

Men's Club Programming Guide

Teaching the Shabbat Seder

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Objective: To have your Men's Club take the initiative to teach members and their families the spirituality of Shabbat through use of the Shabbat Seder, and thereby increase Shabbat observance.

Resources:

- ✧ *The Shabbat Seder Booklet of Blessings and Songs* by Ron Wolfson
- ✧ FJMC web site Shabbat Portal
- ✧ The User's Guide pamphlet from the FJMC Website
- ✧ *Shabbat: The Family Guide to Preparing for and Celebrating the Sabbath* by Ron Wolfson
- ✧ *The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder Teacher's Guide* by Ron Wolfson
- ✧ The Shabbat Seder video

Overall Approach:

Teach members the "how to" of increasing the spirituality of their erev Shabbat meal by using the *Shabbat Seder Booklet* and the *Users' Guide* to elevate their Friday night dinner to a Seder. It is important that this teaching be conducted in a non-threatening manner that does not assume any knowledge of the Seder. It, likewise, **should not assume that participants are fluent in Hebrew or know the blessing and songs without coaching.**

Programming Ideas:

1. If your club wishes to offer a complete course that teaches all the aspects of conducting a Shabbat Seder, take advantage of the *Teacher's Guide*. This guide provides the details for a 6 session class spanning several weeks. Arrange for one or more Shabbat Seders to be conducted by the students in their homes as part of their "final exam" or arrange for a group Shabbat Seder at the synagogue. Add a session on making challah. Award certificates of completion to each student.
2. For a single session course on the Shabbat Seder, schedule a viewing of the full Shabbat Seder video. Allow ample time for discussion of the different portions of the Seder that are demonstrated in the video. Spend time after watching the video reviewing and teaching the blessings.
3. For self-study and to enhance understanding, make use of the *Family Guide to Preparing for and Celebrating the Sabbath*.
4. To add an interesting twist to your club's board meetings, devote 5 minutes each time to discussion of a different aspect of conducting the Shabbat Seder. Assign a different board member to prepare the discussion for each meeting, based on a different section in the Family Guide.

5. Consider linking your Shabbat Seder programming to your Men's Club Shabbat. Some approaches are:

- ✧ Arrange for a Shabbat Dinner at your synagogue in conjunction with your Friday evening Services and have one or more of your members lead the different portions of the Seder.
- ✧ Orient your Men's Club Shabbat sermon or d'var to the importance of celebrating Shabbat at home with a joyous dinner with family and friends. Discuss how a Shabbat Seder can add meaning and spirituality to the observance of Shabbat and can enhance one's participation in Jewish life, with an emphasis on the value to the children of observing Shabbat at home.
- ✧ Use Men's Club Shabbat to announce and kick off any training programs that you wish to conduct on how to conduct the Shabbat Seder.

6. Many synagogues are using the "Guess Who's Coming to Shabbas®" program in order to strengthen synagogue communities and create meaningful memories for families. This program, endorsed by FJMC, encourages congregants to host others for Shabbat dinners in their homes, with guests then becoming hosts in subsequent months. Your club can do a great service for your synagogue by taking on the responsibility of leading this program.

7. Make a "Shabbat Seder kit" consisting of:

- ✧ Shabbat candles
- ✧ Challah (and challah cover?)
- ✧ Seder booklet
- ✧ User's guide

Hand out or market these as part of your training programs.

8. Talk with your Sisterhood gift shop to see if you can arrange a discount on a Kiddush cup and netilat (hand washing) set. They may want to have some Shabbat towels available as well.

9. Hold a "mock Seder" so learners become more comfortable leaders.

10. Schedule a separate session just to teach the blessings and z'mirot.

11. Present copies of the Shabbat Seder Booklet. Give a copy of the booklet to families celebrating an engagement, wedding, baby naming, or bris.

12. Encourage Shabbat dinners in the synagogue by donating 50-80 of the Shabbat Seder Booklets to the synagogue. Advise b'nai mitzvah families that they are available for use on their special week-end

Implementation Guidelines:

Be sure to promote the training session(s). Use your synagogue bulletin, listserv, flyers, and phone calls. Invite all the men in your shul and get your clergy to announce the program from the bima.

The *Shabbat Seder Booklet* and the *Family Guide* may be purchased from Jewish Lights Publishing. The *Teacher's Guide* may be obtained on the FJMC website. See the back page for website addresses.

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