

Musical slated by tabernacle

Brightmoor Tabernacle in Southfield will repeat the musical drama "The Witness" for the third year. The musical was composed by Jimmy and Carol Owens and will be performed by members of Brightmoor's music department. Dates of performances are 7:30 p.m. on April 17, 7:30 p.m. on April 18 and 6:30 p.m. April 19. The musical tells the story of Jesus, as told by Peter. Tickets are available at no charge by contacting the church at 352-6200. The Good Friday service will be taped for use in Brightmoor's "Witness '81" television special to be seen the following weekend. Brightmoor has newly relocated to 26555 Franklin Road in Southfield.

Passover takes Jews to roots of freedom

By Shirlee Iden
staff writer

Jewish people everywhere are now preparing to celebrate a springtime holiday which is mankind's oldest continuous celebration of freedom. Passover, which will begin this year at sundown on April 18 and will continue for eight days until April 26, is the Jewish holiday which most involves the family.

The home-centered celebration commemorates the exodus from Egypt of the Hebrews who had been in bondage to the Pharaoh and were freed from slavery around 1280 BCE (Before the Common Era). Although celebrated in the synagogue, it is chiefly marked at home at family dinners called seders. Seder means order, the procedure of the service. During the seder the story of the Passover, the exodus from Egypt, is read at the dinner table from the Haggadah, a prayer book. There each year is read the story of the struggle of the enslaved Hebrew people, of the emergence of a leader, Moses, and his ultimate confrontation with the Pharaoh ultimately leading to liberation for the Hebrews.

LOOKING BACK to ancient roots is a venerable Jewish custom renewed each spring as families gather to tell the familiar story. Everyone, down to the youngest child, has a part in the ritual.

For the homemaker, Passover must begin weeks before the holiday with cleaning and preparation. Most Jewish homemakers schedule a thorough housecleaning. All the "chometz" or forbidden foods will be used up or banished from the home by the time the holiday begins. Also part of the preparation is to pack up everyday dishes and flatware, pots and pans and unpack the utensils used only during this holiday.

Orthodox and Conservative Jews hold two seders on the first two evenings of the eight-day holiday, while Reform Jews and Israelis generally have one. A seder plate with five foods symbolic of the exodus story is traditionally used. And many families have a special wine cup for the prophet Elijah.

As the holidays start the seder plate on every Jewish table will contain:
 • A hard-boiled egg in the shell, which represents the continuity of life and life's cyclical nature by virtue of its unbroken shape. The egg is roasted to symbolize grief over the destruction of the first temple in ancient Israel.
 • Charoset, a sweet mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices which represents the mortar the Jewish people made under their Egyptian taskmasters. The mixture's sweetness is a symbol of God's kindness making slavery bearable.
 • A roasted shankbone signifies the Paschal lamb. When God told Moses the Jewish homes in carrying out the 10th plague, the slaying of the first-born Egyptian sons, the blood of the lamb was used to demark Jewish homes.
 • Moror, or grated horseradish, recalls the tears and bitterness of slavery.
 • Karpas, which may be a potato, onion, celery or parsley which is dipped in salt water to symbolize the bitter tears of slavery.

For the children, one of the most exciting traditions their search for the matzah (a wrapped portion of unleavened bread) hidden by the father. Usually there is a reward for the one who finds it.
 OTHER parts of the Passover tradition call for the drinking of four cups of wine and the spilling of drops of blood to symbolize the 10 plagues.



Ritual is vital in the observance of Passover. Above (from left) are Elijah's Cup, a replica of the Holy Scrolls and a decorative Haggadah which contains the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Customs recently added to the seder tradition are the incantation of prayers for Jews murdered in the Holocaust and those kept from emigrating from the Soviet Union and Syria. Most familiar of all rites is the use of matzah, or unleavened bread, eaten to remember that the Hebrews had to leave Egypt in a hurry and could not take time for their bread dough to rise. Passover reminds Jews that the children of Israel were delivered by God from slavery in Egypt. It also reminds each individual that because his forefathers were freed, he too was delivered from slavery. With this knowledge of the evils of oppression, he must act righteously and strive for justice for all.

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