

TH Activity Plan – Passover Celebration with Plants

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Photo by L. Fleming & The Nosh



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will learn about plants important for Passover Celebrations & transplant parsley herb into a container for personal use.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Expand knowledge of cultural traditions involving plants; expand plant knowledge

Physical: Identify food substitutions for Passover celebrations

Psychological/Emotional: Enhance empathy through care & nurturing

Sensory: Taste, feel & smell edible & non-edible plants

Social: Expand tolerance; listen attentively when others speak; increase social interactions

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing Passover as the Jewish celebration of freedom, sharing a few facts including those where plants play a role in Passover.
3. The session's focus on plants includes sensory engagement touching, smelling & tasting plants. With each plant, its symbolic significance to Passover is shared (refer to points below). Forbidden food is also mentioned, plant & non-plant items. Demonstrating the components of a [seder plate](#) may also be appropriate.
4. Facilitator distributes materials for potting the herb [parsley](#) (*Petroselinum crispum*), one of Passover's symbolic plants. Participants transplant it into blue & white containers.
5. Group discusses flowers that are symbolic of spring, Passover & Easter including lilies, violets, carnations, daisies, tulips and hyacinths. Stressing common ground between the spring holidays can foster understanding, tolerance and goodwill.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Plants have played a role in Jewish celebrations for Passover, also named the Festival of Freedom. Flowers are not part of the religious ceremonies but they do remind people of springtime when Passover occurs. Different symbolic foods and objects

represent different aspects of the story of the Exodus and the Jewish people's liberation from slavery in Egypt. Delivering a TH session with the theme of Passover can be inclusive for all groups and educational for all participants, recognizing non-Easter celebrations, and supporting tolerance and peace.

Sensitivity to individual and group cultural and religious affiliations should be exercised. Many in today's society are aware of Passover, an important celebration for many globally. Other spring holidays like Easter can be

Materials

Plants used in Passover celebrations
(parsley, onion, horseradish)

Spring flowers like daisies, tulips
etc.

Potting medium, blue & white
containers, parsley herb, water
can

Optional: matzah, parsley herb
butter, romaine lettuce

Gloves, wipes

celebrated concurrently or in other sessions. Refer to THADs [Easter Basket with Ryegrass](#) and Easter Extravaganza with Flowers.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. As with all TH activities where participants will taste or eat plants, allergies, contraindications with medication or swallowing issues or need to be identified prior to session.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: The 7 symbolic foods of Passover include plant products—maror/chazeret (horseradish), maror/chazeret (onion), karpa (parsley) along with non-plant foods of shankbone, roasted hard-boiled egg, and charoset.

Each item on the seder plate (photo below) tells a story. Symbolism of the plants include: karpas/parsley – initial flourishing of Israelites and new spring; haroset – sweet fruit paste of honey, nuts, apples for example for mortar; maror bitter herb like [horseradish](#) – the taste and bitterness of slavery; hazeret, the second bitter herb often [romaine lettuce](#), and more recently, oranges representing the role of women and/or gays and lesbians in Jewish life ([Rabbi J. Jacobs, 2025](#)). For purposes of THAD, these are condensed facts that can be explored further. Some are now veganizing the seder plate where roasted lamb shank bone is replaced with roasted beet and egg replaced with an avocado pit, white eggplant or chive bulb, these accepted substitutes according to Jewish law ([Gottlieb, 2022](#)).

Forbidden foods on Passover, known as hametz, were fermented products of five grains—wheat, spelt, rye, oats and barley. Touching examples of raw grain can provide a sensory facet to the session.

Flowers are part of the Passover tradition though not symbolic. Flowers in shades of blue and white, along with lilies, violets, carnations, daisies, tulips and hyacinths are used for celebrations.

Session options include decorating a container with blue and white for repotting the parsley, growing parsley from seed, having participants explain the symbolism of the various plants, and discussing Seder traditions.



Seder Plate

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Gottlieb, L. (2022). [How to make a vegan seder plate for Passover](#). *My Jewish Learning.com*.

Jacobs, J. (2025). [The seder plate](#). *My Jewish Learning.com*.

Magnusson, M. (2023). [What size container to grow parsley for continuous harvest?](#) *MattMagnusson.com*.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.