

• CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM



PASSOVER

GUIDE •

WE REMEMBER



*One generation will
commend your works
to another; they will
tell of your mighty
acts.*

Psalm 145:4

Through Passover we celebrate God's faithfulness, our rescue from slavery to freedom, our welcome into His kingdom of light and our call to faith in the face of adversity.

The Passover dinner helps us to reorient our hearts and minds by remembering what God has done for us. We retell the stories which remind us of God's great acts of salvation through history, and of what He has done for us personally.

As we share the stories and traditions with our children, and discuss with them what they mean, we invite them to join us in recalling.

The Passover dinner was celebrated by God's people from the time of their rescue from slavery in Egypt, and Jesus celebrated it annually. His final meal with his disciples, was a Passover dinner, and at this meal He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15-16)

In this season, may we find renewed peace, hope and love as we pause to remember and celebrate.

USING THIS GUIDE



Lay up these words in your heart . . . teach them to your children, talking of them . . . when you lie down and when you rise.

This guide is a collation of ideas for celebrating Passover. Some of the elements of the meal are based on Jewish tradition, other elements are borrowed from many Christians who have suggested them as they have celebrated Passover, and others are things I have experimented with over the years.

I encourage you to decide what would make this a joyful and meaningful celebration for you by choosing what you would like to include from the ideas listed. This meal can be as simple or elaborate as you would like. Adapt the activities to your unique family culture, and come to the meal with an expectant heart.

I have sprinkled many ideas for including children throughout the guide.

I have placed elements of Passover in a suggested order, but you can move things around. The four cups, which are explained in detail in the coming pages, are the anchor points for the evening; two cups before and two cups after the food is served. The information and bible verses on the four cups can be printed and read out over the course of the evening.



KIDS

Activities

HOW DO WE INVOLVE CHILDREN?

There are plenty of ideas and activities for children included in this guide. Pick those that you think your children would be most interested in! Some of the activities could be done on another day if you would like to have some meaningful family time over the Easter and Passover season.

If you have young children, start off the evening in the lounge or outside. The children can move around freely for many of the early activities such as washing hands. We usually bring the seder plate onto the coffee table so that the children can more easily share all the interesting foods.

Read the passover story snuggled up on the couch or head outside into the garden to act it out.

MENU



What to serve? You can choose any special meal that your family enjoys, or make a meal based on the first Passover - matzah (unleavened bread), lamb and bitter herbs. I like making a salad using some bitter leaves such as rocket, roasting lamb with veggies and serving a tasty desert.

The Seder Plate is the centrepiece of the table and contains things which help to tell the story of the Exodus. Each has a special significance.

You will need a plate with parsley, bitter herbs (horseradish, rocket, radish, etc), matzah (unleavened bread), salt water, charoset, a boiled egg and a bone (for display only - this is usually a shank bone).

You will also need a napkin containing 3 pieces of matzah stacked one on top of the other.



Where to find Passover foods?

Matzah is a flat bread made without yeast. It can be ordered online from specialty stores. It contains only 2 or 3 ingredients and is fairly easy to make - you can find many recipes online. Otherwise improvise with items such as water biscuits or naan bread.

Charoset is a delicious dip made with apples and nuts - there are many recipes online.

Four cups of red wine or grape juice are traditionally drunk during the Passover meal.

This is done in a similar way to a toast - you don't have to drain your cup each time! You can choose to serve these drinks, or whatever else you have available to drink as a substitute.



KIDS

Activities

BUILD SOME EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION BY INVOLVING YOUR CHILDREN IN PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEAL.

SETTING THE TABLE

Involve your children in setting a beautiful table for Passover. Collect some greenery from the garden to decorate the table. Older children may like to make place names for each guest at the table. Add fairy lights or candles.

Hang a piece of red fabric over a doorway or window to represent the blood that was painted on the doorframes of the homes of God's people at the first Passover.

If your children enjoy getting dressed up in their smartest clothing then encourage them to dress for the occasion!

RED SEA PARTING

A fun way to decorate the table is to use a blue tablecloth, or spread a blue piece of paper across the centre of the table to represent the sea. Add a narrow piece of brown kraft paper as the pathway through the sea that the Israelites walked across on, and then some little figures (wooden peg dolls or lego figures) walking on the path.

Passover SEDER

THE PASSOVER MEAL IS KNOWN AS THE SEDER WHICH MEANS 'ORDER' AND REFERS TO THE PARTICULAR ORDER THAT THE MEAL IS DONE IN. HERE IS THE ORDER WE WILL USE IN THIS GUIDE.

