



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Special Spring Festivals Lesson

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God wants to have a family! He wants every human being who has ever lived to be a part of His Family, including *YOU!* That is *WHY* He created you! If you learn to obey God, you can become a spirit being in His Family. But how can you learn to obey God?

To teach us how to obey Him, God set apart seven special days of the year. These are part of God's **holy days**, and they show us the seven parts of God's plan. This lesson will explain the meaning of the festivals that occur during springtime: the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost. These days picture the first three steps of God's family plan!

PASSOVER

The first festival in God's plan is **Passover**. Thousands of years ago, the cruel Pharaoh of Egypt made the Israelites his **slaves**. He was evil, and he made their lives terrible.

God saw this. He chose a man named Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery.

God commanded Moses to tell Pharaoh: *Let the Israelites go*. Moses told Pharaoh 10 times, but Pharaoh refused. Every time Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites, God sent a terrible **plague** on Egypt.

The last plague happened during Passover. Moses wrote about it in Exodus 11 and 12.

The 10th plague on Egypt was the death of the firstborn.

God wanted to protect the Israelites from this plague. He instructed them on how to escape it. On the night of Passover, they had to kill a healthy male lamb. They had to eat it with their families, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. They had to put the blood of the lamb around the doors of their homes. And they had to stay inside.

This lamb that was killed represented **Jesus Christ**. He is sometimes called “the Lamb.” He would come to Earth and let Himself be killed to save human beings from their sins and to bring them into God’s Family.

When God’s death angel came to kill the firstborn, it **passed over** every house that had a lamb’s blood on the doorpost. It did not kill the firstborns inside.

But the Egyptians did not obey God’s commands, and the death angel killed all the Egyptians who had been born first in their families. Even the firstborn Egyptian animals were killed. After this terrible night, Pharaoh let the Israelites go.

God commanded that His people must keep the Passover every year forever from that night!

Jesus Christ came to Earth as a human being, and He kept the Passover. But He changed the way we keep it. We no longer sacrifice a lamb on Passover. Today, the baptized adults in God’s Church attend a special Passover service led by one of God’s ministers. They wash each other’s feet. This represents a humble and serving **attitude**. They eat a broken piece of unleavened bread. This represents the **body** of Jesus Christ, which was horribly beaten before He died. He was beaten so we can be healed when we are sick. Then the adults drink a small glass of wine. This represents the **blood** that poured out of Jesus Christ’s body when He was killed. Because of His sacrifice, God can free us from our sins when we **repent**, just like the Israelites were freed from Egypt!

DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The second festival in God's plan is actually a seven-day feast: the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. During this time, the Israelites left Egypt and escaped from Pharaoh. God told them not to eat anything with **leaven** in it for seven days.

God tells us we must not have any leavening in our homes during this feast. So we clean out every last slice of bread, cracker, cookie and crumb of leavening from our homes before the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Things that are baked with leaven **puff up** with air. When we sin we puff up as well. That's why God tells us to put leavened bread out of our houses for seven days: It represents putting sin out of our lives!

During this feast, we eat **unleavened bread**. This symbolizes living God's way and keeping His commandments. This is an important part of God's plan to bring you into His Family!

PENTECOST

The third holy day in God's plan is **Pentecost**. The word *Pentecost* means "count 50." During the Days of Unleavened Bread, there is a Sabbath. We count **50 days** from the Sunday after the Sabbath to get to Pentecost.

The first Pentecost came 50 days after the Israelites were escaping from Egypt. On this first Pentecost, God descended on a mountain with thunder and lightning and gave the Israelites His **Ten Commandments**.

Hundreds of years later, Jesus Christ died on the day of Passover. He was dead for three days and three nights, and then He was **resurrected**. He went to heaven to appear before God the Father. It was 50 days after this, on the day of Pentecost, that God the Father sent His **Holy Spirit**.

God gives His Holy Spirit to adults who have repented of their sins

and been baptized. It gives them the spiritual help to understand God's truth and to get sin out of their lives. If one or both of your parents are baptized, you have the Holy Spirit working *with* you. This is what helps you understand the Bible and the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*. When you become an adult and repent and become baptized, you can have the Holy Spirit not just with you, but *in* you.

Pentecost is also called the “feast of firstfruits.”

God is like a farmer. People who have had God's Holy Spirit are like the “fruits” that He harvests first. The rest of His fruits are all the people who have ever lived. He will harvest them later.

