JFS Jewish Journal

Engaging Your Jewish Residents

Jewish Family Services
Northeastern New York

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PASSOVER: Exodus and Elation

Passover is an essential Jewish holiday that tells the story of the Jewish people's escape from enslavement in ancient Egypt. Steeped in tradition, storytelling, and celebration, it is one of the most commonly celebrated Jewish holidays. **This year, Passover will be celebrated from sundown on Friday, April 15 until sundown on Saturday, April 23.**

The Passover Principles

Passover commemorates the redemption of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery. The first two nights feature a *Seder,* a festive ritual feast often celebrated with large groups of friends and family, where we read the Passover story from a book called a *Haggadah.* The story recounts the bitterness of our enslavement, the infliction of the Ten Plagues upon the Egyptians, and our eventual Exodus from Egypt. In essence, we relive the experience of moving from enslavement to freedom.

A main component of celebrating Passover is abstaining from eating *Hametz,* or any food with a leavening agent in it. Leavening agents include yeast, baking soda, and baking powder. For the full eight days of the holiday, we eat *Matzah* (unleavened bread) and other similar replacements. The easiest way to serve Passover-safe meals is by picking foods that are naturally gluten free or ones that are marked as "Kosher for Passover."

Matzah, and four glasses of wine

What is a Seder?

A Passover *Seder* is a festive feast that takes place on the first two nights of the holiday. At a *Seder*, we closely follow a set of steps mapped out in the *Haggadah* that include ritual handwashing, drinking four glasses of wine, saying various blessings, singing traditional songs, and more. A bulk of the *Seder* focuses on a complete retelling of the Passover story. A big meal occurs halfway through, usually featuring Matzah ball soup, meats, and wine.

How to Have a Seder

Though there is a traditional way to have a *Seder*, there is no "right" way, since every family and community has its own customs and practices. There are many alternative types of *Seders* that can capture the spirit of the holiday. You can use an **abridged Haggadah** for a shorter *Seder*, or do something fun like a **Chocolate *Seder.*** Symbolism is a huge part of the *Seder (see Page 2)*, so how it is celebrated can be interpreted in many different ways.

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Symbolism and the Seder Plate

A *Seder* Plate is a round and ornate dish that can be found at most *Seders* and has designated sections for some of the most important ritual and symbolic foods present at a *Seder*. Here are some of the most common *Seder* foods and what they represent:

A Seder Plate

Matzah

Also spelled "*Matzo*", this is the unleavened bread that is regularly eaten throughout the holiday. It is eaten to remember that the Jewish people were so rushed to leave Egypt that they didn't have time to let their bread rise.

Pesach Offering/Zeroa

Also the Hebrew word for Passover, *Pesach,* which is also sometimes called *Zeroa,* is a shank bone, usually from a lamb. This is commemorative of when a lamb's blood was used to mark the home of the Jews, keeping them safe from the wrath of the 10 Plagues.

Maror

Maror is a bitter herb, usually horseradish, eaten to remind us of the bitterness of enslavement.

Charoset

A sweet paste made of nuts, fruit, and wine, *Charoset* represents the mortar and bricks used by Jewish slaves to build pyramids. It also symbolizes the sweetness of freedom, a foil to the bitter *Maror*, and the two are often eaten together.

Charoset & Maror on Matzah

Karpas

This is usually parsley or some other green vegetable that represents the renewal of springtime, when Passover takes place. When we bless the karpas during the *Seder*, we dip it in salt water, which represents the tears of our enslaved ancestors.

Egg

A hardboiled egg is also commonly found on a *Seder* plate, symbolizing birth in the spring.