REMOVING LEAVEN
LIGHTING CANDLES
WASHING HANDS
BREAK AND HIDE THE MIDDLE MATZAH
FIRST CUP: SANCTIFICATION
TELLING THE STORY
EATING FOODS FROM THE SEDER PLATE
SECOND CUP: DELIVERANCE
THE MEAL IS SERVED!
FINDING THE AFFIKOMAN
THIRD CUP
HALLEL: SONGS OF PRAISE
FOURTH CUP

This is a celebration of freedom! There is a particular order in the meal, yet it is relaxed and informal. Take your time, rejoice, ask questions, ponder the stories and the mystery of God's plan. Enjoy this time together.



LEAVEN & LIGHT



Traditionally all leaven is removed from the house and for seven days, starting on the eve of Passover, no leaven is used. Households clear out all bread or other products made using yeast, baking powder or other raising agents. The children are then given the honour of removing the final pieces of leaven. Parents hide small pieces of bread around the house for the children to find. Once all the pieces have been found and removed (usually by burning them!) the house is declared free of leaven and the Passover can begin! If you would like to do this with your children, explain that the bible tells us that leaven represents sin. At Passover, we remember that Jesus has cleaned us from sin, and we get rid of sin in our lives by repenting and asking God for His forgiveness. Then invite them to go hunting!

Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast - as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. - 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Lighting candles At the start of the evening, light some pretty candles on your table and pray for your time together. If you would like to, you can incorporate the imagery of light in your opening prayer: "Thank you God that You have come into the world as the light, to rescue us from the darkness."

WASHING



Washing Hands

Before the meal, each guest washes their hands. Children may enjoy being involved in gathering a bowl, a jug filled with water and a towel, and helping each person to wash their hands. You could pray for each person as you pour water over their hands, thanking God for forgiving their sin and asking for a special experience of His truth and love as you share this celebration. You could also wash each other's feet, remembering how Jesus did this at his final Passover meal.



Breaking the Middle Matzah

Your napkin with 3 pieces of matzah represents God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Take the middle piece of Matzah, break it in half, wrap one half in the napkin and hide it to be found after the meal by the children. It is known as the Afikoman. When Jesus died, His body was broken and then hidden for three days.

Four cups

You can explain that you will be drinking four cups of wine/juice during the meal. If you wish, read out the section on the Four Cups. If you have young children, I would leave this out! Have each person fill their cup for the first cup.

FOUR CUPS

God's promises to His people in Exodus 6 are remembered by drinking four cups of wine during the meal - each cup symbolises a promise. These four cups are the main markers that will guide you through your Passover celebration.

1

SANCTIFICATION

I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians

2

DELIVERANCE

I will free you from being slaves

3

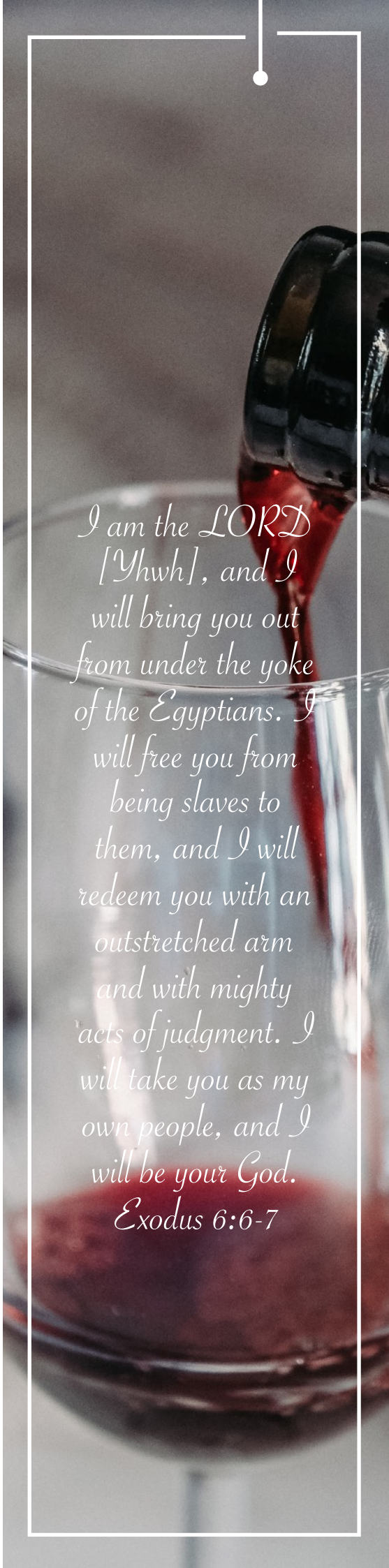
REDEMPTION

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement

4

ACCEPTANCE

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God



*I am the LORD
[Yhwh], and I
will bring you out
from under the yoke
of the Egyptians. I
will free you from
being slaves to
them, and I will
redeem you with an
outstretched arm
and with mighty
acts of judgment. I
will take you as my
own people, and I
will be your God.
Exodus 6:6-7*

SANCTIFICATION



"I will bring you out..."

