

Afikomen Hunt: Now and Later

An AJWS Passover Reading for Children Ages 7-11

Guide for Parents

This Passover reading, for children ages 7-11, is part of a series of three Passover readings for children and adults created by American Jewish World Service (AJWS) to connect the holiday of Passover to the theme “from disaster to development.” As the recent earthquake in Haiti reminds us, we cannot only respond to disasters immediately after they happen, but we must support communities in their long-term efforts to recover and rebuild. Indeed, the Passover story itself contains this message—liberation from the trauma of oppression was not achieved in the single moment of the Exodus but rather unfolded gradually over 40 years in the desert and continues to unfold for us personally throughout our lives. Truly supporting and standing in solidarity with people who have suffered disaster and oppression means working with them over the long term to build strong, independent communities.

The *Afikomen Hunt* can be read aloud and prompt a discussion either towards the beginning of the *seder* when the *matzah* is broken (*yachatz*) or after the meal when children search for the *afikomen* (*tzafun*). The reading should help children understand the concepts of short-term disaster relief (now) and long-term development (later), with the recent earthquake in Haiti as the prime example. We encourage you to use the reading to examine the ways we can help in the immediate aftermath of a disaster (providing food relief, water, medical supplies), as well as to explore how we can address long-term needs (rebuilding infrastructure, improving literacy, agricultural training). We also hope that it will spark discussion about how children can be empowered to respond to disasters in ways that help others.



Pursuing Global Justice
Through Grassroots Change

Afikomen Hunt: Now and Later

Do you like looking for the afikomen?

Do you get a prize or present if you find it? The *afikomen* is a piece of *matzah* that is broken at the beginning of the *seder*, but we look for it much later on, after we've eaten the *seder* meal. A broken *matzah* can make us think of other things that are broken. Maybe you have some things in your house that are broken, like a broken cup or a torn picture. You might try to fix these things with glue.

In the world, there are things that are broken so badly that a little glue won't fix them. You've probably heard about the terrible earthquake in Haiti this past January which destroyed houses, schools and villages and killed many people. The earthquake broke the pipes which brought water to people in their homes, so there was no water to drink. The hospitals were destroyed and all of the medicines were gone.



A BOY WALKS TO HIS TENT AT THE NAN CHARLES CAMP FOR EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI.
PHOTO EVAN ABRAMSON

When we hold the broken pieces of the *afikomen*, we can think about all of the broken pieces of Haiti. We can also think about ways that we can help to fix what's broken in Haiti and the rest of the world. There are some things we can do right away. Right now, people need food and water, doctors and medicines, so we can collect food for people who are hungry and money to pay for medicines and supplies. There are other things we can do which will

help the people in Haiti for many years to come, not just for now. These things include fixing the roads and the water pipes and rebuilding hospitals. We can also help people in Haiti by sending seeds and plants so that farmers can replant their fields and grow their own food.

Kids just like you are helping people in Haiti and other parts of the world in lots of ways. Some kids collect stuffed animals to send to children who live in a place where something terrible has happened. Other kids earn money from doing chores or selling lemonade and send this money to organizations that help people rebuild their houses and schools.



SIGN IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI.
PHOTO EVAN ABRAMSON

The *afikomen* is broken at the beginning of the *seder*. That's the *now* part. But we eat it much *later*. We can find ways to help people who are in trouble, both now and later.

While eating your afikomen, talk about one thing that you can do to help out in Haiti, where so much is broken, just like the afikomen.



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