

Beaver Meeting Schedule: Week One

Theme: St. Valentine's Day

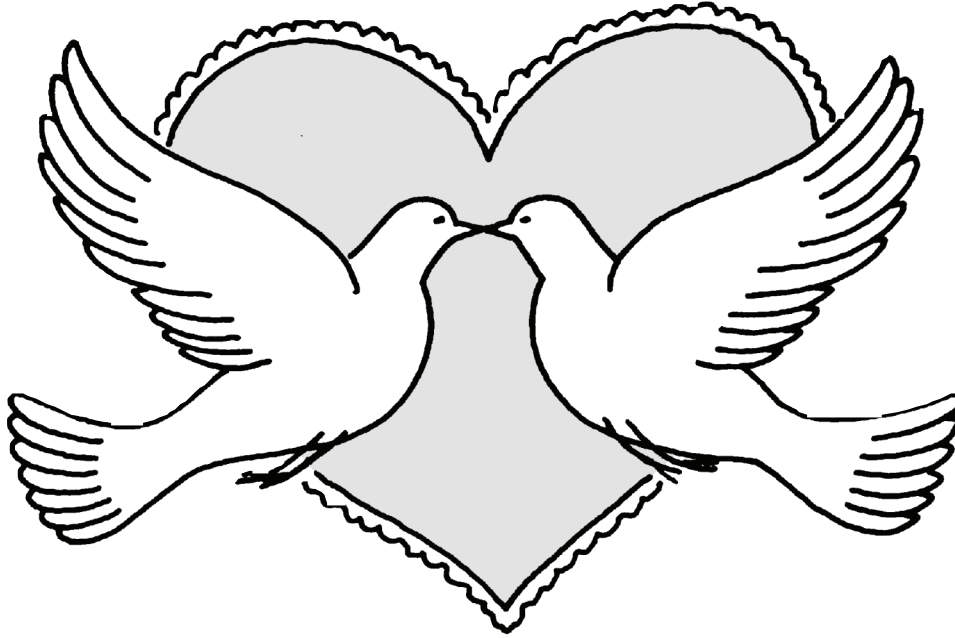
Date: _____

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Program Details</i>	<i>Leader Responsible</i>
10 mins.	Gathering Activity	Flying Valentines <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
5 mins.	Opening Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
10 mins.	Game	Musical Balloons <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
20 mins.	Theme Activity	Valentine Flower <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Song / Story	Song: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Lodge Meeting	Discuss the things you like best about other people. What does it take to be a friend?	
5 mins.	Spiritual Fellowship	Recite Promise / Law Prayer / Talk	
5 mins.	Closing Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
15 mins.	Leader Discussion Time	Review meeting and discuss next week's plans	

Meeting
Notes:

Beaver Meeting - Detail Planning

Theme: St. Valentine's Day



Introduction

Long ago people believed that birds, particularly lovebirds, mated on February 14. In ancient Rome, citizens celebrated a fertility festival on February 15 which honoured two Roman gods (Juno and Pan).

It's uncertain whether our present celebration is named after two martyred priests called St. Valentine who lived in Rome in the 3rd century. Their feast days are remembered on February 14. The modern tradition probably grew out of a 14th century practice where young people in France and England would gather together on St. Valentine's Eve. A person would become the "Valentine" of the one whose name was drawn out of a Valentine box.

Today people in Western cultures observe the day on February 14 by sending cards and other small gifts to close friends — especially of the opposite sex. Cards usually have a bright red heart symbol prominently displayed on them.

Crafts

Flying Valentines

Give each Beaver two drinking straws: one a standard size and the other a larger diameter “milkshake” straw.

Provide patterns of a cupid shape and a heart shape for the children to trace and cut out. Get them to tape the cupid to the large straw and the heart to the end of the small straw.

To make the Valentine fly, a Beaver must fit the small straw into the big one and blow through the big straw.