As we drink the first cup we remember how God promised to remove His people from the world empire of Egypt and brought them into a world of freedom. He set them apart and gave them a purpose - to be a light to all nations around them.

This cup has incredible significance in the life of a Christian. We have been removed from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light because of what Christ has done for us. We've also been given a purpose - we've been set apart from the world to be a light of hope to all people as we follow Jesus and grow to be more like Him.

Colossians 1:12-14

[Give] thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1 Corinthians 1:30

You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

THE STORY

Telling the story of how God rescued His people from slavery is the most important part of the Passover Seder. The story is recounted in Exodus chapters 3 through 14.

Story highlights can be found here:

Exodus 3:1-10

Exodus 6:1-10

Exodus 7:14-18

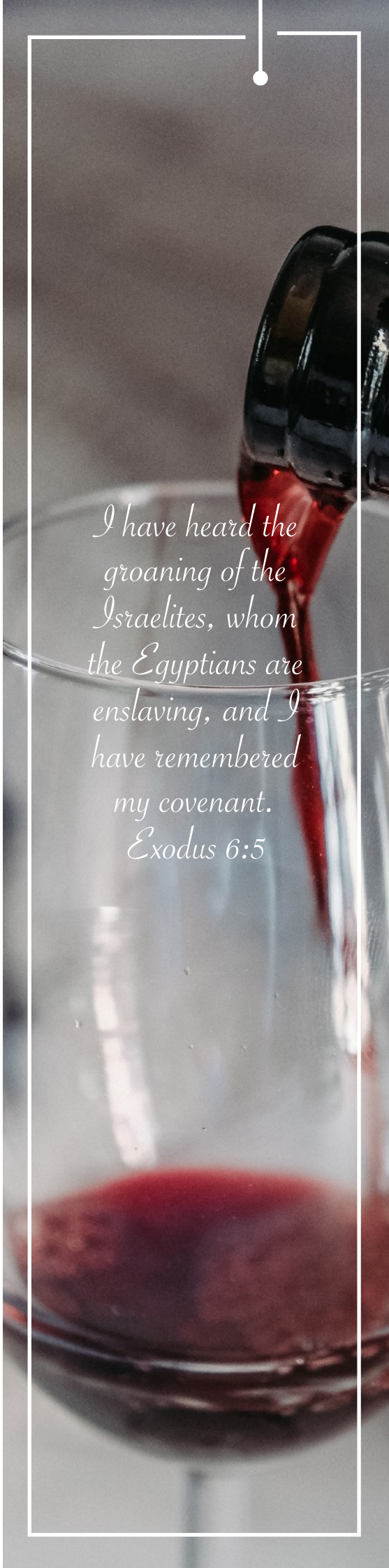
Exodus 12:1-14, 31-34

Exodus 14:10-14, 21-29

You can read these passages of scripture, or think of an engaging way to present the story:

- Tell the story by heart
- Read the story from a children's bible
- Act out the story
- Watch the animated movie 'The Prince of Egypt'

Children can join in the repeated refrain 'Moses said to Pharaoh: "Let my people go!" But Pharaoh said: "No!"



*I have heard the
groaning of the
Israelites, whom
the Egyptians are
enslaving, and I
have remembered
my covenant.
Exodus 6:5*



CHILDREN LOVE ACTING OUT STORIES. THE STORY OF THE RESCUE OF GOD'S PEOPLE FROM EGYPT IS AN EPIC TALE GREAT FOR ACTING OUT.

PASSOVER PLAY

Older children may enjoy working on a performance for the family, or you may choose to have the whole family involved in acting out the story. If you have younger kids, keep this simple by reading out the story from a children's bible and then ask the children to act it out as you read the story. It can be done without prior practice; just allow them to enjoy interpreting the story on a stage.

Moses and Pharaoh are the two main characters, and other characters can include Aaron, Pharaoh's attendants and ordinary Israelites.

Simple props work well - a fancy chair for Pharaoh's throne, pieces of fabric or adult T-shirts for clothing, tea towels for headwear, a stick for Moses' staff and some palm branches to keep Pharaoh cool.

TEN PLAGUES PUPPETS

Head to Etsy for some fun [plague puppets](#) which you can print and glue to popsicle sticks.

Plagues of EGYPT

We celebrate our freedom tonight, a freedom that came at great cost. And so we remember the Egyptians who suffered these plagues. We also remember Jesus who bore our punishment and was separated from His Father while enduring the cross.

