



"This is the Story..."

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

"This is the Story..." Celebration Feast

The Concept: Our Jewish siblings use ritual foods and meals to tell the story of God. It's a tactile way to celebrate who God is and who we are in God. We come out of this long, long series with a story to tell and a song to sing, and here is a way to sing and tell and taste that story.

Ideas for the Feast: This can be celebrated in many different ways! It can be a special meal in your household, a virtual meal for the congregation, a picnic for a large group...do what makes sense in your reality. We suggest here a "script" to follow - but there's nothing sacred about the script. Take it as an idea and riff on it! With each food, we suggest asking for ideas of what it might be a reminder of. While we have something in mind for each, no idea is wrong here.

Gather the Supplies:

1. Vegetables - These will mostly figure as the first thing you eat, representing creation. Here are some ideas of what those vegetables could be.
 - a. Salad
 - b. First plants - like seaweed or mushrooms
 - c. Roasted root vegetables
 - d. Or go super simple with carrot sticks!
2. Circular fruit (think grapes, apples, oranges, kiwi...) - This will represent all the cycles.
Cut it up in circular slices or just leave it whole.
3. Stew - The "main course," this is a reminder of the stew Jacob fed Esau.
Here's a [simple recipe](#), here's a [vegan recipe](#)
4. Salty snack - We'll eat this at various times to remind us of hardship.
Pretzels, salted nuts, crackers...
5. Bread - This features several times.
Use the bread that works for your dietary needs.
6. Honey - this will pop up a couple times, usually in connection with the promised land.
7. Olive oil - you'll dip bread in this
To make it yummiier, add bread dipping seasoning
8. Juice - this will represent the last supper.
Use whatever kind of natural juice you have on hand!
9. Eggs - these will symbolize new life/resurrection
Cook them however you like - although hardboiled might be simplest.
10. Applesauce with cinnamon - This will represent Jesus' birth (applesauce=baby food, cinnamon smells strong like frankincense - we know, it's a stretch!)
11. Gummy worms and angel food cake - The finale, representing new earth (get it, gummy worms?) and new heavens (angel food).

Set-up:

1. Prepare the table. Make it fun or fancy, whatever works for you! The key is that it's special.
2. Get all the food ready and on the table so you can go through the meal seamlessly.
3. You may want to prepare the plates, putting small amounts of each thing on them, so that you don't have to serve each thing when it's time to eat it.
4. Get your music ready. If you want to use Jonathan's recordings, pull up your final big song so that you can play and pause your way through the meal. Or maybe you plan to sing it acapella or accompany yourself. Do what works for you!

Meal Script:

We have spent a year learning about God's big story - about our story. Now it's time to celebrate! As we eat each part of the meal, we'll sing the next part of the song. We'll tell the story, eat the story and sing the story. First, let's pray.

God, thank you for all you have done throughout history. Thank you for creating this beautiful earth and for creating each one of us. Thank you for sticking with us even when we miss the mark. Bless this food, bless our conversation, and draw us to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

1. Vegetables

"This is the story of how it all began. God made matter and chaos shattered."

What do you think these vegetables remind us of?

- Creation - first living things were plants

2. Circular Fruit

"Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky"

What does this fruit, shaped like a circle, remind us of?

- Circles to show the cycle - humans missed the mark, but God stuck with the people

3. Stew

"And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, oh ohhhh. A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is saved from famine."

What might this stew remind us of?

- The stew Jacob fed Esau - that he sold for the birthright
- Family meals
- A good hearty meal, reminding us of God working through Joseph to save the people from famine

4. Salty Snack

"God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses. Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them. Oh ohhh"

What does this salty food remind us of?

- It's salty like the tears of the people crying out to God.

5. Bread

"The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules. Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!" Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!"

What does bread remind us of?

- Manna in the wilderness
- Learning to live in community, breaking bread together.

6. Honey - dip some bread in it (or a finger!)

“Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.”

What does honey remind us of?

- Entering the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey

7. Back to the circular fruit

“God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest. Ruth’s worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love. Corruption in the temple then God sends Samuel.”

Circles again! What do they remind us of this time?

- The judges cycle

8. Dipping oil - dip the bread in it

“God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets. And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart and loses David’s heart... A widow’s gift and a prophet’s cry.

God brings life in desperate times. Josiah reads this misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly like David did. In his time. God gives Jeremiah a picture of God’s ruined family... Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem? Any hope? Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you?”

What does this oil remind us of?

- Anointing kings with oil
- The widow, Elijah, and the oil

9. Back to the salty snack

“By the streams of Babylon, how can we sing when you are gone, Jerusalem... I’m in a valley of human bones. These bones are Israel, God’s breath is hope. Haman plans death for Esther’s exiles. She risks her life so they might survive.”

What is the salty food for this time?