Flying Valentine



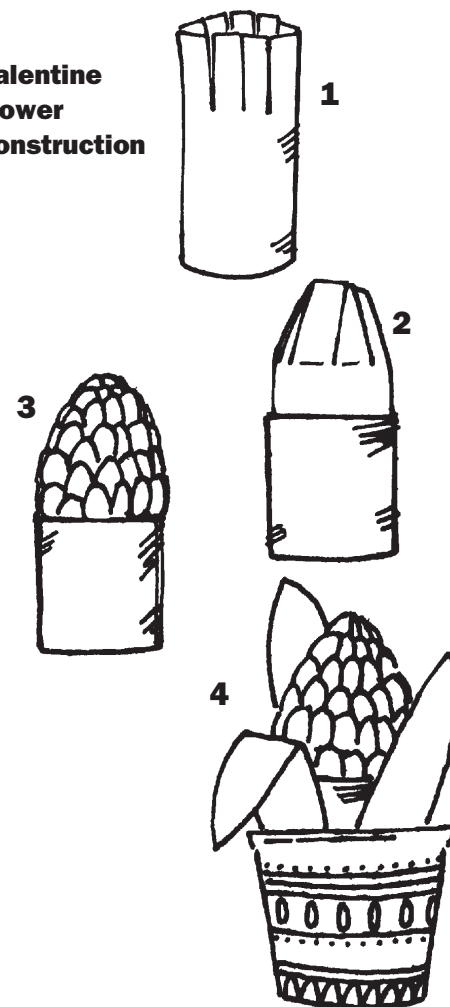
Valentine Flower

For each hyacinth, you need one toilet roll tube, green construction paper, pink crêpe or tissue paper, a small yogurt container, glue and tape.

Cut eight slits around the top of the tube about a quarter of the way down. Bend in these sections to form a rough cone shape and secure with tape. Glue a strip of green paper around the bottom of the tube.

To make the flower, cut the pink paper into 5 cm squares. Crumple each piece and glue to the top of the tube until it is covered. Cut two or three paper leaves and glue them to the tube. For the finishing touch, set the flower into the yogurt container pot.

Valentine Flower Construction



Game



Musical Balloons

Bright red and pink balloons will put everyone in a Valentine mood. The game is a simple version of musical chairs.

The Beavers bat balloons around the room while the music plays. When the music stops, they all try to catch their balloons.

There are two rules: no one can catch a balloon until the music stops, and the Beaver who doesn't catch a balloon controls the music for the next round (before returning to the game).

Song

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
My Bonnie lies over the sea,
My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me.

Bring back, bring back,
Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me.
Bring back, bring back,
Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me.

Stand up on the first word with a "B" in it, and then sit down on the next "B", and so on for each word with a "B" in it. The whole group should end the song sitting down.

Suggested Stories

- *It's Valentines' Day,*
by Jack Prelutsky
- *The Great Valentine's Day Balloon Race,*
by Adrienne Adams

Beaver Meeting Schedule: Week Two

Theme: St. Patick's Day

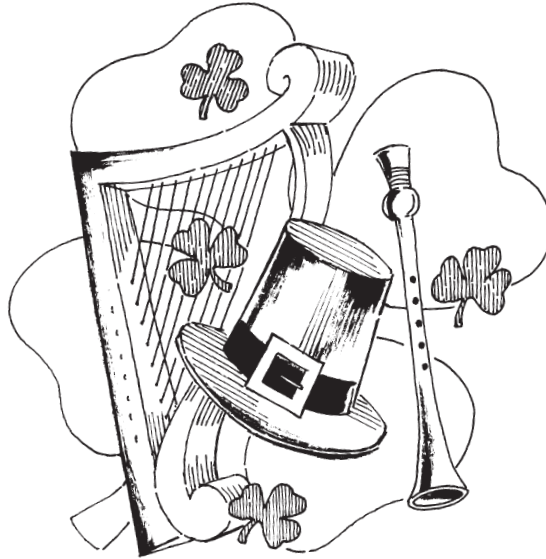
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<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Program Details</i>	<i>Leader Responsible</i>
10 mins.	Gathering Activity	Shamrock Label Pins (See Detail Planning Sheet)	
5 mins.	Opening Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
10 mins.	Game	Shamrock Hop (See Detail Planning Sheet)	
20 mins.	Theme Activity	Leprechaun Centrepiece (See Detail Planning Sheet)	
10 mins.	Story	Legend of the Leprechauns (See Detail Planning Sheet)	
10 mins.	Lodge Meeting	How would you catch a Leprechaun?	
5 mins.	Spiritual Fellowship	Recite Promise / Law Prayer / Talk	
5 mins.	Closing Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
15 mins.	Leader Discussion Time	Review meeting and discuss next week's plans	

Meeting
Notes:

Beaver Meeting - Detail Planning

Theme: St. Patrick's Day



Introduction

Each March 17th, people around the world celebrate the feast day of St. Patrick. But who was he? Was he just a myth dreamed up by revellers as an excuse to overindulge in food, drink, song and dance? Not at all.

