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NINE STEPS TO A KICK-ASS PASSOVER SEDER

CAUTION! THESE KICK-ASS STEPS ARE WRITTEN WITH NORMAL PASSOVER YEARS IN MIND. (NOT CORONA PASSOVER 2020.) HOWEVER, EXCEPT FOR STEPS #3 AND MAYBE #6, THESE STEPS ARE STILL DAMN IMPORTANT.

Too many Seders are as dull as matzah! Hosting a fun, thought-provoking Seder is important! Heck, it might be the only Jewish experience of the year for some of your guests! Seems like a lot of pressure, but we've got you with these nine easy steps!

{1} THE SEDER POLICE – THERE ARE NONE:

Yes, there are certain traditions to a Seder. In fact, the word Seder means “order.” But if you're the Seder Leader, you are the master of the table. If that means starting with the songs, or going right to the skit, do it. But have a game plan. Know which pages you want to spend time on, and definitely assign the skit parts in advance.

{2} WHEN (AKA FIRST OR SECOND NIGHT)?

The first night of Passover in 2020 is Wednesday, April 8th, and the second is Thursday, April 9th. The Seders are exactly the same each night so go with the night that makes your life easier or do both nights. If it's better to get your friends and family together on a different day (like on the weekend) so that more people can join, go for it!

{3} INVITE PEOPLE NOW, AND INVITE THEM AGAIN LATER:

When is it too early or too late to invite people? Some people already know what their plans are for Passover 2025, because their family always goes to their Aunt Barbara's. Other people are happy to get an invitation to a Passover Seder the morning of! Our advice is go ahead and invite people as soon as you decide you're having a Seder (even those people who always go to their Aunt Barbara's). If you've ever hosted an event before, you know that people aren't always great with the RSVPs, others will cancel last minute, and others will ask to bring their new friend from work/pilates/Tinder. Don't be shy about sending reminders.

{4} HOW LONG SHOULD MY SEDER BE?

As long as possible! JK, kind of. Some Seders last into the wee hours. Other people rush through it. Frankly, it's hard to fit all of the good parts into a Seder that lasts less than 45 minutes. When you have a fantastic Haggadah (ahem...ours!), you can easily keep a group captivated. The entire JewBelong Haggadah takes about 90 minutes, and between the singing and the skit, it goes really fast!

{5} PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE:

If Seder Leaders spent as much time preparing their Seder service as they do finding a recipe for matzah balls, celebrating Passover could be a lot more meaningful. Seder Leaders often think they can just wing it – and they can't. There are two readings in the JewBelong Haggadah that deserve special mention. One is *Ruth's Mix*, to celebrate diversity (on page three) and the other is *The Elephant At Your Passover Seder*.

{6} KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:

Who's going to be at your Seder? If you're having first-timers, keep that in mind. At JewBelong, we've been going to Seders our entire lives, and it wasn't until we put together our own Haggadah that we really learned the details. If you are hosting a cerebral group and want to go around the room and ask what freedom means to each of them, go right ahead, but that won't work for every crowd. If you're having kids, make sure you either serve appetizers or have snacks on the table. And don't be opposed to setting up *A Rugrats Passover* in another room for the kids who hit the wall.

{7} HATERS GONNA HATE:

If you're going to lead a Seder, then someone's got to tell you this, so it might as well be us. There are probably/definitely going to be people at your table who are going to be impatient from the get-go. They might check their watch, they might ask you to skip a reading or two... These are the same people who leave a great concert before the encore. Please, for the love of all that is good and holy, do not let the Haters get under your skin, and don't rush through your Seder because of them. And maybe, don't invite them next year.

{8} WATCH OUT FOR TOO MUCH HEBREW (AKA DON'T PLAY "WHO'S THE BETTER JEW?"):

You know that uncomfortable feeling when you're at a Seder with 18 people, and there are only four who know the words to some Hebrew song, and the rest sit there uncomfortably while they stumble through it? We do, too. And it can make people feel like bad Jews. This is NOT the feeling you want to elicit at your Seder. So, if you're going to include Hebrew, make sure your guests understand it, or keep it to a minimum.

{9} CENTERPIECES, DRINKING GAMES AND OTHER FUN STUFF:

The Passover story is loaded with ideas to add even more fun to your Seder! JewBelong.com has instructions to make a Jello Red Sea Centerpiece and Baby Moses in a Basket. But don't stop there! Decorate your table with long reeds so it looks like a sea of reeds, use pillows, because we're supposed to recline since we're no longer slaves, plus gather various props that represent the ten plagues. You can also go big with costumes and props for the skit. Not to mention alcohol. If your guests are of the right age, it's more fun singing *Dayenu* a little buzzed. Be creative...Moses Martini anyone? Our JewBelong favorite drinking game is Burning Bush - every time you hear the name Moses, take a shot/sip of Fireball whiskey.