



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Special Spring Festivals Lesson

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God created the Earth and everything on it. He created the weather to have four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. He did this to teach us about His plan to bring every human being who has ever lived into His Family!

As winter gives way to spring, days become longer and nights become shorter. More sunlight means warmer temperatures and warmer soil. Seeds begin to sprout. New life appears everywhere!

The first month of God's calendar begins during the spring. During this season, God commands us to observe His first three **holy days**. God designed things this way so we are completely surrounded by new life during His spring holy days.

The three spring **festivals** show three steps to bring new life into God's Family. God does this by transforming the people in His Church into the **Bride of Jesus Christ**.

The four fall festivals show us God's four-step plan to expand His Family further by bringing everyone else

into His Family as **children of God!**

Put the three spring festivals and the four fall holy days together, and these seven festivals show you God's complete plan for having a family! In this lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*, you will learn about the *meaning* of the first observance, Passover, and the three spring holy days: the **first day of Unleavened Bread**, the **last day of Unleavened Bread** and the **feast of Pentecost!**

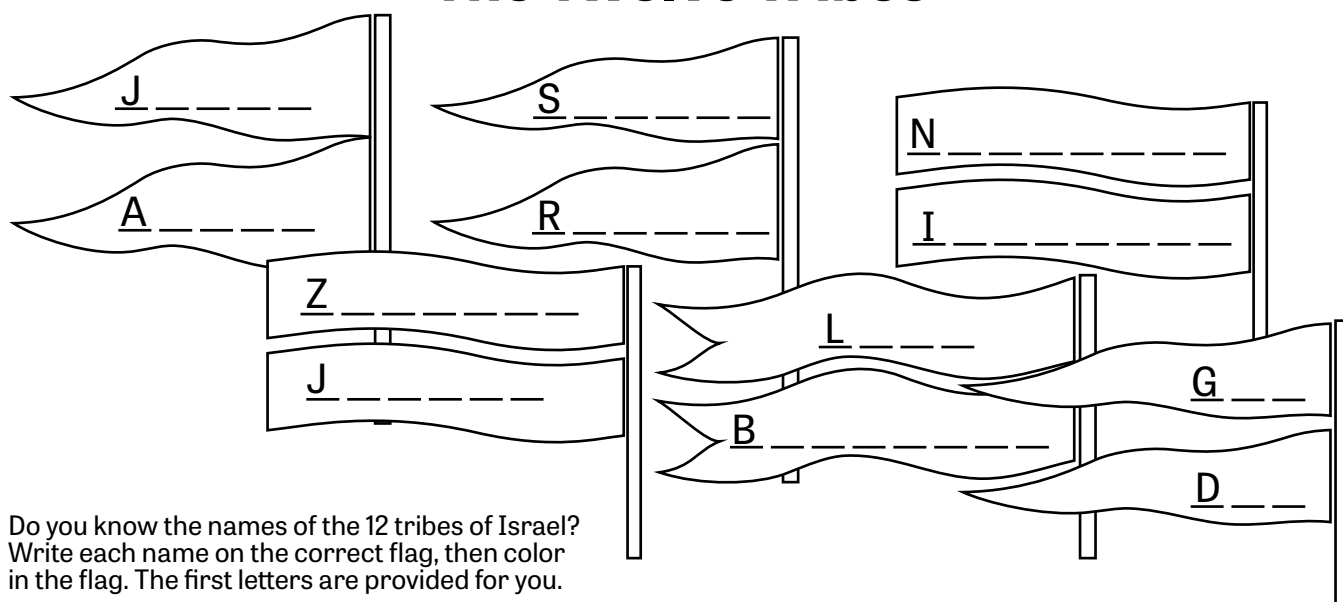
FIRST PASSOVER

The first step in God's plan is symbolized by **Passover**. This is a memorial that occurs just before the first spring holy day.

Thousands of years ago, the cruel **Pharaoh** of Egypt made the Israelite people his slaves. For about a century, the Egyptians oppressed the **Israelites** and made their lives terrible. Harsh taskmasters beat the Israelites and didn't allow them to rest on the Sabbath.

God knew many years before that this would happen to the Israelites. He knew they were suffering. God

The Twelve Tribes



Do you know the names of the 12 tribes of Israel? Write each name on the correct flag, then color in the flag. The first letters are provided for you.

chose a baby boy named Moses to begin preparing for a special mission. When Moses was 80 years old, God sent him and his older brother, Aaron, to deliver a message from God to Pharaoh: *Free the Israelites*. But Pharaoh was hard-hearted. He refused to listen. Instead of letting the Israelites go, he made their lives even worse!