Patrick was born into a Romanized family in early 5th Century Britain. Captured by pirates and sold as a slave when he was sixteen, Patrick ended up in Ireland working as a lowly herdsman. For six years his faith sustained him. When he escaped, he returned to Britain where he had a vision (recorded in his still-surviving autobiography called *Confessio*) which called him to return to Ireland and convert its people to Christianity.

Though deeply afraid of following his spiritual calling, Patrick studied in a European monastery then left for Ireland. Despite constant threats to his life, Patrick travelled widely telling people of God's love for them and sharing stories from Jesus' life. Setting such an outstanding example, the entire Irish population soon embraced Patrick's faith. Churches, schools and monasteries sprung up all over Ireland. People recognized Patrick for his humility and simplicity. For example, he used an Irish shamrock to explain the Trinity: God is one but appears in three persons — *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*.

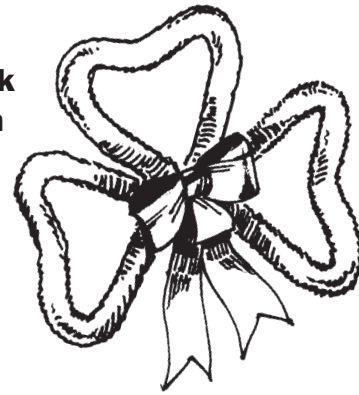
Today Patrick is the Patron Saint of Ireland.

Crafts

Shamrock Lapel Pins

Give each Beaver three green pipe cleaners and have them form each into a shamrock petal. Twist together the ends at the centre. Leaders can add small ribbon bows and safety pins. These shamrock pins can be worn during the meeting and taken home afterwards.

**Shamrock
Lapel Pin**

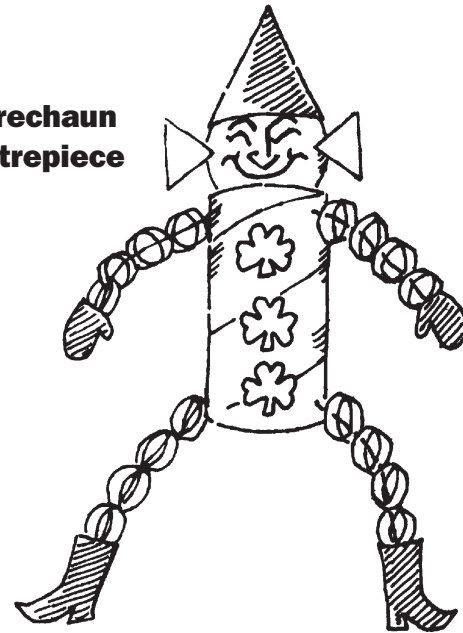


A Leprechaun Centrepiece

Beavers will enjoy making these leprechauns. You will need toilet paper or paper towel rolls, green and black construction paper, ping-pong balls, green wool or thread, scissors, glue and/or stapler, and markers.

Use toilet paper or paper towel rolls for the body. Get your Beavers to cover them with green paper (or paint them green at an earlier meeting). Make the leprechaun's head from a ping-pong ball, and top it with a hat of green or black construction paper. Legs and arms are easily made from green paper circles strung on green wool or thread. Hands, feet and ears can be made from double thicknesses of construction paper (you may need to design a pattern for these) and stapled or glued to arms, legs and head. Using felt-tipped pens, give the leprechaun a mischievous face.

**Leprechaun
Centrepiece**



Game

Shamrock Hop

Arrange your Beavers in pairs; give each pair two big green shamrocks cut from cardboard. One Beaver in each pair is the "hopper", while the other is the "helper" as they cross the pond from one side to the other.

The helper places the shamrock on the floor and, with both feet, the hopper hops onto it. The helper puts the other shamrock a little farther ahead and the hopper hops onto it. They continue until they reach the other side of the pond, where the hopper and helper change places for the return trip.

**Doing the
Shamrock Hop!**



Stories



The Legend of the Leprechauns

Leprechauns are fairies who live in Ireland. They are called “the Little People” because they are so tiny they can hardly be seen by you and me.

Leprechauns work very hard mending shoes for the other Irish fairies who, because they like dancing, wear out their shoes quickly. Being such hard workers, leprechauns are sometimes grumpy, but they are very rich.

Leprechauns dress in bright green suits and hats so they can hide in the meadows and forests of Ireland where they live. The people of Ireland say that if you catch a leprechaun, he’ll tell you where he has hidden his pot of gold as long as you promise to let him go.

