim Hayinu—We were slaves in Egypt but now we are free. Discuss what it means to be a people who were once slaves. Get moving and try some Bibliodrama about what each situation looks like.

We Are the Chosen—Give people the opportunity to choose items at the Seder table (e.g. choose from among different *Haggadot* to use at the Seder, choose the chair on which they will sit, choose their favorite part of the Seder). Discuss why people made their choices. What does it mean to choose? To be chosen? What does it mean to be a chosen people? What does it mean that God chose the Jewish people?

Uncle!—Invite participants to close their eyes and imagine what Egypt looked like during and after each plague. How devastated were the Egyptians and the land? Discuss why God would torture the Egyptians in this way. Why did God not simply lead *B’nei Yisrael* out of Egypt quietly in the dead of night?

Someone’s Knocking on the Door—As the door is opened for Elijah the Prophet, who is said to be the announcer of the Messiah, discuss why some people anticipate the coming of the Messiah. What does it mean for the Messiah to come? What can you do to perfect the world?

Feed the Hungry—“*Ha Lahma Anya*” invites all who are hungry to come and eat. Discuss with a grown-up the possibility of inviting someone who needs a place for Seder to join yours. Ask a question during your Seder about what is each person’s responsibility to make sure that all are fed.