God will bring the “firstfruits” into His Family first. They will marry the first of the firstfruits, Jesus Christ. Then Jesus Christ and these firstfruits will help bring everyone into God's Family.

So Pentecost, the feast of firstfruits, is about God's Church—people who have (or have had) God's Holy Spirit. It reminds us of how God is using the Church in His plan for a family.

The three festivals of Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost teach us the first three steps in God's plan for mankind. In the fall holy day lesson, you will learn the meaning of the last four steps of God's plan!



ILLUSTRATIONS MELISSA BARREIRO

Israelite fathers prepare a lamb for the Passover.
They smear its blood on their doorposts so the death angel
will pass over their homes.



These are the three things baptized members of God's Church do on Passover to remember Jesus Christ's death.



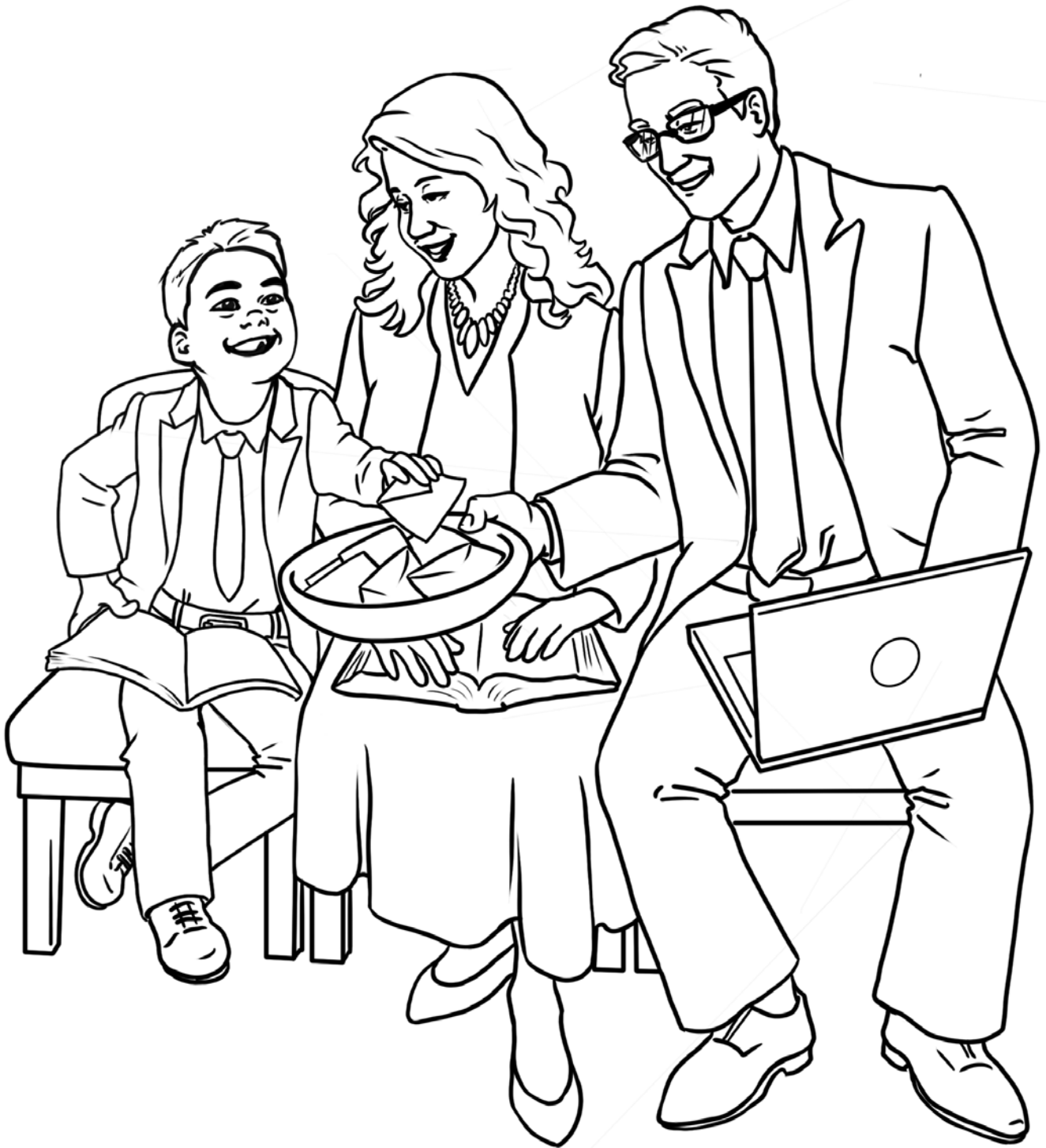
We clean all leavening out of our homes before the Days of Unleavened Bread begin.