But leprechauns are clever creatures and usually manage to get away, as you will see in this story.

Once upon a time, a long time ago in Ireland, a farmer named Sean Haggarty was walking through his fields on his way home. Sean was tired and hungry after a hard day tending his sheep; he was looking forward to his supper. As he crossed the field next to his house, he suddenly saw a movement in the tall grass.

He could hear the sound of an Irish jig coming from the spot and began to wonder if he had found a leprechaun.

“If it is a leprechaun,” thought Sean, “maybe I can sneak up on him and catch him. If I catch him, I’m sure I can get him to tell me where his pot of gold is.”

So Sean crept up on the spot and finally saw a leprechaun seated on a tiny bench hammering on a shoe! The leprechaun was about 75 mm tall and was singing and hammering so loudly that he didn’t hear Sean creep up. Sean reached out and grabbed him with both hands.

The singing and hammering stopped. A tiny voice said angrily, “Hey you! Put me down! What do you think you’re doing?”

Sean could feel tapping on his fingers and gingerly opened his hands to peek at the little person he had captured. The leprechaun, dressed completely in green, glared up at him.

“I said put me down!” he screamed.

“Not for a while yet,” grinned Sean, sitting down on a nearby log. “Not until you tell me where your pot of gold is.”

“Pot of gold?” said the leprechaun, looking crafty, “What pot of gold is that?”

Sean laughed, “Oh, you’re not going to fool Sean Haggarty, little leprechaun. Everyone in Ireland knows that if you capture a leprechaun, he’ll tell you where his pot of gold is — if you promise to let him go.”

The leprechaun looked even more angry.

“All right, all right, you win. If you promise to let me go, I’ll show you where my pot of gold is hidden,” he said.

“You will?” said Sean. “Then of course I promise to let you go. But you have to show me first.”

The leprechaun sighed and pointed, “It’s over there, buried under that buttercup.”

Sean was delighted and hurriedly dumped the leprechaun on the ground. He strode over to the buttercup and looked at it carefully.

“Good, good. I’ll tie my red neckerchief around the buttercup to mark the spot and go and get my shovel,” he said.

“Suit yourself,” replied the leprechaun, who had already started working on his shoe again.

Sean rushed home, picked up his shovel and in 10 minutes was back in the field.

“Now,” he said to himself, “Where’s that red neckerchief?” He looked around the field and saw an amazing thing. Every single buttercup had a red neckerchief tied around it!

“Oh no,” exclaimed Sean, “I’ll never find the pot of gold now.” And from somewhere in the distance came the sound of a leprechaun laughing.

Suggested Stories

- *St. Patrick’s Day in the Morning*. By E. Bunting
- *Jeremy Bean’s St. Patrick’s Day*. By A. Schertle

Beaver Meeting Schedule: Week Three

Theme: Passover

Date: _____

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Program Details</i>	<i>Leader Responsible</i>
10 mins.	Gathering Activity	Red Sea Picture <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
5 mins.	Opening Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
10 mins.	Game	Search for Hametz <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
20 mins.	Theme Activity	Passover Story and Seder Plate <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Song	Let My People Go <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Lodge Meeting	Passover Food Tasting	
5 mins.	Spiritual Fellowship	Recite Promise / Law Prayer / Talk	
5 mins.	Closing Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
15 mins.	Leader Discussion Time	Review meeting and discuss next week's plans	

Meeting
Notes:

Beaver Meeting - Detail Planning

Theme: Passover

Background

As with many Jewish festivals, Passover (Pesach) has both agricultural and historical origins. Passover celebrates the harvest of barley, the first of the ancient agricultural year's cycle of crops.

Passover also commemorates the Jewish people's passing over from slavery in Egypt to freedom. As the story is told, the children of Israel lived peacefully in Egypt for many years. But there arose a Pharaoh who decided to make the Jewish people slaves. This Pharaoh was Seti I. During this period and the following reigns of Ramses II and Merneptah, the Jewish people had to work hard and long to build Pharaoh's cities and pyramids. God heard the cries of the slaves and sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go. Pharaoh refused, so God sent many terrible plagues to the land of Egypt. Each plague, however, passed over the Jewish people without harm.

Finally, after the tenth plague, Pharaoh ordered the Jewish people to leave immediately. As the Israelites reached the Red Sea, Pharaoh changed his mind and ordered his army to bring back the slaves. Whether by miracle or a change in the wind, the water of the sea parted, and the Jews passed over the sea to dry land on the other side. The water closed as Pharaoh's army approached and the Jewish people were at last free.

