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## **Passover Storytelling Goes Beyond the Haggadah**

Passover is all about telling (or retelling) a great story. The Passover story, in particular, is about the history of our people. The story starts out thousands of years ago when the Jews were slaves and built ancient cities for Egyptian kings called Pharaohs. The Egyptians were worried that the Jewish slaves would become too strong and fight for their freedom, so Pharaoh ordered the drowning of all male babies born to the Jews. To save her newborn son, one Jewish woman placed her baby in a basket and asked her daughter Miriam to take him to the reeds in the river and hide him. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and named him Moses, which means "drawn from the water," and unknown to the princess, appointed Moses' real mother to care for him while he lived in Pharaoh's palace.

Sounds like a soap opera, doesn't it? Right from the start, it's impossible to make this long story short.

One day God ordered Moses to go before Pharaoh and demand that he "let my people go," but Pharaoh refused. That's when trouble began for the Egyptians. God sent the 10 plagues, including turning water into blood and destroying crops with hailstorms and locusts. But the worst punishment of all was killing all the Egyptian firstborn children. There we go with killing again.

God ordered Moses to tell all the Jews to mark their doors with red blood from the pascal lamb that they were to eat for dinner that evening so that the angel of death would pass over every Jewish door and spare those inside.

The story of the Exodus from Egypt gets even more riveting from there and includes the parting of the Red Sea, the miracle of manna in the dessert, and finally, the liberation of a nation.

But the storytelling tradition on the Festival of Pesach doesn't have to end with the vivid narrative in the Haggadah. After all, this pilgrimage holiday lasts an entire week, so read up:

The Koufax Dilemma, by Steven Schnur

Danny is angry that he can't pitch in the season's opener because the game is scheduled on the first night of Passover. Would an important sporting event be scheduled on Easter? My point exactly. Anyway, this elementary school pitcher is forced to do some serious soul searching and discovers a loyalty to his divorced parents, his team, his heritage, and himself. A must read for all baseball families.

A Passover Story, Matzah Ball, by Mindy Avra Portnoy

Aaron can't pass up a chance to attend an Orioles game at Camden Yards even though it's during Passover. Instead of enjoying the usual popcorn and pretzels like his friends do, he has to munch on matzah and macaroons. Sometimes being Jewish doesn't seem fair, until a miracle happens in the top of the eighth.

Also, for ages one through seven, the PJ Library recommends the following titles:

What I Like About Passover, by Varda Livney

In this charming board book, a little girl lists all the best things about coming together for Passover, such as "crunchy matza" and "being with all of you!"

Dinosaur on Passover, by Diane Levin Rauchwerger

A big, overzealous dinosaur shows up at a little boy's house to help him prepare for Passover and enjoy the holiday.

It's Seder Time!, by Latifa Berry Kropf

Beautiful photographs and lots of craft ideas bring this Passover story to life as a preschool gets ready for the festive holiday.

The Matzo Ball Boy, by Lisa Shulman

Mischievous pictures complement the tale of a lonely Bubbe as she makes a matzah ball in the shape of a boy in this Yiddish take-off of the Gingerbread Man story.

Mrs. Katz and Tush, by Patricia Polacco

A touching, artistic story about a young African American boy who learns much more about love, friendship and Passover than he expects when he gives an elderly Jewish woman a kitten to keep her company.

Miraim's Cup, by Fran Manushkin

The beautifully illustrated story of Moses' sister Miriam provides the narrative for this take of a classic Passover story.

For more entertaining Passover stories for children, check out the wide selection of holiday books at the Saul Brodsky Jewish Community Library.

*"Mishegas of Motherhood" is the creation of Ellie S. Grossman, a St. Louis freelance writer and stay-at-home-mom who never stays home. Please feel free to send any advice to: [ellie@mishegasofmotherhood.com](mailto:ellie@mishegasofmotherhood.com) or visit her website at [www.mishegasofmotherhood.com](http://www.mishegasofmotherhood.com).*

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