



# Ideas for Enhancing Your Seder **AND ADDING JOY**



Rabbinic Leadership in the Corona Crisis

**Activities and games that can be integrated throughout the Seder**  
(Please note that some of the ideas require advance planning before Chag)

- 1. We can make each other happy although we are not together:**
  - This year, despite our original plans, we are forced to spend Pesach apart from family and friends. In order to add joy to those with whom we cannot spend the Seder physically, we can prepare messages to be opened at specific points (at candle-lighting, at specific points in the Haggadah, etc).

#### **EXAMPLES:**

letter from grandparent to grandchild, or vice versa, or to friends

**letters contents** → a blessing for Seder night, a picture, a thought about the Haggadah, a question or challenge, a family joke

**Writing Style** → Try to keep it personal and familiar; for example: "My dear grandson, you are about to sing Mah Nishtanah – make sure to sing loud and clear, and don't worry – I can hear you all the way from here."

- 2. Personalized Crowns**
  - Prepare in advance paper crowns for each participant with their name. On Seder night, we are all like royalty.

- 3. Unity Begins in the Family**
  - The current situation has returned parents and children to the home. The nuclear family is the basis of the community. This is the time to cultivate the home, since a home is more than walls – it is us. Prepare notes and place them in the middle of the table. At each new section of the Seder, open one of the notes and go around answering the question. Examples: What do I love about my family? What is my favorite place in our house? What are similarities between me and the person to my right?

- 4. Certificates of Appreciation**
  - Print out and fill in for each family member a certificate of appreciation. This is a great opportunity to recognize small moments where, despite extended time inside together under challenging circumstances, family members have risen to the occasion and shown care, patience, and helpfulness. ([Attached please find a template to print.](#))

- 5. A Tale of Confidence ("Maaseh M'bitachon")**
  - This story by Rabbi Nachman of Breslev seems like it was written specifically for us on this strange Pesach in particular. In the story, a king decides to check whether there exists in his kingdom someone more carefree than he. He indeed finds such a man, a destitute but jovial man. In light of the encounter, the poor man wakes up each morning to new restrictions from the king, increasing calls for isolation (sound familiar?).

[Attached please find the full story about how the poor man deals with the new restrictions and how we can all relate. Appropriate for all ages.](#)



## 6 : Songs and Joy

- Happiness and optimism are vital healing and protective sources. Ask family members beforehand what songs they want to hear throughout the Seder, whether traditional songs, or original choices that relate to themes of the Seder – or just a song that would make them smile.

## 7 : Role Playing

- Prepare paper slips or crowns with “roles” such as Health Ministry official, Purell, latex gloves, etc. (or stick with more conventional roles, like Pharaoh, Moshe, Miriam, etc.). Throughout the Seder, each “character” can chime in with commentary in the role’s voice.

## 8 : Exodus in the Era of Coronavirus

- “In every generation, one must see oneself as having left Egypt.” Ask everyone to imagine a situation in which s/he is in Egypt just before the Exodus, and in the background is the Coronavirus crisis. Ask everyone to write a “post” in the voice of someone experiencing such a situation during the Exodus. Share them throughout the night and guess who wrote each.

## 9 : My Line in the Haggadah

- Ask each person to choose a line in the Haggadah that most inspires them at the moment and gives them strength at this time. Each person can explain briefly why it is meaningful to them.

## 10 : And since some things haven’t changed this year, it is still a good idea to:

- Take a nap before the Seder.
- Avoid arriving to Seder super-hungry, especially the children.
- Prepare small gifts for each person.
- Prepare small games/knick-knacks for times when someone loses focus.
- Sing as much as possible.
- Decide what parts of the Haggadah and from the ideas included here speak to you most and would be best for your family this year.

