HOW TO LEAD A VIRTUAL SEDER
Jews have been adapting to changing circumstances for over 5000 years. You can do this. This night indeed is different from all other nights.

In the midst of COVID-19 and physical distancing, we need new ways to come together to share a seder.

Seder2020 is here to help with everything to make your virtual seder a success.
WHY HAVE A SEDER THIS YEAR?

With everything going on in the world, why should we take time (on a Wednesday and Thursday no less) to get together on-screen and host or attend a Passover Seder?

Because, as OneTable’s CEO Aliza Kline likes to say, ritual is important. Ritual can act as an anchor in this world where so many things are happening too quickly.

There are a lot of reasons to say no to Seder this year, we’re here to make it easier to say yes.
SETTING YOUR GUESTS UP FOR SUCCESS

Just as you would let your in-person guests know what to expect of the night - let your guests joining you digitally know.

You can include all of the necessary information directly in the dinner description on the Seder2020 site, and/or email it out to your guests, either through the site or from your own email.

We suggest before your event:

• **Send out the link** to your Haggadah/Haggadot in advance and ask that everyone have it open during your Seder.

• **Do a trial run:**
  - Ask a friend to join you on the technology of your choice.
  - How is the sound quality? Camera angle? Lighting where you’re seated? Figure out these pieces before your Seder so you can focus on helping your guests.
  - Consider checking in with each of your guests the day before to make sure they have the tech they need.
Let people know they should be on video so that they’ll feel prepared and comfortable the night of.

Assign roles - it will put people at ease to know what’s expected of them:

- **Facilitator:**
  - This may be you as the host, or you might share this responsibility. This is the person responsible for moving the night forward.

- **Portion readers:**
  - It’s easiest to assign portions prior than to call people out in the moment. Keep notes for yourself on who is doing which section.

- **Music director:**
  - Someone to create a playlist and DJ (quietly) in the background or during pauses.

- **Tech Support:**
  - Who is the tech savviest of your guests? Ask if they’ll help with any issues that come up in the moment. What a nightsaver!
  - This person can also be the person to watch the chat for any big questions that come up and to remind people who forget to mute after they’re done speaking.
DURING THE EVENT

- Encourage everyone to use headsets or earbuds, making sure to speak directly into the microphone whenever possible.

- Spend the first several minutes acclimating your guests to being on a video call together. Go over the features you find helpful with them, and ask them to remain muted when they’re not speaking.

- Build in breaks for people to get up and stretch, grab a glass of water, let Elijah in, be away from the screen for a moment or two.

- Consider Zoom Breakout Rooms:
  - If you’re using Zoom and hosting a large group, Breakout Rooms are an excellent choice for conversation portions of the evening.
**Fun Additions to Consider**

**Share your space**
- Take a moment at the beginning of your Seder to have your guests share where they are in their homes - how did they set their table? What photos do they have hung on their walls? Introduce their cat or dog!

**Show + Tell**
- To begin, have your guests take two - five minutes each for a show + tell. Perhaps it’s a poem that has brought them comfort during this time or one of their favorite old family photos.
- Create a prompt like, “what reminds you of family?” or “what are you grateful for?” or “what sets you free?” and have your guests share a photo or artifact that answers the prompt.

**Unplug Together**
- Take time before you all gather on screen and unplug away from screens together. Go for a socially distanced walk, work on a puzzle, read a chapter in your book - while you might not physically be together for this unplugging, it can be a comfort to know your guests are also taking a moment to unplug. When you all gather again, you can share what you did for your unplugged moment.
The thing is, the Passover Seder is Hellenist,
Modeled after the Greek symposium.
*Synagogue, afikomen: Greek words.*

We are indebted!
Yet we talk about tradition as if it is singular,
Judaism as if it is One Thing.

In reality, it is Many.
And so tonight, a symposium of One
Among the Many.

I cannot hide the afikomen from myself.
Instead, I will seek to remember
How much is borrowed, how much shared.

Afikomen is a loan word,
**Greek for that which comes after.**
We inherit more than we know.
We inherited the word "Afikomen" from Greek influence.

Share something new you’ve learned/inherited during COVID-19 times; if the afikomen is really about searching for something — what’s a piece of new knowledge we can all “find” as a result of this seder?

Or assign the role of “Afikomen” before the dinner, have that person make jokes about matzo subtly throughout the night in the chat, and have your guests guess who it is when the time comes.
ENDING YOUR SEDER

The most important thing to focus on is how you want people to feel once they’ve signed off and closed their computer/phone. Here are some things we like to do:

• **End it with a toast:** To life, to life, L’CHAIM. Say something along the lines of “before we part– I’d like to make a toast to you all” and then wrap up your experience in a way that feels personal and personalized.

• **End it with some warm fuzzy feelings:** Ask everyone to share something they are thankful for in general or from your time spent on camera.

• **End in gratitude:** It’s a remarkable thing that Jewish tradition seeks to inspire us to be present before we eat, and all the more so that we are then directed to acknowledge our gratitude after we eat - gratitude not for the food itself, but for the incredible feeling of being full. What does it mean to be fulfilled? In Hebrew, the root of the word for fulfillment - to be whole, to be complete - is shalom, the same as the word for peace. May we find peace, a whole and complete peace. May we be fulfilled, not only by our food, but by our actions and our words.
MORE WAYS TO END YOUR SEDER

• **End it with a funny story:** Laughter is crucial right now (and always). Try asking your guests to prepare a joke or share a funny moment from their lives, then, popcorn style, each person shares. Or step up yourself and have a funny story prepared to read to your guests as the final piece of the evening.

• **End it with a dance party:** Pick a song and invite your digital guests to get up and dance without worrying about being too silly. People can even turn their cameras off for this portion, but it will feel great to do it together.