God sent Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh that He would send terrible **plagues** if Pharaoh didn't free the Israelites. Pharaoh wouldn't listen, so God sent plague after plague against Egypt—a total of 10 plagues. After nine plagues, Pharaoh still refused to obey God. God told Moses that there was one more plague to come. This plague would be so terrible, Pharaoh would let the Israelites go.

God protected the Israelites from most of the first nine plagues. To be

protected from the 10th plague, the Israelites had to follow some special instructions from God.

The first month of God's calendar is Abib. On the 10th day of Abib, the father of each family had to select a male lamb less than one year old. The lamb couldn't have any markings or bruises. The man had to separate the lamb from the others and take care of it until the 14th day of Abib. Then, after sunset, he had to kill this lamb and smear its blood on the doorposts of his family's house.

Each family had to roast the lamb and eat it that night, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. If the family couldn't eat the whole lamb that night, they could share it with their neighbors. Any leftover meat had to be burned before morning. Every family member had to eat quickly, with shoes on their feet and walking sticks in their



The final plague brought on Egypt was the death of all firstborn.

hands. They had to be ready to leave Egypt the next day, but they could not leave their house all through the night!

That night, God sent the death angel to kill all the firstborn, both man and beast. Only those inside a house marked with the blood of a lamb were saved! When the death angel saw the blood, it *passed over* the house and did not kill any firstborn inside. That is why this night is called *Passover*. God commanded that His people keep the Passover every year forever from that time on (Exodus 12:1-14).

The Egyptians did not obey God's commands, so the death angel killed all their firstborn. Even Pharaoh's firstborn son was killed. After this terrible plague, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go.

Moses told the Israelites to ask the Egyptians to give them gold, silver and extra clothing for their journey. The Egyptians gave them these things, which was right because the Egyptians had forced the Israelites to work for them for years and years and never gave them anything in return.

As they left Egypt, the Israelites celebrated and raised up their hands: They were finally free! Every year, God's people remember the night God led the Israelites out of slavery by sharing a special meal called the **Night to Be Much Observed**.

Where did you and your family keep the Night to Be Much Observed last year? _____

PASSOVER TODAY

God commanded that His people must keep the Passover every year forever. Hundreds of years after the Israelites left Egypt, **Jesus Christ** kept the Passover when He came to Earth as a human being. God's Church still keeps the Passover today!

The ancient Israelites knew the Passover lamb saved them, their children and their animals. But they did not know everything about what the lamb represented. It actually pictured Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, John the Baptist called Jesus the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). The Apostle Paul called Him "our passover" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Christ came to Earth and let Himself be brutally beaten and then killed. Why did He do this? Like the Passover lamb, His sacrifice *saves lives*.

Because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, He can save human beings from dying for their sins, and He can bring them into God's Family. Jesus lived a perfect life. He never sinned. He kept the Passover every year, just like God commanded. He kept His last Passover the night before He was crucified, when He was 33 years old. During this Passover, Christ showed His 12 disciples a *new* way to keep the Passover from that time forward. There was no need for a lamb, because Jesus Christ Himself was *the* Lamb.

NEW SYMBOLS

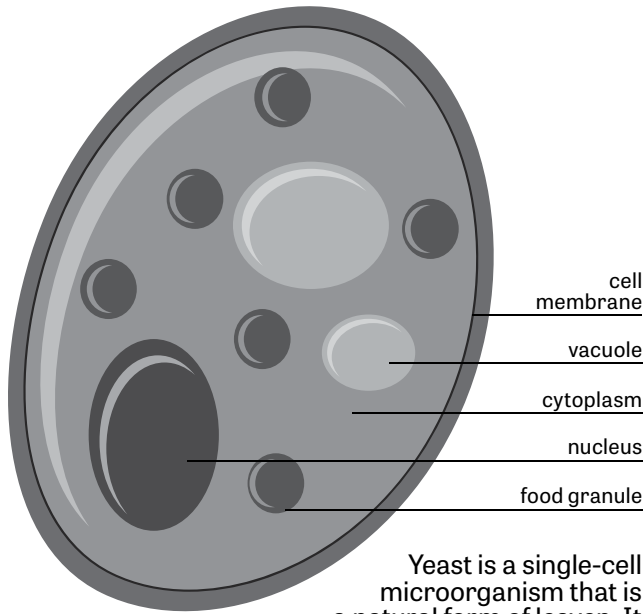
The first thing Christ taught His disciples to do during this new Passover service was to **wash one another's feet**. He wrapped a towel around His waist and poured some water into a basin. Even though He was the Lord over the disciples, He washed each of their feet just like a lowly servant would do. He explained that the disciples should do the same thing to help them learn to have a humble, serving attitude.

