

Schools

Celebrating Pesach at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool

By Becca Weiner

Pesach has many long-standing traditions and rituals among Jews: from the Passover Seder and retelling the story of the Exodus to delicious matzah brei for breakfast during the eight-day-long holiday. Here at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool, we put our own spin on Pesach. From Judaica class with Morah Becca to the Seders, we guarantee that you won't find a Passover celebration quite like ours anywhere else.

We begin teaching the kids the story of Passover in the months leading up to the holiday, as our 4s and PreK classes work on decorating a Seder plate. The teachers work with the students on each part of the Seder plate and what it symbolizes. On Tu B'shevat, they plant parsley to celebrate the impending spring and they watch it grow until they can add it to their Seder plate during Passover.

In Judaica, students start learning about Passover with the story of Joseph, since it was because of Joseph that the Jewish people ended up in Egypt. In preparation for Pesach, Morah Becca lays the foundation of the story by helping our students act out the good and the bad from Joseph's life, from being sold into Egyptian slavery to ascending to one of the highest ranks in government.

While the plagues may seem like the least palatable part of the Passover story, our kids love going to the plague museum with Miss Debby in the Library. Set up like a touch-and-feel museum our students get to experience the plagues in a much less excruciating way than the Egyptians did. Additionally, our teachers incorporate the plagues into their classrooms. At snack time, some of the teachers use food coloring to turn the kids water into blood, and after nap time our students wake up to find frogs on their sleeping mats.

After the kids learn about each of the ten plagues in their classroom and with Miss Debby the 4s and PreK classes participate in our annual "Slave Walk." They begin in the gym, where "Pharaoh" has them do physical labor, such as scattering koosh balls only to collect them once again. The valiant Moses comes in to save our 4s and PreK by facilitating the ten plagues. Our students watch as teachers toss frogs on our Pharaoh and plant boils on his face. Once Pharaoh finally relents, Moses leads our students to freedom by marching them from the gym, down the hallways of the Levine JCC and all the way back to the Charlotte Jewish Preschool building.

Each class participates in a Seder with their age levels. Our ones, twos, and threes have a beautiful Seder led by Miss Patty, Morah Becca, and the classroom teachers. Miss Patty plays all of our Passover favorites on her guitar – from "One Morning" to "Pharaoh, Pharaoh." Morah Becca and the classroom teachers read the Haggadah so students can

hear the complete story of Passover in one sitting, just like a real Seder. After we read the Haggadah the students enjoy the Passover meal.

Our 4s and PreK classes take over Lerner Hall with their Passover celebration. For weeks leading up to the Seder the 4s and PreK work on creating their very own slideshow depicting the parts of our Haggadah. Students illustrate various Passover scenes, from frogs jumping on Pharaoh's head to Moses leading the Jewish people through the parted Red Sea. The 4s and PreK teachers read the Haggadah aloud to the students as pictures of the events run across the giant screen behind them. Our students have the opportunity to watch the Passover story unfold thanks to their very own artwork, as the teachers recount the Exodus.

Like everything else we do at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool, we make Passover a thrilling and

exciting holiday for our students to celebrate. Our teachers make the experience real for our students, from the plagues to the Slave Walk.

Enrollment for the 2014-2015 is currently underway. To sched-

ule a tour or to get more information please contact Alyson Kalik at 704-944-6776. ☆






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