

Wilderness Torah's Passover in the Desert Second-Night

Seder Youth Skit: *The Four Children* Collaborative Performance

Art & Storytelling Around the Fire

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Time frame: 1 hour preparation time, and 15 minutes skit that will be performed as part of Wilderness Torah's second-night Passover Seder bonfire on April 11, 2017

Location: Passover in the Desert Festival, Panamint Valley, CA
To be implemented with eight children ranging from ages 3-13

Program Overview

As part of Wilderness Torah's Passover in the Desert festival, for the second-night Passover seder, we are doing an off-the-page co-created celebration around the bonfire! The Passover story will come alive through the brilliant and creative minds of each of member of the village, and be experienced through the *ancient art of performative storytelling*.

On this night, all present in the intergenerational village will assemble to co-create various parts of the traditional seder in small groups. Each group will create a short skit (about 15 minutes) about one aspect of the seder and perform it around the fire for all to witness. Each group's performance will be unique and collaborative, and will all weave together to become the entire second-night seder experience. Through this experiential approach to retelling the story, we hope to inspire creativity, embodiment, connection and fun for folks of all ages.

The youngest members of the village will come together as their own group, and create and perform a skit about "The Four Children." This youth program for the second-night seder is based on the symbolism and significance of the number *four* in nature and in Judaism. At its core, it is inspired by the energetic qualities of the four children of the Passover story (simple, wicked, wise, the one who doesn't know how to ask), the four directions (east, south, west, north), the four elements (earth, fire, water, air), the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), four major life stages (childhood, adolescence, adult/elder, birth/death), and the four worlds in Jewish mysticism (*Atziah, Beriah, Yetzirah, Chayot HaKodesh*), and others.

Goals and Enduring Understandings:

Participants will:

- Understand the significance and symbolism of the number *four* in the Passover story, in nature and in Judaism. They will explore how the themes relate to one another.
- Understand the overlapping qualities of nature's cycles, the Jewish calendar cycle, and human growth cycle.
- Embody the emotional qualities of each of the four children of Passover. They will think about how they personally might relate to the essence of each Passover child as it pertains to their own life stages.
- Begin to understand the energetic qualities of the four direction, elements and seasons
- Access their sense of creativity, play and emotional intelligence
- Collaborate and interact with other youth of different ages
- Perform in front of the whole village around the fire, be seen for their gifts by the adults, strengthen their confidence, face any fears of public speaking or performing, and have fun in the process

Materials needed

- Pen and paper for writing down ideas and the skit
 - Firewood for the fire
 - Maps of the Medicine Wheel and circular Jewish calendar (optional references)
 - Any props desired for the skit
 - Open hearts and minds!
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Session Plan

I. Planning Hour: Introducing this theme of the youth group's skit (1 hour)

! Explanation of the theme of the number *four* (5 min):

- In Nature – where do we see the theme of *four*?
 - Four elements
 - Four directions
 - Four seasons
- In Passover
 - The four questions
 - The four children
 - The four cups of wine
 - *Bonus: In the story, the four promises God made to the Israelites
- Let's widen it to Judaism. Where might you see the number four in Judaism?
 - Four foremothers: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah
 - Four angels: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael
 - The four letters in God's name: Yud-Hei-Vuv-Hei
 - *Bonus: The four major holidays agricultural & earth-based holidays: Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Tu B'Svhat
 - *Double Bonus: The four worlds in Jewish mysticism: *Atziah, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Chayot HaKodesh*

Other important *fours*:

- Stages of life: birth, youth, adult (or elder), death
- Aspects of life: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical
- Centers of self: heart, mind, body, spirit/soul

! The Four Children deep dive (10 minutes):

- Ask: Does anyone know who the four children of Passover are?

- Explain: the simple child, the wicked child, the wise child, the one who doesn't know (how to) ask
- Break it down one by one:
 - **Simple Child:**
 - " Ask: What are the qualities or associations you have with the word "simple"? Other words are "naïve," "ignorant," "pure," "essence"
 - " Act: Ok great, now try to feel those qualities in your body. Can you act them out? Can you show me what "simple" looks like?
 - " Now interact with someone else in the group, acting as a "simple person," asking each other questions:
 - Example of "simple questions:" What time is? Who are you? Where are we going? What's this? How do you do that?
 - **Wicked Child:**
 - " Ask: What are the qualities or associations that we have with the word "wicked"? Other words are "challenging," "evil," "judgmental," "rebellious"
 - " Act: Ok great, now try to feel those qualities in your body. Can you act them out? Can you show me what "wicked" looks like? (think: attitude)
 - " Interact with others in the group, ask questions that pose a challenge and that are "wicked"
 - Examples: Why would you want to do that? Can't wait play another game? When are we going home? Why do you even like that?
 - **Wise Child:**
 - " Ask: What are the qualities or associations that we have with the word "wise" or "wisdom"? other words "profound," "intelligent," "curious"
 - " Act: Ok great, now try to feel those qualities in your body. Can you act them out? Can you show me what "wise" looks like?
 - " Interact with others in the group, ask questions that feel "wise," philosophical, deep...
 - Examples: I wonder what will happen if...? What's the meaning of...? How will I know? Are you sure about that?
 - **The child who doesn't know (how or what) to ask:**
 - " Ask: What are the qualities or associations that we have with this concept? Other ideas are: one who doesn't have the words, doesn't know there are options or alternatives...
 - " Act: Ok great, now try to feel those qualities in your body. Can you act them out? Can you show me what not knowing looks like?
 - " Interact with others in the group. How can you ask questions without knowing how to ask?
 - Examples: raw emotions, no words, pointing, body language, expression!