After this footwashing service, Christ took a piece of unleavened bread and broke it into small pieces. He gave this bread to His disciples to eat. After they had eaten it, He gave them a small amount of wine to drink.

BREAD AND WINE

The Passover is the most solemn and serious day of the year. Christ was brutally beaten and crucified on the Passover of A.D. 31. First He was whipped so hard and so many times that His skin was torn so badly that people could see His ribs. He was beaten until He didn't even look human anymore. Then He was nailed to a wooden stake. Just before sunset, He was stabbed in the side with a spear, and He bled to death!

Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but He willingly let Himself be beaten and killed so that He could pay the penalty for our sins!



Yeast is a single-cell microorganism that is a natural form of leaven. It causes bread dough to become puffed up with air, just like sin causes people to become “puffed up” with vanity.

God tells us that every human being has sinned and disobeyed His Ten Commandments (Romans 3:23), except Jesus Christ. Sin brings misery. God doesn’t want anyone to live forever in misery, so the penalty for sin is eternal death (Romans 6:23).

Before Christ came to Earth as a human being, He was a God Being called the Word of God. He helped God create humans. Because He created humanity, His life is more valuable than all human lives put together.

Because He never sinned, Jesus Christ did not have to die to pay the penalty for His sins. But He willingly died anyway! Why did He do that? So His death could pay *our* penalty for sin.

The broken piece of unleavened bread that is eaten during the new

Passover service represents Jesus’s beaten body. His body was tortured to pay the penalty for our physical sins. Physical sins are the breaking of health laws that lead to injury and sickness. Because Christ paid this penalty, God can heal us when we are sick! (1 Peter 2:22, 24).

The small glass of wine that is drunk during the Passover service represents Jesus Christ’s spilled blood—His death. Christ’s blood was spilled to make possible the forgiveness of our spiritual sins.

The new Passover symbols that Christ instituted remind us of the tremendous price of sin. The Son of God voluntarily gave His life for us. Because Christ paid the penalty for our sins, it is possible for us to become part of the God Family!

THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins the day after Passover. This is a seven-day festival that represents the second step in God’s plan. It begins with the first holy day of the year: the first day of Unleavened Bread. The second holy day of the year is the last day of Unleavened Bread.

During the Days of Unleavened Bread, God commands that we put all leaven out of our homes. We must eat flat bread that is made without leaven.