Younger children may enjoy creating sound effects for each plague - read out the plague's name and the sound, and encourage them to repeat each sound.

BLOOD

er yuk!

FROGS

ribbit ribbit

LICE

scratch scratch

FLIES

zing zing

ANIMAL PLAGUE

ker splat!

HAIL

clatter clatter

LOCUSTS

munch munch

DARKNESS

ooo! ooo!

DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

Seder

PLATE

After the story, sample all the foods on the Seder Plate together. As you eat each talk about what each items means as a way of recapping the story. Try making a little entree out of matzah, charoset, parsley and the bitter herb. Eat this together with the second cup of deliverance.

MATZAH

Bread made without yeast reminds us of how the Israelites had to leave in a hurry - they had no time to wait to let their bread rise. Leaven represents sin, and the bread also reminds us of Jesus who was without sin.

BITTER HERBS

Remind us of the bitterness of slavery.

PARSLEY DIPPED IN SALT WATER

The parsley reminds us of the branches that were used to paint blood over the doorframes of the Israelite houses. The salt water reminds us of the tears the Israelites cried while they were slaves.

EGG

Remind us of the promise of new life.

BONE

A reminder of the lamb which was killed

CHAROSET

The sweet charoset reminds us of the mortar used with the bricks which the Israelites were forced to make during their slavery.

DELIVERANCE



"I will free you from slavery..."

The people of God had been living in Egypt for 400 years, and for most of those years had been living under the burden of Egypt and the bondage of slavery, building a kingdom that was not theirs. This cup is a reminder of the good news that was brought to the Israelites when God said He was going to deliver them from slavery.

We are reminded that we have been set free. We've been delivered from the bondage of sin and given new life. We've been set free to serve the living God.

Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-5

You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.

Romans 6:16-18, 23

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hebrews 2:14-15

By his [Jesus'] death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.



Time for Dinner



KIDS

Activities

THE HUNT FOR THE AFIKOMAN - THE MIDDLE PIECE OF MATZAH

After the meal, children hunt for the Afikoman, the middle piece of Matzah which was wrapped in a napkin and hidden. Award a prize, such as some small chocolates, for the child who finds the Afikoman to share with the other children.

Remind them that when Jesus died, he was buried for three days and then rose from the dead! This piece of bread reminds us of Jesus' body which was broken, buried and rose again.

Break the Afikoman and share it together to complete the meal. Read the section on the third cup of deliverance, and drink that together with the matzah.

EASTER STORY CARDS

If you would like to continue this conversation with your children over a few days, you can purchase and print these wonderful [Easter Story Cards](#) which highlight the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.

REDEMPTION



"I will redeem you with mighty acts..."

This cup reminds us of God's words to His people that He is going to redeem them and take them back. He was going to come to them and rescue them.

This cup is familiar to us because this is the cup which Jesus took, the cup after the meal, and used it to explain that through His death and the shedding of His blood, He was going to provide forgiveness of sin, and rescue us from the penalty of sin and death. We remember the blood of Christ, the perfect lamb of God, that was shed for us when he redeemed us and bought us back.

1 Peter 1:18-21

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Isaiah 53:4-9

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. For the transgression of my people he was stricken, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.



Pray together and thank God for His rescue of you. Sing some of your favourite songs of praise before ending off with the final cup of Acceptance.

ACCEPTANCE



"I will take you to be my people and I will be your God..."

This cup reminds us of God's promise to take the people as His own, and to be their God. He accepted His people, and welcomed them into a close relationship with Him.

As Christians, we can take this cup because by the blood of the lamb, we are no longer strangers and aliens, but we have been accepted by God because of what Christ has done. We have been adopted as sons and daughters of the living God.

Ephesians 2:12

At that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



SOME ADDITIONAL FUN ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY WITH YOUR CHILDREN!


THE EXODUS DRILL

Create an obstacle course for your children. Tell them to pretend they are escaping from Egypt - when you give the signal let them grab a backpack and complete the obstacle course around the house. Finish off with a special drink together (a smoothie or hot chocolate), and wonder what it would have been like to have to leave in such a hurry. If your children are older, you might want to do this after dark with torches!

WOOLY SHEEP CRAFT

Gather some yarn. Google an image of a lamb and print. Use as a template to cut the shape of a lamb out on a piece of thick cardboard.

Let your children wrap the lamb with the yarn, going around and around in different directions to cover it. Tuck the end in or secure with a knot. You can colour the sheep's face with crayon. Talk about the blood of the lambs painted on the doorposts of houses, and how Jesus was called God's lamb.

A white lamb with pink ears stands in a lush green field. To the right, a wooden fence post is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

He took us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, from deep darkness to great light and from bondage to redemption.

