

Videotapes offer background on Pesach seder, Exodus story

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Bulletin Correspondent March 29, 1996

There is a feast of affordable videos on Jewish subjects, and many teach about that most important Jewish tradition, the seder. The following videos for under \$30 range from seder how-tos to imaginative adaptations of the Exodus narrative.

Telephone numbers for ordering any of these titles by mail are included, but you might call your local Jewish bookstore first to see if they stock the program.

Videos that focus on the seder can be a handy reference for families as they prepare their own celebrations. The following three programs offer practical information on creating a seder meal:

"The Jewish Holidays Video Guide" (75 min., 1987, \$29.95, Kol-Ami, (800) 393-4264)

This introduction to the home celebration of all the major Jewish holidays includes a 22-minute segment on Passover. It runs quickly through the structure of the seder, with explanations of foods, rituals, blessings, and the Exodus story.

"A Passover Seder" (30 min., 1994, \$14.95, KidVision, (800) 766-0226)

This program presents highlights of a family seder, enhanced with commentary by Elie Wiesel and animation by celebrated illustrator Mark Podwal. The program's focus on the participation of children makes it appropriate for the entire family to watch while planning a seder.

"Passover: Traditions of Freedom" (57 min., 1994, \$29.95, National Center for Jewish Film, (617) 899-7044)

This film for adults explores the diverse seder traditions of Ashkenazic and Sephardic families in Israel and the United States. It is particularly appropriate for the growing number of Jews who, in addition to understanding their own traditions, seek to incorporate the practices of other communities into their home observances. And, as it was made by popular cookbook author Joan Nathan ("The Jewish Holiday Kitchen"), you can be certain that the gastronomical dimension is not neglected.

A number of videotapes for children explain Passover customs and the Exodus narrative. Of course, we should not use such programs to excuse ourselves from the *mitzvah* of actually telling the story of the Exodus to our children. Used appropriately, however, the following videotapes can reinforce children's understanding and appreciation of what we celebrate at Passover:

"Passover at Bubbe's" (30 min., 1990, \$22.95, Jonathan David Company, (718) 456-8611)

As the children in this puppet presentation prepare for the seder, a talking Haggadah takes them on a magical journey back to ancient Egypt to experience the Exodus for themselves. The videotape includes energetic renditions of traditional Passover songs.

"A Rugrats Passover" (25 min., 1996, \$9.98, Facets Video, (800) 331-6197)

This special installment of the popular Nickelodeon children's cartoon has proven exceptionally popular among young children. It offers a humorous retelling of the Exodus, but takes significant liberties with the biblical account.

"Shalom Sesame: Passover" (37 min., 1991, \$16.95, Comet International /Shalom Sesame, (800) 428-9920)

Sarah Jessica Parker, Mary Tyler Moore, and others join the Muppets in Israel to create this very entertaining Passover program with a special emphasis on elementary Hebrew vocabulary. Highlights include the segments "Jerusalem Jones and the Lost Afikoman" and "Cooking with Miriam" (an instructional cooking show from ancient Egypt). The video can also be ordered as part of the "Shalom Sesame Sharing Passover Kit," which includes a coloring book, audiocassette, games, and other supplementary activities.

"Moses in Egypt" (30 min., 1993, \$12.98, Facets Video, (800) 331-6197)

The most faithful of these titles to the biblical text, this beautifully animated program tells the story of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Danny Glover narrates.

"Passover Adventure" (28 min., 1984, \$22.95, Ergo Home Video, (800) 695-3746)

Taking to heart the imperative to see ourselves as if we personally went out of Egypt, actor Jonathan Sagalle ("Schindler's List") takes us with him as he travels through the Sinai and Israel to re-enact the flight from Egypt for himself.

For information on these or any additional titles, call the Bureau of Jewish Education at (415) 751-6983, ext. 135.

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