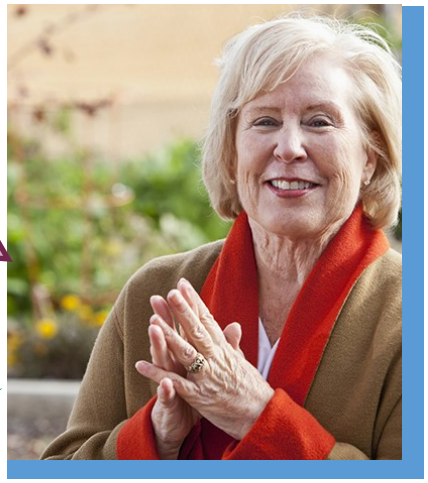
Important Terms for Passover

Hebrew…	It is pronounced…	It means…
Chag Sameach	Hahg sah-mey-ach	Happy Passover!
Pesach	Pess-ach	Passover
Seder	Say-der	The festive Passover meal
Haggadah	Hog-ah-dah	The book read at the Seder
Hametz	Ha-mates	Food with leavening
Sefirat HaOmer	Se-Fear-aht Ha Oh-mare	Counting of the Omer
Mitzrayim	Meets-rye-eem	The Hebrew name for Egypt

Bubbe's Corner

This section highlights different Jewish traditions from both local and world-wide Jewish communities. Here, you can learn about the cultural variations of Jews and connect with your residents' personal traditions on a deeper level. Every Jewish community and family has its own traditions unique to their lives and experiences. Be sure to ask your residents about any Passover memories they have!

Some communities don't eat foods like legumes, rice, and corn on Passover because they too closely resemble *Hametz*. These foods are called *Kitniyot.*



The second *Seder* marks the beginning of a 49-day period called *The Omer* which counts down the days until *Shavuot,* the next major Jewish holiday.

In Israel, Passover lasts only seven days and everywhere else, it lasts eight!

In 2009, a restaurant in New York City made the world's largest matzo ball – it weighed 267 pounds!

Passover Music

Music plays a very important role in the celebration of Passover. With both traditional songs from the Haggadah and modern classics that tell the Passover story, you can't go wrong playing these Passover tunes.

Echad Mi Yode'ah

This song, which translates to "Who knows One?" is a fun, repetitive song that enumerates various Jewish traditions, counting from 1 to 13. Usually sung at the end of the *Seder*, it's a familiar tune that many people know. **Watch a sensational performance of it here.**

Dayenu

Enough already! This song, which is found in the *Haggadah* lists the miracles that God has done for the Jewish people, ending each line by saying *Dayenu*- "it would have been enough". **Listen to this modern take on the traditional Passover song.**

