

Your “Four Sons”

Framing this unit

The Haggadah passage about the Four Sons has been a source of inspiration for illustrators of Haggadot over the centuries.

In this activity your students will design their own illustration of the Four Sons after exploring Haggadot from the National Library collections.

Group Activity

Educators should read the Four Sons text with the learners, either in the original Hebrew, the traditional English translation, or in a modernized English version such as this:

The Torah describes four children who ask questions about the Exodus.

The wise child asks, “What are the laws that God has commanded us?”

The parent should answer by instructing the child in the laws of Passover, starting from the beginning and ending with the laws of the Afikoman.

The wicked child asks, “What does this Passover service mean to you?”

The parent should answer, “It is because of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt. Specifically ‘me’ and not ‘you.’ If you had been there (with your attitude), you wouldn’t have been redeemed.”

The simple child asks, “What is this Seder service?”

The parent should answer, “With a mighty hand God brought us out of Egypt. Therefore, we commemorate that event tonight through this Seder.”

And then there is the child who does not know how to ask.

The parent should begin a discussion with that child based on the verse: “And you shall tell your child on that day, ‘We commemorate Passover tonight because of what God did for us when we went out of Egypt.’”

(based on text from [The Passover Haggadah, A guide to the Seder](#))

Discussion

[Look at the illustrations of the Four Sons.](#)

- Can you identify which are the different sons from the images?
- What is the same in all of the illustrations? What is different?
- In what ways are the ancient depictions of the Four Sons different or similar to the modern ones?
- How do you think society influenced the way in which the Four Sons are portrayed?
- What clues do the illustrators give you as to which son is which?
- Why are the sons ordered from right to left? (Hint – think about the direction in which Hebrew is written.)
- Look at the illustrations provided. Are there illustrations of four daughters?
- Why do you think the Haggadot show only sons?
- Search the internet for alternative texts and illustrations that include the Four Daughters.
- Why do you think many Haggadot are illustrated?

Creative Activity

Use the online tool - [ThingLink](#) as an online analysis tool. [Click](#) to access an example.

Upload the image of the Four Sons from a Haggadah of your choice.

Add questions or include links and other images that you find relevant.

Share the link with your students.

Do it yourself!

Learners will create their own version of the Four Sons in Canva or with materials.