

Extras for your visit: A guide to the options

When Rabbi Zvi visits schools in person, he brings all the props needed to set up a classroom as a synagogue or for topics such as Shabbat, Passover, or Chanukah. For your virtual visit, Rabbi Zvi can still show the same items virtually, but it works much better if you have actual objects in the classroom, creating a proper workshop environment. This is a guide to help you understand what we offer, and how to choose.

Note that for the most part, we have looked for sources of props to keep the cost down for schools. This means that most items are simple, but they work well. In the case of kiddush cups, shabbat candles, and challah covers, there are regular and economy options as budgets will vary between schools. We do not provide more expensive items such as replica Torah scrolls or tallitot (prayer shawls), but we can advise on reliable reasonably priced sources for these as needed.

Current prices can be found on <https://www.jcob.org/extras.html>

General Items

The following items are relevant for all workshops, no matter the topic.

1. **Kippah / Kippot.** A Jewish man or boy will wear a kippah to show that God is above us. The plural of kippah is kippot. Religious Jews often wear the kippah all the time. Others will put one on only while praying, attending religious special meals, or for other Jewish rituals.



We suggest you have one or two kippot in each classroom during workshops.

2. **Mezuzah.** This is a scroll containing the Shema, a passage from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 stating the importance of belief in God as One, and the commandment to love God. Jews will put such scrolls on the doorposts of their houses. Less religious Jews might just have one on the front door, but really you are meant to put on every doorway in the house (aside from the toilet or bathroom).

Mezuzah scrolls are written by hand with a quill on parchment, just like a Torah scroll. They are protected by little boxes, called mezuzah cases. We provide small mezuzah cases and replica scrolls (paper that looks like parchment). Note that since these will be handled by children, the scrolls are altered so that God's holy Name does not actually appear.

For more on the significance of a mezuzah, check out <https://www.jewfaq.org/signs.htm#Mezuzah>



Shabbat Props

For Shabbat, we recommend that you have items to set up a Shabbat table in the classroom, like that shown here, with a paper table cloth underneath.

You can find a guide to the Friday night Shabbat Evening ritual here:

<https://www.jewfaq.org/shabbatref.htm>



1. Shabbat candles.

We light candles just before sunset on Friday, as Shabbat is about to start, so that the house is full of light on Friday night. It helps to remember the time before electric lighting, when the light of not one but two candles was a real treat. The woman of the household usually does the lighting, but men often light candles too, particularly if they do not live in a household with a woman present.

Since one cannot kindle flame on Shabbat, the custom is to light the candles, wave one's hands over the flames and cover one's eyes, then recite the blessing, then uncover one's eyes and welcome Shabbat as the lit candles are revealed. It is lovely to replicate this in the classroom using electric candles, and make believe that Shabbat has just begun.



We offer relatively inexpensive candlesticks with electric taper candles. We can also supply LED tea lights as a lower cost alternative.



Kiddush cups (kiddush wine/ grape juice).

The key ritual at the Shabbat table is recitation of the kiddush, or holiness prayer, said over a cup of wine or grape juice. Usually everyone at the table gets a sip of wine (or grape juice). We cannot post grape juice, but if you can get hold of grape juice locally, we can supply little cups for the children to have a taste.



plastic replica kiddush cup

We do supply kiddush cups. Most schools are perfectly satisfied with inexpensive plastic replica cups that look like silver, but we can provide metal (stainless steel) cups when requested. We have also recently sourced some metal cups without trays, which are much lower cost.



Metal kiddush cup with tray

2. Challah / Challah cover

We eat special bread called challah on Friday night and Saturday. This is similar to brioche – a rich eggy sweet bread, but dairy-free. This is covered by a special cloth, or challah cover, so as not to embarrass the bread while we say the blessing over the wine (as the wine blessing is said first).

If possible, it is lovely to get hold of actual challah to give children during online Shabbat workshops. Challah can be obtained online from Ocado. We do occasionally post challah to schools, but there is no guarantee it will arrive in good condition depending on the reliability of postal services.

As an alternative to actual challah, we provide challah posters. These can be covered with the challah cover, making believe it is actual challah. Our challah covers are home-made and designed to be affordable, but as a economy alternative, we can also send Shabbat napkins, which can also be used to cover the challah.



Challah cover next to a challah poster



*Shabbat napkin
(economy alternative to challah cover)*

3. Havdallah candle and spices

Shabbat ends on Saturday night, when it is fully dark (so Shabbat actually lasts about 25 hours with a bit of time added to each end). A special ceremony called Havdallah formally ends Shabbat and welcomes the new week. For more details see

<https://www.jewfaq.org/havdalaref.htm>

At havdallah, rather than lighting two separate candles as on Friday night, a multi-wicked candle is used, for the blessing on fire. We provide havdallah candles, which come in various colours depending on our source of supply. These are real candles, not electric ones.



