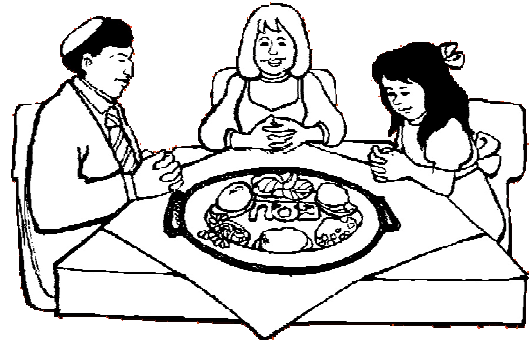


Passover (Nissan 15)



Passover, like all Jewish holidays, begins at sundown. The first day of Passover is on the 15th day of the Jewish month of Nissan, and lasts for eight days. The first two and last two days are days on which no work is permitted. This holiday commemorates the departure of the nation of Israel from Egypt led by Moses over 3,000 years ago and is a celebration of spiritual freedom as well as physical liberation from slavery. This story is told in the biblical book of Exodus. The name Passover comes from a Hebrew word meaning to pass through or to pass over. It refers to the fact that G-d passed over the houses of the Israelites when He was slaying the firstborn of Egypt. The holiday is also referred to as the Spring Festival and the Time of our Freedom.

The most significant observance related to Passover involves the removal of all leaven (chametz) from our homes for the eight days of the holiday. Leavening gives bread, cake, cookies the ability to rise and increase in volume. During Passover, Jews are not supposed to eat or own any leavened products. Therefore the home must be cleaned entirely in preparation for the holiday. As well, all dishes and utensils that have come in contact with leavened products must be changed for the eight days. The grain product we eat during Passover is called matzah, or unleavened bread, made simply from flour and water and baked very quickly so it does not have the opportunity to rise.

Passover is celebrated in homes by having a Seder, or a special meal where the story of Passover is retold through the reading of a book called the Haggadah. With its special foods, songs, and customs, the Seder is the high point of the Passover celebration.

At Shalom Village our kitchens and dining rooms are cleaned and prepared with Passover dishes and utensils. Matzah and matzah products are substituted for bread products. The residents and their families enjoy a Seder on the first night of Passover in our dining rooms beginning with candelighting, reading the haggadah (Passover story), and then enjoying a traditional dinner.