- Tears in exile

10. Back to the honey - dip bread, salty snack, or a finger in it

“Finally God’s family rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. God plunges them into a sea of joy and celebration of Only God. God is One, Only God. Comfort to Jerusalem, your warfare finally ceases. Matthew lists these generations, Abraham to Jesus”

What does this sweet honey remind us of?

- Sweet return from exile
- Back to the land flowing with milk and honey

11. Applesauce with cinnamon

“The angel says, “You’ll have a son and God will give him David’s throne.” Mary says, “God looked at me, now I’m the luckiest person around.” Mary, now pregnant fiancé, makes a grueling journey. She has her baby, shepherds see angels declaring God’s glory and peace among people. The Spirit sends shepherds and elders and prophets to tell those who wait their Messiah has come. Herod gets nervous, the Magi find Jesus. They hide their discovery and hurry back home... Once again an angel comes to Joseph -- so they make good their escape, ooh. Jesus in the temple, astonishing the crowd. Jesus with his parents. Jesus growing up.”

What does this spiced applesauce remind us of?

- Baby food - like the baby messiah ate
- Cinnamon has a strong smell, like the frankincense and myrrh the Magi brought to Jesus.

12. Back to the bread

“Down by the Jordan with the prophet John, Jesus asks to be baptized. And the skies are opened. A dove descends. A voice from heaven says, “This is my son, the son I love. I’m pleased with him.” Jesus calls disciples to be with him in the work he’s doing. Ohhh oohhh. Jesus teaches the disciples, “This is life inside the blessing: You’re blessed, you who are empty. You’re blessed all you who mourn. You’re blessed, you who ache for God, whose inner life is pure. This is life inside the blessing.” Jesus walks on the water. Peter tries and begins to sink. Jesus grabs his hand and the wind dies down. Jesus sees the crowds with compassion. So he teaches them for days and days. The people are hungry. There’s baskets left over and no one left out. People bring their children to Jesus. Jesus blesses them and says, “You must accept God’s good government like a little child would or you won’t get in at all.” Ohhhh ohhh. What’s most important? Love God with everything and love your neighbor, whoever that may be. Jesus tells Martha, “You’re upset about many things; Just one thing’s essential; it’s what Mary’s choosing here.”

What does this bread remind us of?

- Feeding the multitudes
- Jesus is the bread of life
- Disciples breaking bread in community

13. Juice

“Save now, David’s son rides on a donkey. He will judge nations, separate the sheep from goats. In the garden Jesus prays “Yes, father, if there’s no other way.” Jesus dies. The veil rips. . . “Surely this was God’s kid.”

What does the juice remind us of?

- The last supper Jesus ate with his friends

14. Eggs

“Mary is crying, the tomb is empty. Jesus meets her and speaks her name. Jesus appears to many of his close friends, breaks bread with them, shows them his scarred hands. While he blesses them he’s carried up to heaven after he asks them to wait in Jerusalem.”

What do these eggs remind us of?

- Eggs symbolize new life - like resurrection

15. Back to the bread and honey

“Together in one place, sound of wind and tongues of fire. The place where they’re praying’s shaken and everyone’s filled with God’s breath. They have one heart and soul and no one claims for themselves alone what they own.”

What does this bread and honey remind us of?

- Honey and wheat bread are both traditional Pentecost/Shavuot foods
- The early church broke bread together
- Sweetness of the filling of the Holy Spirit
- The “pollination” of the work of the early church

16. Back to the salty snack

“Stephen sees Jesus and asks him not to charge his killers with their sin, with their sin. Saul is traveling. A light shines all around, he hears a voice calling his name. In a vision God tells Ananias to go and pray for Saul. When he prays something like scales fall and Saul’s no longer blind.”

What does the salty food remind us of this time?

- There were difficult times during the early church.

17. Get out the leftovers of everything you've eaten so far and take what you want!

“Peter is praying. The sky is opened and a sheet comes down with unclean food. Peter is wondering what all this means when an invitation comes. God’s Spirit is poured out beyond the boundaries of God’s family. Outside the city God opens Lydia’s heart, she and her family are baptized. In that same city Paul tells a spirit to come out of someone who’s a slave. That spirit leaves the girl and with it go the slavers’ future profits. The slave owners lie to get Paul and Silas jailed. Close to midnight an earthquake shakes the jail’s foundation. Doors open wide but Silas and Paul stay to help their jailer to find God’s salvation.”

Why are we eating this strange mix of food? What does it remind us of?

- Peter’s dream
- The messy beauty of the early church

18. Gummy worms and angel food cake

“This is the story of how it all began. The former things have passed away and God makes all things new. This is the story, this is the celebration, God visits the people and brings their liberation. God makes all things new.”

What do the gummy worms and angel food cake remind us of?

- Worms: new earth, compost, and fertilizer
- Angel food cake: new heavens
- Sweetness and strangeness of our job to carry on the story
- Sweetness of God’s love for us and the universe