For havdallah, a blessing is made again over wine (or grape juice), and you can use the same cup as for kiddush.

A blessing is also said over sweet spices, to usher in a sweet and good week. We supply packets of spices that can be handed round. We recommend a pack of three sachets for each class if possible, or if not, at least one sachet per class.



Passover Props

The most important ritual for the Passover festival is the Passover (Pesach) Seder, a special symbolic meal held on the first night of Passover, or the first two nights outside Israel. You can read more about the Passover seder here: <https://www.jewfaq.org/seder.htm#Seder>

For a Passover workshop, we recommend that you have items to set up a table for the Passover seder, with the essential items, including matzah, a seder plate and props, and possibly candlesticks (see above).

1. Matzah.

This is essential to any Passover workshop. Matzah is flat bread that Jews eat on Passover to remember that their ancestors in Egypt left in haste and did not have time to let their bread rise before the journey. During Passover, no food made from grain is permitted other than matzah and all leaven has to be removed from the house before the festival begins, which makes Jewish spring cleaning a sight to behold.



We provide Rakusens matzah to schools. This is made of nothing but flour and water and has no allergy warnings aside from wheat and gluten. Each box contains two individually sealed packets of seven matzahs.

2. Seder Plate and props

At the Passover seder, we tell the story of Passover. This is done primarily through explanation of the matzah and the objects on the seder plate.

- The bone symbolises the Passover offering. It is a memory of a memory because the Passover offering was a memory of the original Pascal Lamb, which was eaten on the first Passover, its blood painted on the doorposts so that the angel of death 'passed over' the houses of the Israelites so none were harmed.
- The egg symbolises rebirth. It is burnt to symbolise the destruction of the Temple, which was burned down (the first Temple by the Babylonians and the second Temple by the Romans)
- The bitter herb reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. There are two types of bitter herb. One (the horseradish) is eaten on its own. The other (the lettuce) is eaten with matzah in the Hillel sandwich to satisfy the Torah's instruction to eat the Passover offering with matzah and bitter herb.



(But we don't have the Passover offering anymore due to the destruction of the Temple, so it just matzah and bitter herb in the Hillel sandwich.)

- Charoset reminds us the mortar that we used when building things for Pharaoh. We dip the bitter herb in the Charoset to add a bit of sweetness to the bitterness.
- Karpas symbolises spring and new growth / life. We dip it in salt water, which symbolises tears. Any vegetable (something that grows from the ground) can be used for karpas, but most UK Jews use parsley or another green leafy vegetable.

We supply plastic replica seder plates (designed to look like porcelain), as well as plastic bones and eggs and fresh horseradish (which the school will need to cut up so that the children can all have a bit to smell).



We provide instructions for you to set up the remaining fresh items (the parsley, lettuce and charoset), but there are pictures on the seder plate so those are not essential. We also provide a seder plate activity for the children to do after the workshop.

3. Wine / Grape Juice.

As on Shabbat, the Seder meal begins with kiddush the sanctification prayer said over a cup of wine or grape juice. However, on Passover there are four required cups of wine (or grape juice). As for Shabbat, if you can obtain grape juice locally that is wonderful, but in all events, you will want a kiddush cup in each classroom.

Most schools are perfectly satisfied with inexpensive plastic replica cups that look like silver, but we can provide metal (stainless steel) cups when desired.



plastic replica kiddush cup



Metal kiddush cup

4. Candles.

As on Shabbat, we light candles at the start of all major festivals such as Passover. Candlesticks are not as necessary for Passover workshops, as the focus is on the story, matzah, horseradish, and seder plate. But we can supply either candlesticks with taper candles or tea candles, as we do for Shabbat.



Chanukah Props

On Chanukah, the most important ritual is the lighting of the chanukiya or chanukah menorah. This commemorates the miracle of the oil. For more on this see <https://www.jewfaq.org/holiday7.htm#Story> We can provide chanukah candles (note that the style and colour will vary depending on our supply source). You can obtain reasonably priced chanukah menorahs directly from Rimmon Judaica

<https://www.rimmonjudaica.com/judaica/menorahs/>
(they did not pay us to advertise them – it's just a good website)

We can also provide dreidels, special chanukah toys that children use to play a special game where a lucky fall of the dreidel can win you sweets, and an unlucky fall means you lose. The legend behind this is that the Greeks outlawed study of Torah under penalty of death, and so the Jewish children kept spinning tops with them, and pretended they were playing a game whenever spies arrived.