Highlights of the Passover observance are the eating of matzoh throughout the festival, and the festive meal (Seder) ushering in the holiday at which the Passover story (Haggadah) is read. Seder (SAY-der) means order, since the Haggadah follows a set pattern for observance and eating. Passover is observed for eight days.

During Passover, Jewish people do not eat food that contains leaven or yeast, such as bread. This restriction is to remind Jews of the hasty departure from Egypt when there was no time to let any bread rise. The home is meticulously cleaned to get rid of all leaven crumbs. Any products containing leaven (called hametz) are put away in a cupboard. Traditionally, the night before Passover there is a ceremony called the Search for the Leaven. This search is great fun and is usually done by children. Since the house has been thoroughly cleaned in preparation for Passover, parents scatter a few bread crumbs in various spots in the home. Using a feather, wooden spoon and candle (or flashlight), the children search and sweep up any crumbs they find. The house is then declared ready for Passover. The Search for Leaven is also a symbolic reminder that we should take time to search the crevices and crannies of our hearts for ill feelings or deeds.

On the first two evenings of Passover, the Seder is held. The Seder is entirely a home ritual. Jewish people retell and relive the Passover story through this observance. Because the story is told with food, Jewish people smell, taste and feel the Passover story happening as it did to Jews long ago.

The Seder

Some important features of the Seder include:

1. *The Asking of the Four Questions.*

This is the focal point for the Seder and a way of tying in the many meanings and lessons of Passover. The youngest child usually asks these four questions, however, any person can ask the questions. The purpose: by questioning, we encourage learning. The Passover text (Haggadah) provides answers and allegorical stories.

The four questions why the Seder is different from other nights and answers in brief are:

- a) Why do we eat only matzoh?
- b) Why do we eat bitter herbs tonight?
- c) On all other nights we eat herbs without dipping them into anything. Why do we dip them twice tonight?
- d) Why do we recline when we eat tonight?

Matzoh is a flat, unleavened bread similar to a large cracker. It is the bread of affliction and symbolizes by its thinness the humiliation and poverty the people of Israel had to endure as slaves. Eating matzoh reminds Jews of their hasty departure from Egypt. Three matzoh are put on the table in a special matzoh cover.

Jewish people eat bitter herbs because it was so bitter being slaves. Parsley is dipped into salt water. The salt water is a reminder of the tears of the Jewish slaves, while the parsley is a reminder that spring is here and new life will grow. Jews also dip bitter herbs into a sweet apple and nut mixture. This mixture, called haroset, resembles the mixture which the Jewish people used to make bricks to build Pharaoh's cities and pyramids while they were slaves.

It is customary to sit with a soft pillow behind your back while the Seder is in progress. Long ago, kings and free people could eat in a leisurely fashion while slaves stood throughout the meal. Reclining during the Seder meal shows that Jews are now free people.

2. *The Seder Plate*

The Seder plate is the centerpiece of the Seder meal. On the plate are the following items:

- Z'roa (roasted lamb shank bone): a symbol of the lamb the ancient Jews used to offer at their spring holiday in hopes of a good harvest.

- Bei-tzah (roasted egg): symbol of the festival sacrifice brought to the Holy Temple on each major holiday, the birth of a new season and a new life out of slavery.
- Maror (bitter herbs): horseradish — symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.
- Haroset: a sweet apple and nut mixture representing the mortar used to make bricks, and the sweetness of freedom.
- Karpas (green herbs): parsley, lettuce or celery. Ancient royal festivals began with salad, so eating karpas is symbolic of the Jewish people being as free as royalty.

3. *Opening the Door for Elijah*

After the story of Passover is told and the main meal has been finished, the front door is opened for Elijah. Children open the door to see if anyone is really there. Elijah is a much-beloved prophet of the Jewish people. He symbolizes hope. He is said to dress in beggar's rags. When Jews open the door to him, they open the door to the hungry and lonely, to hope and to springtime.

4. *The Afikomen*

One of the three matzoh on the Seder table is put away to save for dessert so that the last taste is a reminder of the Jewish exodus. Traditionally, children get great joy in snatching this matzoh and hiding it in one place or another for ransom. This is how matzoh crumbs end up in the strangest places around the home. The Seder is finished when the Afikomen is eaten.