Chad Gadya

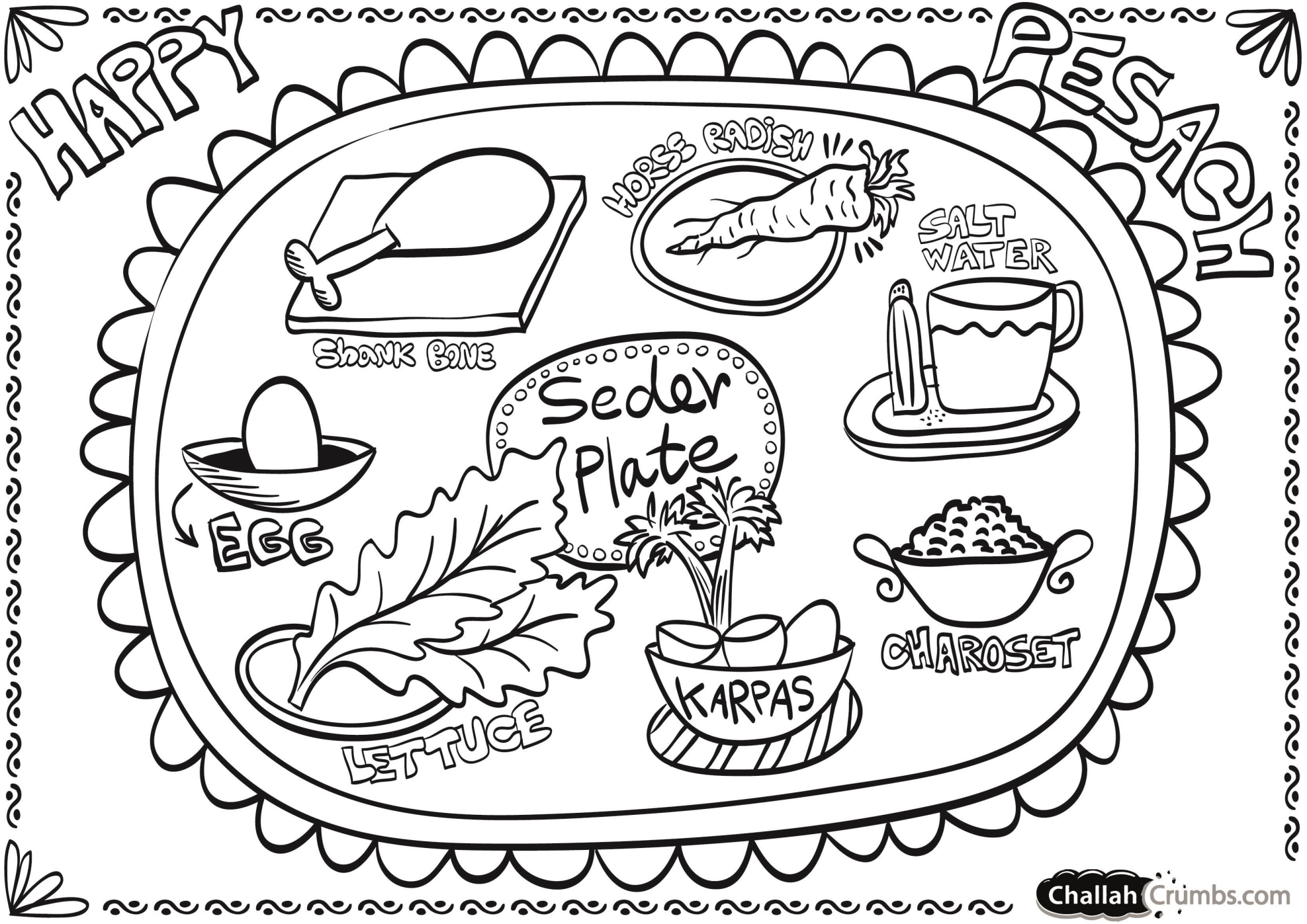
This chain-reaction song is a fun one to do at the end of a *Seder*, usually with animal noises and all. **Comedian Jack Black seems to like it, too.**