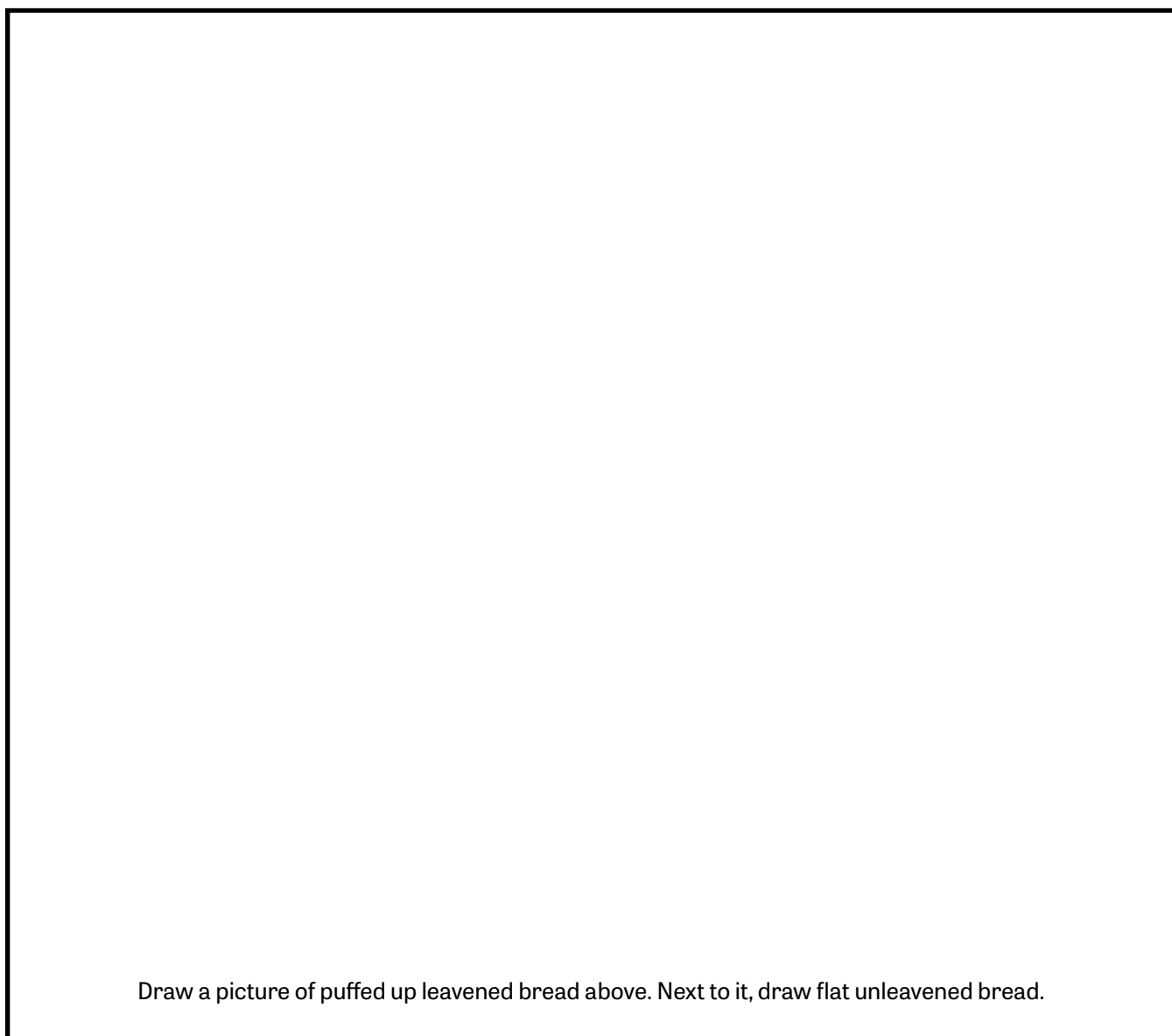
Leaven causes bread, cake and

cookies to rise and become puffed up with air, just like sin causes people to be “puffed up” with pride and vanity. Also, a little leaven spreads through a whole loaf of bread, just like a little sin spreads through your whole life. Even a small lie leads to other lies, until your whole life is full of them. This is why God commands that we remove all leaven from our houses before the first day of Unleavened Bread. Putting leaven out of our houses represents putting sin out of

our lives!

List places in your home where you might find leaven: _____

The ancient Israelites had to get leaven out of their tents and their camp. Today, we have to work hard to get leaven out of our houses, our workplaces, our vehicles and our belongings before the Feast



of Unleavened Bread starts. This work shows us that we also must work hard to get sin out of our lives. During these days, perhaps your parents would like you to make a list of sins you know you need to get out of your life so you can better obey God's commandments.

The special dinner at the very beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is called the Night to Be Much Observed. This night reminds us that the ancient Israelites began their journey out of Egypt on the 15th of Abib under a full moon. They began this journey out of slavery with celebration and joy! This great event happened the night after the Passover and is called the **Exodus**.

God commanded His people to celebrate the Night to Be Much Observed every year forever so we will remember the miracles He performed to save the Israelites from slavery (Exodus 12:42). Today, we celebrate the Night to Be Much Observed to remember the miracles God is performing to rescue us from sin!

How will you and your family keep the Night to be Much Observed this year? _____

The first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are holy days. God commands us not to work

on these days. Instead, we attend a special Church service to learn more about God's master plan. Just like Passover and the Night to Be Much Observed, God commands we keep the Days of Unleavened Bread every year forever! (Exodus 12:17).

PENTECOST

The third holy day in God's plan is **Pentecost**. Pentecost does not fall on a specific date on God's calendar. How do we know what day Pentecost is on? During the Days of Unleavened Bread, there is always a weekly Sabbath. We count 50 days from the day after this weekly Sabbath to get to Pentecost. The word *Pentecost* means "count 50."

About 50 days after the Israelites left Egypt, God gave His Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai on the day of Pentecost. Hundreds of years later, God gave His Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ's disciples on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. This day marked the beginning of God's Church!

The Holy Spirit is the power of God, kind of like how electricity is the power of a lightbulb. God gives His Spirit as a special gift to adults who have repented of their sins, have accepted Jesus Christ's sacrifice, have been baptized and have been prayed over and had hands laid on them by one of God's ministers. The Holy Spirit is what makes someone a member of God's Church. Those

who have the Holy Spirit use its power to overcome their sins. The Holy Spirit also gives us the power to understand God's spiritual truths!

