

The Four Types of Children

A HUMANISTIC SUPPLEMENT TO THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

Society for
**Humanistic
Judaism**

There are four types of children.

We answer each according to their ability to listen and comprehend.

“The ancient rabbis loved to play word games with the text of the Torah. Through a careful examination of its phrasing, they uncovered four different instances where they imagined parents explaining the Exodus story to their children. The differences among these four verses seemed to suggest four different types of children gathered at the Seder...” –Rabbi Jeffrey Falick

The WISE CHILD asks:

What does all this mean?

This child is philosophical - and also practical. This child wants to know more than just the details of the Seder. She wants to know how the messages of the holiday can shape her identity. She wants to know how to take these lessons and put them into action.

Say to this child:

*We welcome your thoughtfulness and commitment.
We will guide you to make your mark on the world.*

The REBELLIOUS CHILD asks:

What does this mean to all of you?

This child is oppositional - and also skeptical. This child likes to protest for protest's sake, but he still comes to the table. He wants to appear not to be listening, but he takes in all the lessons. He wants to still belong, and his challenges need to be taken seriously.

Say to this child:

*We welcome your defiance and independence.
We will guide you to find your place among us.*

FOR MORE INFO OR TO GET INVOLVED, PLEASE CONTACT:



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The INNOCENT CHILD asks: *What is this?*

This child is unschooled - and also open-minded. This child is eager to learn and is hungry for information. She wants knowledge and will direct her own learning by the questions she asks. She wants to deepen her identification and bring new meaning into her life.

Say to this child:

*We welcome your enthusiasm and curiosity.
We will guide you to find your way.*

Then there is the YOUNG CHILD, who does not know *how to ask.*

This child is making sounds - and also turns them into words. This child is engaged every moment in the experiences that surround him. He wants to grab hold of everything, make connections, and master skills. He wants to be held and embraced with all the protection and love we can give him.

Say to this child:

*We welcome your very presence.
We will guide you with our love, care and devotion.*

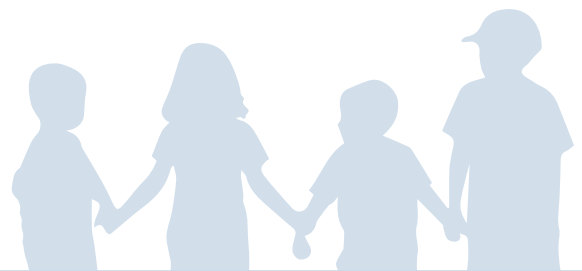
Some say there is a FIFTH CHILD – who no longer sits *at the table.*

This child has fallen away by attrition and disaffection. This child has been turned away by rejection and disapproval. She is feeling sad and lonely. He is feeling angry and bitter.

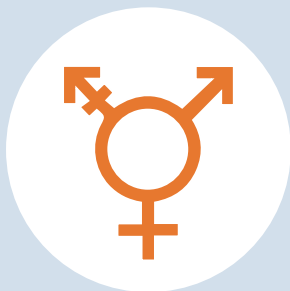
Say to this child:

*There is always a seat at this table.
Please come back to us, we cherish you forever.*

Reprinted from The Liberated Haggadah, written by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer



Why four children?



This Humanistic version of “The Four Children,” which has traditionally been “The Four Sons” from the Passover Haggadah, recognizes that we teach all our children, regardless of their gender. All children have a seat at the table and can learn according to their needs and abilities. Rabbi Peter Schweitzer utilizes the tradition and provides a deeper sensitivity and psychological perception to why each child asks questions differently depending on their understanding and perspective. A fifth child is also included here. The answers offered are unique responses from Humanistic Judaism.