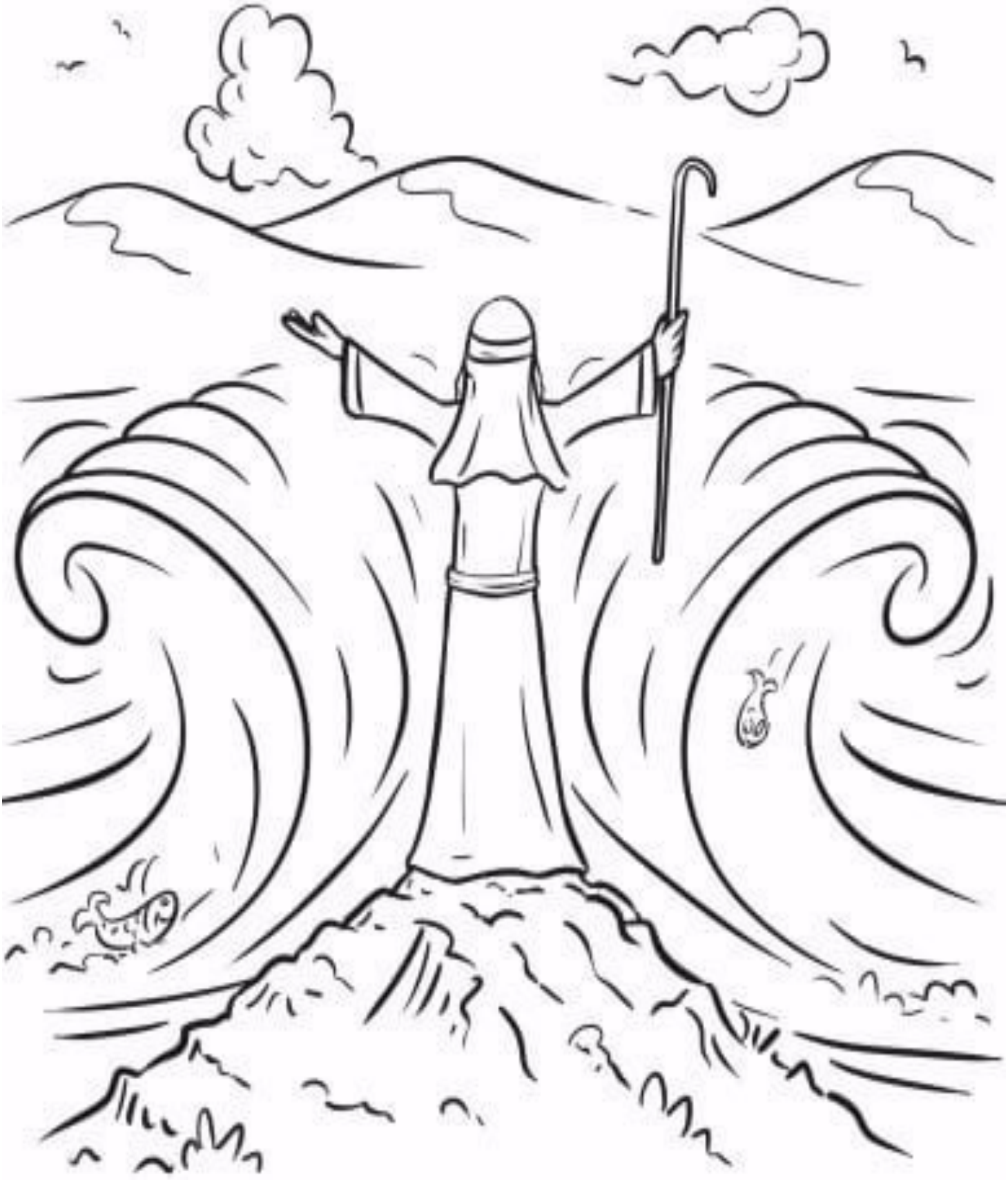
Dayenu, seen in a Haggadah

Mah Nishtanah

This song, traditionally sung by the youngest person attending a *Seder*, asks the question "What makes this night different from all other nights?" The answer? Eating special foods and participating in certain traditions. **A staple of Passover, Mah Nishtanah can be listened to here.**

To print sheet music of Passover songs please visit: **https://tinyurl.com/passover-music**


HAPPY
PESACH
HORSE RADISH
SALT WATER
SHANK BONE
Seder Plate
EGG
LETTUCE
KARPAS
CHAROSET
ChallahCrumbs.com



Jewish Holidays Calendar 2022

HOLIDAY	DATE
Passover (8 days)	Friday, Apr. 15* – Saturday, Apr. 23, 2022
Shavuot (2 days)	Saturday, June 4* – Monday, June 6, 2022
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Sunday, Sept. 25* – Tuesday Sept. 27, 2022
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Tuesday, Oct. 4* – Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022
Sukkot (7 days)	Sunday, Oct. 9* – Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022
Shmini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Sunday, Oct. 16* – Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2022
Hannukah (8 days)	Sunday, Dec. 18* - Monday, Dec. 26, 2022
Tu B'Shevat (1 day)	Sunday, Feb. 5* – Monday, Feb. 6, 2023
Purim (1 day)	Monday, March 6* – Tuesday, March 7, 2023

**** All holidays begin at sundown***

About JFS

JFS has continuously provided a range of support, services and resources for individuals and families of all ages and backgrounds since 1854.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values.

Our staff have expertise in:

- Helping older adults maintain their safety and independence.
- Providing resources and guidance to older adults and their families.
- Spiritual support and guidance
- Counseling and case management.

Support Our Chaplaincy Program

JFS created the Dr. Rela Mintz Geffen Jewish Community Chaplaincy Fund to enable us to provide spiritual connection and support for Jewish residents in long-term and elder care in the Capital Region.

If you would like to help expand the role and reach of this vital program for older adults, please make a contribution to the fund at jfsneny.org/donations or contact Rabbi Ami at 518-516-1116.

Thank you!

Jewish Family Services
Northeastern New York

Connect with Us!
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Chaplaincy Services are a service of Jewish Family Services through a grant from Jewish Federation of NENY in cooperation B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation, Daughters of Sarah Community for Seniors and Temple Israel.