



## Read the PJ Library Book

### Sammy Spider's First Passover (3's)

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#### Synopsis

Sammy Spider is fascinated by the Shapiro family's celebration of Passover. As Sammy watches the Shapiro's prepare for Passover, he becomes more and more determined to take part in the festivities. Despite his mother's insistence that "Spider's don't celebrate Passover," Sammy spins a beautiful web that ultimately helps Josh locate the afikoman.



## Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Matzah vs. *chametz* - חֲמֵץ / מַצָּה

The Story of Passover (through the senses) - *Ha-ga-dah shel Pe-sach* - הַגָּדָה שֶׁל פֶּסַח

Celebration of spring - *Chag he-a-viv* - חַג הָאֵבִיב

**Matzah vs. chametz.** In this book, the Shapiros engage in a pre-Passover cleaning frenzy, intent on removing the *chametz* from their home. *Chametz* (a Hebrew word derived from the verb "to sour or ferment") refers to any food made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt, or their derivatives, which has come in contact with moisture or water and has been allowed to leaven or rise. To commemorate the Jewish slaves' hasty departure from Egypt when there was no time for bread to rise, families often celebrate Passover by feasting on matzah and removing all types of chametz or leavening from their homes. The Torah instructs "For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses" [Exodus 12:19]. Many people spend the days before Passover removing the physical bread crumbs from their homes, as well as their spiritual chametz, such as overly inflated egos and pride.

**Telling the story of Passover (through the senses) – Maggid.** According to the Haggadah (the prayer book and guide of the Passover festive meal), "In every generation one is obligated to see oneself as one who personally went out from Egypt." Sensory experiences serve as one of the best ways of personalizing the Passover story. The Haggadah instructs participants to **taste** special foods

(such as matzah, bitter herbs, parsley), **touch** wine or grape juice and remove drops from the cup during the recitation of the ten plagues, **smell** pungent horseradish, **listen** and participate in joyous singing, recline on **soft** pillows, and use all of the senses to transform the leaving of Egypt into a meaningful and relevant experience.



**Celebration of spring – Chag he'aviv.** Passover has several names. *Pesach* (which means to pass over) is referred to as *z'man cheirutainu* (the time of our freedom); in the *siddur* (Jewish prayerbook) the holiday is *chag hamatzot* (the holiday of matzah), and Passover is also *chag he'aviv* (the holiday of spring). The name *chag he'aviv* describes the time of year in which Passover occurs, and hints at some of the underlying themes of the holiday. Spring is a time when the earth awakens from its winter sleep and blossoms. Like spring, Passover marks a time of renewal and new beginnings. Three thousand years ago, after hundreds of years of slavery, the Jewish people burst forth from the pain and darkness of slavery and became a free people. Passover, therefore, represents a time for noticing the beauty of the season, while simultaneously celebrating the joys of freedom.

# Imagine

your community living these Jewish values.

**How would your classroom change?  
How will families be involved?**

## In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **Matzah vs. chametz:** Help children understand what chametz is before they help clean for Passover. Bake challah on one day and matzah on the next; serve the challah and matzah together at **snack time**. As a **science activity**, ask the children to compare and contrast the taste, texture, appearance and process by which the two foods were made.
- ✧ **Matzah vs. chametz:** At **morning meeting**, make a list of all of the places in the classroom where crumbs might be found. Assign various cleaning tasks, such as washing toys or scrubbing tables to specific class members. For added cleaning fun, try stocking the room with several well-charged handheld vacuums and spray bottles filled with water and vinegar or any other safe, natural cleaning product.
- ✧ **Passover's five senses:** Consider exploring several Passover staples using all of the senses. Set up **sensory exploration tables** for a "seder item of the day." For example, during matzah day (or week) you might set up a tasting station featuring three kinds of matzah, such as *shmura* (watched and hand-made), egg, and plain matzah. Collect votes on the favorites. For touch, children can use crayons to create matzah rubbings; the sight table can feature matzah puzzles by breaking a large piece of matzah into several smaller pieces and then challenging students to reassemble the pieces. Crush matzah to music and try to discern its smell. Now on to parsley and eggs...
- ✧ **Celebration of spring:** Go on a **nature walk** in search of signs of spring. Remember to list or photograph your findings.
- ✧ **Celebration of spring:** This year, try to make all of your Passover items with a spring theme. For example, decorate an afikoman bag or matzah cover with flower-shaped sponges, used pressed flowers on your *Haggadot* (plural of Haggadah), or affix silk-like flowers to your Miriam or Elijah's cup. [Some families use a Miriam's cup, in honor of Moses' sister who helped find hidden drinking wells on the long desert journey.]



## Bridging Home and School

### Spring into Passover

Invite families to assist in the creation of a spring themed *Happy Passover* banner that will hang in the school entranceway. Ask families to collect “spring items” from outdoors and bring them to school. Encourage families to spend a few minutes at drop-off or pick up time gluing their spring items to the banner.



### Top This

Hold a Mega-Matzah Snack Day that will give children a chance to sample many different kinds of toppings while munching on matzah. Solicit families for recommendations for tasty matzah toppings. Purchase or collect donations of as many of the suggested toppings as possible. Invite families to join you for your Mega-Matzah Day.

## Family Engagement at Home

### Family Cleaning Frenzy

Parents of three-year-olds are sometimes surprised to learn that children of this age are capable of and enjoy participating in cleanup tasks. Send home a note explaining the purpose of Passover/Spring cleaning and describe the cleaning tasks that your students enjoy. Include a recipe for child-friendly, green cleaning products. Ideally, families will send in photos or notes describing their family’s cleaning experiences.

# Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

**What happened?**

**How can the learning go deeper?**

### Tell us a story...about children’s beginning discovery of Passover

No one expects a three-year-old to learn everything there is to know about Passover. What do you feel are the one or two most important things for your group of children to internalize about this important holiday? What do the parents of your classroom care about? You might post a sign or letter to elicit response. For example;

*Dear Families, As Passover approaches I am beginning to focus on all of the ways your children are growing this year. One of Passover’s many names is Chag Ha’aviv, the festival of spring. It is a time to celebrate new beginnings and new growth. We hope to be out in nature a lot and notice spring, new growth and your children’s new skills as part of our Passover experience. What would YOU hope we explore?*

Then share with all of us on our private Facebook group page! <http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook>

# More resources and websites for inspiration

Green cleaning projects: <http://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/green/green-cleaning>

Engaging children at the seder: <http://pjfor.me/seder-fun>

PJ Library spring cleaning blog: <http://pjfor.me/spring-cleaning>