The Feast of Unleavened Bread starts at sunset, the evening after the Passover. This evening is called the Night to Be Much Observed.

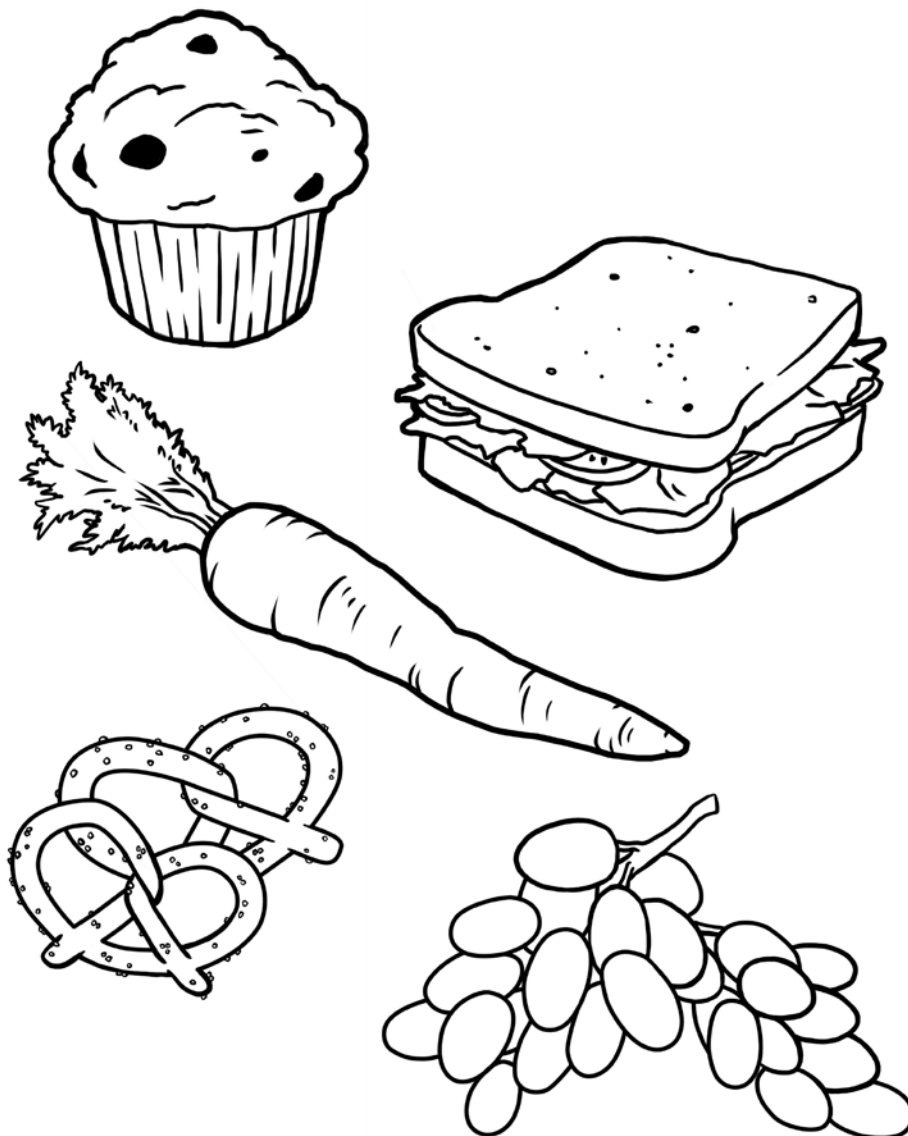
Under the light of a beautiful full moon, the ancient Israelites began their journey out of Egypt on the very first Night to Be Much Observed. They began their journey out of slavery with great happiness and joy. This great event is also called the Exodus.

Just like the Israelites celebrated their journey out of Egypt on the Night to Be Much Observed, we celebrate our journey out of sin on this night. To help us remember the importance of this night, we rejoice on the Night to Be Much Observed with a special dinner. Paste photos from your Night to Be Much Observed dinner here to make a scrapbook page.



The day of Pentecost is about God's people in His Church,
the first ones He is calling into His Family.

Find the Leaven



Circle the items you should *NOT* eat
during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.