



**JEWES UNITED
FOR JUSTICE**

original art by Liora Ostroff

THE SEDER PLATE

The Seder Plate contains foods that are traditional symbols of Passover, each helping us to remember and recreate different aspects of the Passover story.

Hold up each symbol, if you have it, as you read the corresponding explanation. Take time to discuss the question posed at the end of each section.

Karpas (green vegetable) - Karpas represents the fresh fruits and vegetables we plant and harvest, as well as the flourishing period of the Jewish community prior to the period of slavery in Egypt. Just like plants, we need time to cultivate the life and health of our families and ourselves. *What do you do in your own life that you find nourishing for yourself and your family?*

Maror (bitter herb) - We eat the maror to remind us of the bitterness of the Israelites' suffering as they worked without pay, without relief. Today we still work without the guarantee that we will have the time to care for ourselves and our families. The Israelites became embittered by their forced labor, so much so that they were ultimately prevented from entering the promised land. It would be easy for us to become like the Israelites, to become bitter when we don't have the ability to take care of ourselves, a new child, or an ailing parent, and to allow the structural unfairness to keep us from crying out and demanding change. May this taste of bitter herbs wake our senses and encourage us to fight through that bitterness and prevent our own complacency. *How does the burden of both working and caregiving embitter your life?*

Egg - An egg is fragile, but its thin shell provides just enough to protect the tender new life from a rough world. Much like an egg's shell, the Time to Care Act provides just enough to protect us from life's precariousness and challenges. *Without this protective shell, how much more vulnerable do we become to life-changing events?*

Shank Bone/Beetroot - The Israelites used lambs' blood to publicly mark their doors as a signal to the Angel of Death to pass over their homes and spare the lives of those under that roof. *What kind of public markers and stigmas exist for those who take time off of work to care for themselves or their families, and does this change depending on gender?* The vegetarian version of the shank bone is the beetroot, whose red juice resembles blood. *What is the historical root of the injustice forcing people to choose between family and work?*

Charoset - This fruit and nut mixture symbolises the mortar the enslaved Israelites worked with to build Pharaoh's palaces. Just like the work done by the Israelites, caregiving work is often unpaid labor. People cannot afford to take time to care for themselves and their families if they are not receiving a paycheck. Just like an appropriate mortar mixture is necessary to hold the bricks together, families require the proper mixture of financial security and time together to hold strong. *What are the bonds that hold your family together?*

Matzah - The Israelites did not have time to bake bread before they left the house of bondage, so they carried unleavened bread, matzah. When Maryland military personnel are deployed, they and their families often do not have much time to prepare. *When we don't have this time to care, how can we provide real and substantial nourishment for our families and ourselves?*

Orange - The orange on the seder plate symbolizes our commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer folks, and our dedication to work towards a more fruitful community where all are welcome at our table. The orange is not part of the traditional seder, but a later addition by a Jewish feminist scholar in the 1980s. Susannah Heschel's addition posed the question of whether the Passover seder was sufficient, or whether it needed to be expanded, and we should be following her lead. The Time to Care bill should be the start of a larger conversation of what our society should be providing to every individual. Just as the orange was a way to ask "who is missing?," we need to also be asking who is being left out of the laws and protections that our government currently offers. *Who needs space at our table, and how can we make it for them?*