The **Middle East** is where the Bible was written. This region has two harvest seasons each year. The first is a small spring grain harvest. The second is a large fall harvest. Pentecost comes during the spring harvest. It pictures when God will bring members of His Church into His Family as part of the **firstfruit** harvest. Members of God's Church are called *firstfruits*, because they will be the first to be born into God's Family!



Pentecost pictures the harvest of God's firstfruits.

After Jesus Christ returns to Earth, these firstfruits will become His Bride. They will help Him and the Father teach everyone on Earth about God's way of life. If the people they teach decide to obey God, they will have the opportunity to become the *children* of Christ and His Bride!

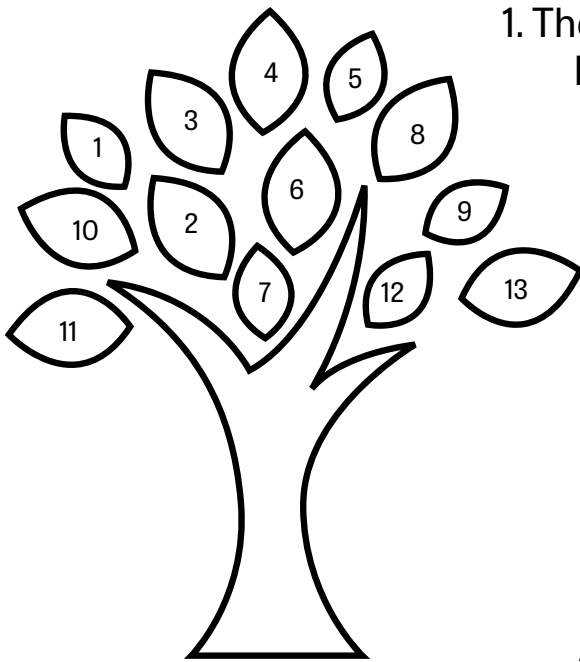
THE GOD FAMILY PLAN

The spring festivals picture God's plan to bring His Church into His Family as firstfruits. First, Christ died on Passover to pay for the sins of mankind. Then, members of His Church get rid of their sins and leave behind the evil ways of this world. This is represented by the Days of Unleavened Bread. Finally, God gives the members of His Church the power of His Holy Spirit so they can overcome sin and become Christ's Bride.

The four fall holy days picture God's plan to bring the billions of people who were never a part of God's Church into His Family as children of God. Seven is God's number of completion. All four fall holy days come in the seventh month of God's calendar. When you add them with the three spring festivals, you get seven total festivals, which picture the complete plan of God for having a family. You will learn more about the fall holy days in a future lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*.

Help Spring Arrive

Complete the statements below. As you fill in each word, use a green crayon or colored pencil to color in the leaf that has the same number as the statement. Continue answering and coloring (you can use different shades of green) until all the answers are complete and the tree looks like it would in the springtime.



1. The seven festivals teach us God's plan to have a _____.

2. God's year begins in the _____.

3. The first month of God's calendar is called _____.

4. God commanded the Israelites to select a perfect, unblemished _____ on the 10th day of the first month.

5. The first festival in the spring is _____, and it occurs on the _____th day of the first month.

6. On the first Passover, the Israelites smeared lamb's blood on the _____ of their homes.

7. Those families who followed God's instructions did not lose their _____.

8. Today, God's people eat a piece of _____ bread and drink a small glass of _____ during the Passover service.

9. The Israelites left Egypt on the _____ to Be Much Observed.

10. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is _____ days long with _____ holy days.

11. God gave the Ten Commandments on the day of _____.

12. Pentecost means "_____ 50."

13. Pentecost is also known as the feast of _____.

Paste photos from the Night to Be Much Observed here to make a scrapbook page.

Spring Festivals Word Search

T J D L N E P P R S S F G Y P
X S A O O K L I P O E K V A N
W Y O E V A C R C H V D M D D
V R O C G E I G R Y A L H Y E
U E N U E N K E K S L P N L K
Y H E V G T V A E K S F Q O R
E S Q P E O N I C K Q W T H W
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G P E C S S S M Z M J L E B C
K A L U O M E B N W R D Z I R
Z K S R K S S O K V T S K B R
A E X E T B H Q K W U V F X S
J F R N W B Q M T I K U D G O

ABIB
CAKE
COOKIES
HARVEST

HOLY DAY
ISRAEL
JESUS
LAMB

MOSES
PASSOVER
PENTECOST
PLAGUES

SLAVES
SPRING
WINE
YEAST