

# Pesach Curriculum Guide

Bagels & Locks Studios

## Background

The holiday of Pesach (Passover) begins at sundown on the 15th of the month of Nisan and continues for seven days in Israel or eight days outside of Israel. This holiday celebrates the Israelites' freedom from slavery in Mitzrayim (Egypt), as described in the book of Sh'mot (Exodus), and their transformation from a group of tribes who were slaves to the Egyptians, with no autonomy, into a full-fledged nation, "Am Yisrael" (the Nation of Israel).

Starting from almost midday on the 14th of Nisan, and extending throughout the holiday of Pesach (until nightfall at the end of the 21st or 22nd of Nisan, depending on one's location), the Torah prohibits eating, keeping, or owning chametz. Chametz (leaven) is made when one of five types of grains is combined with water and the mixture is left to stand for more than eighteen minutes. The grains that can become chametz are: wheat, spelt, barley, rye, and oats. These are also the grains from which one can make matzah.

Some people spend hours, days, or even weeks preparing their homes for Pesach and getting rid of any chametz that might be found, making their spaces "Kosher for Pesach". The holiday consists of 2 types of days - Chag/Yom Tov/Holiday days (1 or 2 days at the beginning and 1 or 2 days at the end - 1 day in Israel, 2 days outside of Israel), and Chol Hamoed, the 4 or 5 in-between days. During the time that the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the Jewish people would gather in Jerusalem to mark the holiday.

With bread products out of the picture for the entirety of Pesach, Matzah takes center stage at our tables. This is certainly true at the Seder, where three matzot (matzahs) play an important part in the Seder ritual. For many people, the Seder is the highlight of the holiday of Pesach, and possibly the most memorable Jewish celebration of the entire year! The seder is often celebrated in large groups, and is usually designed to allow children to maximize their experience and develop a connection with the history of the Jewish People.

On the following pages you'll find ten themes that are associated with the holiday of Pesach. Each topic is also the subject of a clue in ***HolidayQuest: The Missing Matzah***.