



IS IT PASSOVER YET?

Written by Chris Barash

Illustrated by Alessandra Psacharopulo

This family is cleaning, prepping, and coming together for a very special holiday – but how will the children know when it’s here?

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Passover, a joyous holiday that commemorates the exodus of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt, is the most widely observed of the Jewish holidays. Year after year, Jews all over the world, from all walks of life, participate in a *seder* (the ritual Passover meal). And in the days and weeks just prior to Passover, families prepare for this eight-day-long holiday.

Traditionally, preparing for Passover includes a thorough, top-to-bottom cleaning of one’s home, removing all *chametz* (bread and other leavened products) from the house. Instead of bread, during Passover many families eat *matzah*. This cracker-like product reminds us of the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt – there was no time to wait for their bread to rise. In this story, fancy dishes come out of the cupboard; during Passover, it’s traditional to use dishes that haven’t been used during the rest of the year. And Elijah’s cup is placed on the *seder* table in the hope that the Biblical prophet will visit during the meal.

In this story, the final clue that Passover is imminent is the arrival of extended family. Passover is a time to gather with loved ones and share the joy of togetherness and freedom.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Children notice the hustle and bustle as their families prepare for holidays like Passover. They will naturally grow excited as they become more familiar with the rituals and objects that accompany the holiday.

Let your children help “clean” as you prepare for Passover. Encourage them to find every last crumb of bread so you can rid your house of *chametz*. Many households finish their Passover cleaning with the ritual of *bedikat chametz* (the search for *chametz*) on the night before Passover begins. Hide ten pieces of bread wrapped in paper around the house; then let your children hunt for them. It’s traditional to conduct the search with a lit candle (which an adult should hold) and then sweep up the *chametz* with a feather and a wooden spoon. You can look online for more information about the ritual of *bedikat chametz*.

Sing Passover songs like “Dayenu” with your child in the days approaching the holiday. Search online for recordings with lyrics.

Passover is a traditional time for family get-togethers. Older children can help make *seder* place cards for each person. Your child can think about what drawings would appeal to each guest.