

CUSTOMIZING HAGGADOT: **A GUIDE FOR THE “NON-TECHNICAL AT HEART”!**

1. INTERNET HAGGADAH RESOURCES

You can use the following internet site to download free Haggada templates (ready to use “as is” or for customizing) and additional downloads, such as Seder Songs, supplementary Seder readings, Passover activity programs, etc.:

<http://www.jewishfreeware.org>

Jewishfreeware.org is a website created by Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner, which makes truly FREE Jewish downloads available to all! However no download may be used for commercial publishing or for profit; they are intended only for individual or for non-profit us. For any questions about using the website and any of its products, you can contact Rabbi Lerner at: bdlerner1@gmail.com

Downloads are available in 3 systems:

- Davka 6.0*
- RTF (a semi-universal transport file)
- PDF (you will need another program to put it into, such as Word, in order to edit)

*the most cost-effective option for synagogues is to secure a copy of Davkawriter 6 Platinum and a Davka 6 site license for your synagogue computer lab where all of the synagogue can share the program

Note:

- (1)The “Dagesh” software program has a Hebrew-English processor and a Haggadah.
- (2) Davka will give a significant discount to synagogues for upgrading from Dagesh to Davka. If you are using a different Hebrew-English word processing program it may also qualify for this discount. *Contact Dovid at Davka : NY 718.928.5521 · T.F. 800.621.8227 ·*
- (3) **Melel** is the Mac program for Hebrew-English Processing, which is equivalent to Davka 6.0 available from Davka.
- (4) There is a new “Unicode” Hebrew font edition available from Davka (ask Dovid).
- (5) Hebrew font also comes installed with Microsoft on PCs.

2. CLIPART

What gets advertised as “freeware” often isn’t really free. While you will find many sites for “free Jewish clipart,” you are often required to buy something in order to get good (or even any) clip art.

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Often it is easiest just to call Davka or your preferred software vendor and ask which of the clip art programs is appropriate for use with your project and compatible with your operating system and your Hebrew-English word processor . If you are using Davka as your processor for creating your customized haggadot, their clipart will be obviously compatible.

If you are using Microsoft, it will have some clipart available for use. Type in words like “Passover,” “matzo”, etc. and see what you find. You may be surprised at how good some of it is!

3. CREATING CUSTOMIZED HAGGADOT

A. Choose and download a haggadah from on-line or from software you purchase.

Using one of the download-able haggadot on the Jewishfreeware website, download one of the selections and copy it into Word, Davka or other compatible processor. (Note: the haggadot are labeled as to which processor is compatible; for example, the third haggadah listed on the Jewishfreeware website can only be edited in Davka 6, although you can still download and print it out exactly “as is”.)

B. Edit and Customize

For the Individual

Begin to experiment with different ways to customize your haggadah:

- Use different **fonts** for texts (Hebrew, English, transliteration, quotes, etc.)
- move texts around
- delete some texts
- add texts (see Jewishfreeware’s selection of supplementary readings and “parody songbook”)
- add photos (take from your own digital photos, or visit internet galleries for “royalty-free” photos)
- take digital photos of things to insert: kids’ artwork like “*kos Eliyahu*” and matzah covers, seder plates, and the kids themselves! (great next to the “Blessing of the Children” for home haggadot)
- frame photos, wrap text
- insert footnotes, explanations (what we are doing in the seder and why), commentary (e.g., take stories from books like *Legends of the Jews*; you can either type the material in or scan the books and digitally “cut and paste”)
- increase font size for the visually-impaired (or simply aging eyes!)
- use “add-on” software to complement your work, for example, a genealogy supplement, using freeware, shareware or a software program such as “Doro-Tree”

For the educational system

- (a) Use Hebrew & English with transliteration, (b) Use Hebrew & English without

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- transliteration, (c) Use Hebrew alone or with transliteration
- Create haggadot with transliteration for home use at seders
 - Use Davka’s MasterTeacher program for to create activities, e.g. crossword puzzles
 - Use the parody songbook, or create and include new songs (hold a contest for students to create new seder songs!) - either as a supplement or insert where each “author” thinks best
 - Create a class haggadah
 - Have students create haggadot in groups
 - Create a school-wide haggadah; each class creates a different section. Sell as a school fundraiser (501c-3)
 - Have the kids enact the Passover story in costume; take digital photos and insert them in the haggadah
 - Or, what else would you add to this list? [Write your suggestions to Dov Lerner, bdlerner1@gmail.com]

C. CREATING “HEIRLOOM” HAGGADOT

- Have students create personal haggadot for use at home: include photos of those attending the seder that year and those who are present only “in memory” or “in absentia” (every participant can take home a souvenir of the seder!)
- Import genealogy software (if using Davka, ask Dovid at Davka what is compatible): there is freeware, software for purchase, shareware (there’s always something new online, so keep looking!)
- Have students create family trees using photos of family members
- Students can include favorite seder memories from previous years
- Scan and insert artwork from when they were younger
- Each member of the family/guests can represent a character in the seder (the four sons, the rabbis at Bnei Brak, or in the songs (Had Gadya)
- Use baby photos: play “Guess Who This Is?” throughout the seder

D. FOR THE TOTAL NON-TECHIE:

1. Download the full haggadah and additions of your choice, print it out, and just manually cut and paste, inserting whatever you like!
2. Remember: **DO NOT PANIC! Allow yourself lots of time to play** with the programs. Make mistakes, and start over (my favorite toolbar key is “Edit: Undo”!) You only learn this stuff by doing.
3. When all else fails: **Have your students show you how!** They are “digital natives” (we are immigrants in this “strange new land” of technology; it may take us longer to learn, but you really can “teach old dogs new tricks”!)