

Program Summary - Connecting the Passover Seder and the Refugee Crisis

As Programming Vice President, one of my goals would be to vary the structure of MAR's programming to include even more interactive activities revolving around topical issues. I would take advantage of the timing of our events to plan related programs. A vision of this I have could come to fruition at Spring Kallah as it falls at the tail end of Passover. The program would take this opportunity to explore the plight of refugees today relating to the origins of the Passover story through hands-on activities.

The program leader would begin by reading the poem, [Maggid](#), by Marge Piercy to introduce the theme of the program and then give a brief introduction to the mechanics of the activity and how it relates to Passover. The region would then divide into two universes and from there spread out into four rotations, each representing a different element of the seder. The first station would stand for the Four Children as participants would be assigned one of four positions on immigration, ranging from "close all our borders" to "allow all immigrants in," and then they would hold a mini-debate. The second station, representing the plagues, would have participants split into small groups and brainstorm as many modern-day plagues facing refugees that they can think of. A group leader would then go round-robin style taking one suggestion from each group, with no repeats, every round. Groups would be forced to tap out when they ran out of ideas, similar to a sing down. For the third station, there would be short stories from refugees describing small miracles in their lives for participants to read and then write their own letters to people they are thankful for, symbolizing Dayeinu--that it would have been enough. Finally, the fourth station, embodying the hunt for the Afikomen, would get participants moving around as they must hunt for a plain clothespin. Only when a person is able to spot the clothespin may they "choose a country" to seek asylum in by moving to that country's sign in the room. With limited slots for each country and the overall difficulty of actually spotting a tiny tan clip, this activity represents the challenges refugees face when seeking asylum.

After completing all four rotations, the region would come back together, and everyone would contribute to a mural, writing or drawing a change they hope to see occur in the next year, reminiscent of the phrase, "Next year, in Jerusalem." Ultimately, it is also important to give MARites a way to turn their knowledge into action. Thus, the program leader would share ways to get involved through various organizations such as HIAS which even has a refugee-themed Haggadah that can be used for a complete seder. By engaging in mini-games and reflective activities that relate back to our own Jewish history, the issue becomes more personal, and MARites can leave the program with a deeper understanding of the modern-day struggle for freedom.