! Weave it together: explain the connections/points on the map of intersection **(10 min):**

- **Earth, East, Spring, early childhood: Simple child**

- The East, Mizrach, the “place of shining,” is where the sun rises, Passover, and represents new beginnings and birth
- Ask: Why they think the Simple Child is in the East? Reflect, discuss, embody.
- **Fire, South, Summer, mid-kid and tween years: Wicked child**
 - The South, D’rom, “the place of heights,” is noon, the heat of the day, fire, summertime, It is the time of day when we are most productive and the time of the year when the plants are in their most abundant growth
 - Ask: Why they think the Wicked Child is in the South? Reflect, discuss, embody.
- **Water, West, Autumn, transition into adolescence: One who doesn’t know to ask**
 - The West, Ma’arav, “the place of blending” is where the sun sets and corresponds with Autumn, it is the ingathering time, when we gather for a meal with our family. In our life, it is the time when we harvest all that we have learned and we begin to confidently share our gifts with our community. This is the place of birthing.
 - Ask why do you think it’s this one? Maybe needing advice as they grow up and learn, learning to use their own voice...
 - NOTE: the one who doesn’t know how to ask can also be the birth/death stage of life—in that transitional portal time
- **Air, North, Winter, late teen years: Wise child**
 - The North, Tzafon, “the hidden place”. This is midnight, winter, and the place of mystery. This is the place of the Elder, one who must have passed through each direction and be able to guide and initiate others because of what they gained in their journey around the wheel.

! Suggestion/example of a skit: Can be used, adapted and elaborated on, or the participants can choose to create their own skit and storyline. *Play with it!* **(10 minutes)**

- Typical Wilderness Torah Family with four children going to Passover in the Desert...
- Characters: two parents (no speaking lines- these can be the mentors) + four kids:
 - Eldest Child/Wise, age 17: North, Air, Winter, mature
 - Second Child/Wicked, age 12: South, Fire, Summer, rebellious
 - Third Child/Simple, age 5: East, Earth, Spring, energetic and open minded
 - Fourth Child/One who doesn’t know how to ask, 1 year old: Water, West, Autumn, emotional

Scene 1: In the car driving down to Passover in the Desert

- Baby (Doesn’t know how to ask) crying, emotional, cranky
- Simple: Where are we going? What’s that out there? When are we getting out of the car?
- Wicked: why are even doing this? What’s the point of Passover? Rebellious energy
- Wise: What does Passover in the desert mean? What do you think we will find in the desert? What makes going to the desert different than having Passover at home? I wonder...

Scene 2: Setting up the tent when they first arrive onsite

- Baby: crawling away, hungry, crying, playing with the tent cords
- Simple: where does this pole go? How does this work? oh cool a scorpion! distracted by environment...
- Wicked: why do we even need a tent? Cant we just sleep outside? I'd rather sleep in the car. Why couldn't I bring my bed?
- Wise: I hope we have enough stakes for all sides. Isn't the point of Passover in the desert to be outside and feel the elements, but if we are in a tent we will be shielded from the elements and the true Passover experience? So this is what the open wilderness feels like...

Scene 3: one afternoon while at Passover in the desert...

- Baby: crawl up, point to mountain with excitement, baby noises and giggles and smiles
- Simple: What are you doing over here? I want to make something like that, can I join you? Can you teach me?
- Wicked: it's so hot, I'm so bored, why wont anyone take me to surprise canyon now I don't want to wait why do I need to be "supervised"...I'm just ready to adventure in the desert on my own!
- Wise: what do you think will happen on my wilderness encounter experience? What are my intentions for going out there?

Scene 4: closing circle, the family is saying their goodbyes to new friends

- Baby: calm, quiet, happy, maybe a little irritated from being in the sun too long
- Simple: I don't understand- it's over? Isn't this just how real life should always be?
- Wicked: I finally got used to the desert life, I don't want to go home. Leave me here! I want to stay with my new friends and live in Surprise Canyon forever, and definitely not go back to school tomorrow...
- Wise: How will I tell my friends back home about this? How can I hold onto the memories and insights, and this feeling of *freedom*?

! Practice: Come up with your skit! (25 minutes)

- Give them time to create! Educator goes around to help with any questions or offer advice, generally be available, but participants collaborate on their own

II. Perform the Skit (as the opening act) at the bonfire that evening! (15 minutes)

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