

A DIFFERENTIATED SEDER: A SEDER FOR ALL LEARNERS

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I. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

In our Haggadah, we read of the rabbis' famous Midrash on the Four Children. It can offer helpful distinctions between personalities and learning styles. It points out the need to treat learners as individuals - that one "lesson" does not fit all. The rabbis' formulation was to specify four types of children (learners). There are many interpretations of the four children. Here are some:

- A. Learner 1 - חכם - "Wise/Intelligent Child" (Learner) - inquisitive, involved
Examples - Outstanding student from Religious or Day School, Jewishly knowledgeable adult
- B. Learner 2 - רשע - "Wicked Child" - Resistant Learner - has little background, alienated from Jewish roots
Examples - Teen who quit Hebrew School after bar/bat mitzvah, adult with "When do we eat" attitude, one who has forgotten or turned away from his or her religious school training
- C. Learner 3 - תם - "Simple Child" - at the developmental stage of concrete learning
Examples - A young child, one who is at a Seder for the first time, someone who hasn't learned Hebrew yet
- D. Learner 4 - שאינו יודע לשאול - "One who is unable to ask a question," - one who does not know that questions are expected
Examples - A very young child, a non-Jewish guest



The Seder is the rabbis' "lesson plan" for teaching the Exodus from Egypt and today we are challenged to make the Seder relevant to all the learners who attend. One current educational approach to teaching and organizing a class is called "**Differentiated Instruction.**" Much of the theory of **Differentiated Instruction** can be incorporated into our Seder (lesson). We should

consider our Seder guests, determine how we will enhance our Seder to meet their unique needs, and provide many ways for them to participate.

- A. Some principles of **Differentiated Instruction** are:
 - 1. Respecting each individual's uniqueness
 - 2. Providing a variety of learning opportunities to meet the needs of all learners
 - 3. Encouraging choice and multiple paths to successful learning
- B. The Teacher/Leader
 - 1. Guides the process
 - 2. Knows each participant's interests and strengths
 - 3. Offers activities that are challenging, engaging, and individualized

II. PRE-SEDER PLANNING

- A. Assess who your participants are.
- B. Distribute a questionnaire asking what would make the Seder more meaningful, e.g., do we want our Seder to include:
 - 1. Role-playing
 - 2. Creating a quiz game to use, such as Concentration
 - 3. Sharing of a Passover heirloom or creating a new heirloom
 - 4. Choosing and then preparing a Passover food; e.g. different kinds of *haroset*
 - 5. Sharing of new Haggadot
 - 6. Researching a part of the Seder, or various Seder customs and recipes
 - 7. Creating an "Order of the Seder" chart for the 14 steps of the Seder
 - 8. Giving out responsibilities for specific parts



III. SEDER ACTIVITIES FOR OUR DIFFERENT CHILDREN/LEARNERS

Incorporate multiple methods of engagement. Some suggested activities to meet the needs of all types of learners during the Seder are:

- 1. Providing a variety of Haggadot to use as sources
- 2. Challenging participants to:
 - a. ask original questions
 - b. find new things/explanations/issues to add
 - c. create a new activity/reading for the Seder
- 3. Giving out props, e.g., role-playing cards, to use with retelling of story
- 4. Providing an alternative to sitting at the table by creating a Seder from an historical period (sitting on pillows like a Roman banquet)
- 5. Providing materials about Roman culture at the time (dress, dipping, reclining)
- 6. Purchasing toy Seder plate, Seder plate puzzle, finger puppets etc., for younger kids to play with or participate non-verbally



7. Keeping Seder on track by creating a chart and keeping note of the Seder order
8. Providing transliterated text, sheet music and musical accompaniment
9. Serving snacks early in the Seder - karpas that is filling, e.g., artichoke hearts
10. Incorporating the Biblical story with dramatic play and costumes; creating a Pesah environment - Red Sea from blue paper, Baby Moses in Sea (doll in basket)
11. Acting out part of story in pantomime - with others guessing
12. Being sensitive to participants with special needs, consider having a sign-language interpreter or a Braille Haggadah
13. Giving each person an individual Seder plate
14. Looking for something new to put on the Seder table to pique interest
15. Providing sentence stems to help participants ask questions of others, e.g., "If I had to leave home (Egypt) on short notice, I'd pack . . ." or "Tonight, on the Seder table, I notice . . ."
16. Encouraging a post-Seder activity: creating artwork, "publishing" a blog, diary or memory book of the Seder; being an archivist



For Philadelphians in 2007: one can request that Seder guests who are going to the King Tut exhibit at the Franklin Institute, or the Egyptian exhibit at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, share their experience - especially in relation to Moses growing up in a royal environment. Ask them to purchase and bring in items from the museum's gift shop to share.



IV. WEBSITES FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

- A. <http://www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/pesach/pesach.htm>
Fun kids games and activities with pictures, word finds, and stories.
- B. http://www.frnsd.k12.nj.us/rfmslibrarylab/di/differentiated_instruction.htm
provides a hotlist of websites on Differentiated Instruction
- C. http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/kids/pesach_together/howto.shtml
A pre-Passover Family companion to any Haggadah used at your Seder.

- D. http://www.scusd.edu/gate_ext_learning/differentiated.htm
What is Differentiated Instruction?
- E. <http://30minut seder.com/songs.html>
Words and music to traditional Seder tunes.
- F. <http://urj.org/educate/holidayhappenings/>
Scroll down to the Passover section for families and children

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