Passover Foods

Before the colony meets, gather or make the following foods to be eaten during the lodge meeting:

- Matzoh: large crackers sold in boxes. Two boxes will be plenty for 20 Beavers and leaders.
- Gefilte fish: ground fish (usually whitefish) mixed with matzoh meal to make fist-size balls. Slice them up so every Beaver can have a taste.
- Macaroons: come in tall cans in many flavours. A real treat for Beavers.

- Haroset: break up a piece of matzoh and put a spoonful of haroset on it for eating. The recipe for haroset is as follows:

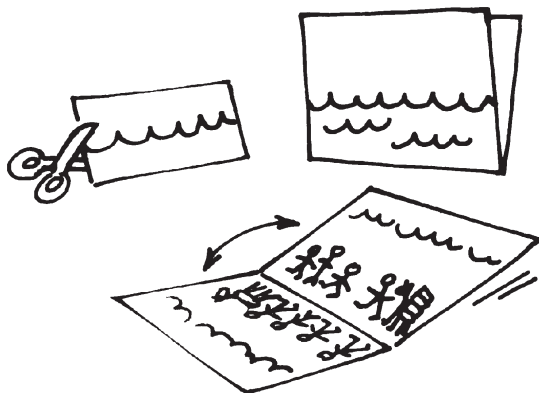
- 10 Delicious apples, peeled and cut into fine pieces
- 250 mL cup chopped almonds or walnuts
- 45-60 mL of honey
- 500 mL grape juice to moisten the above ingredients
- cinnamon to taste.

Raisins can be substituted for nuts. Mix ingredients together in a large bowl and refrigerate overnight so the grape juice can soak into the apples.

Crafts

Red Sea Picture

Holding a piece of construction paper lengthwise, fold the edges so they meet in the middle of the paper. On the outside, draw waves or cut blue paper to resemble waves; glue them on. Open the fold to resemble the parting of the Red Sea and draw the Jewish people fleeing from Pharaoh. Beavers can draw people walking, riding on animals and carts, and carrying their belongings.



Passover Story and Seder Plate

Spend a few minutes retelling the story of Passover as discussed in the beginning of this JUMPSTART package. Tie the story to the Red Sea gathering activity and the Search for Hametz game. Talk about the items that go on the Seder plate, provide samples of what they look like and review what each food item represents.

Give each Beaver a paper plate, paints and markers. Let them make their own Seder Plate by drawing each of the Seder plate food items on the paper plate. When finished, review by lodges what each Seder plate food symbolizes.

Game

Search for Hametz

Scatter bread crumbs around the meeting area. Give each lodge a number of white turkey feathers (available at craft stores), a wooden spoon and flashlight. Send the Beavers off to look for the crumbs.

Song

Let My People Go

When Israel was in Egypt's Land,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!

Chorus: Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land;
Tell old Pharaoh, "Let my people go!"

The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my people go!
To lead the children of Israel thro',
Let my people go!

Chorus:

When they had reached the other shore
Let my people go!
They sang the song of triumph o'er
Let my people go!

Chorus.

Suggested Stories

- *Matzoh Mouse*, by Lauren L. Wohl
- *The Four Questions*, by Ori Sherman and Lynne Sharon Schwartz

Beaver Meeting Schedule: Week Four

Theme: Passover

Date: _____

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Program Details</i>	<i>Leader Responsible</i>
10 mins.	Gathering Activity	Candy Hunt / Little Lamb Easter Card <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
5 mins.	Opening Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
10 mins.	Game	Easter Basket Quiz <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
20 mins.	Theme Activity	Ukrainian Easter Eggs <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Story	Three Little Trees <i>(See Detail Planning Sheet)</i>	
10 mins.	Lodge Meeting	Sharing Treats	
5 mins.	Spiritual Fellowship	Recite Promise / Law Prayer / Talk	
5 mins.	Closing Ceremony	<i>Details can be found in the Beaver Leader's Handbook</i>	
15 mins.	Leader Discussion Time	Review meeting and discuss next week's plans	

Meeting
Notes:

Beaver Meeting - Detail Planning

Theme: Easter

Background

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian church. It commemorates the death and resurrection (coming back to life) of Jesus Christ after he was crucified on a cross by the Romans about 2,000 years ago.

Many Christian churches precede the holiday by a time of preparation involving prayer and fasting. This is called Lent. It lasts about 40 days. Palm Sunday (a week before Easter) celebrates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, as prophesied by Zechariah. Holy Week begins on this day and lasts until Easter morning. Holy Thursday is in memory of the Last (Passover) Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples the night before he died. Sometimes Christians hold a traditional, Jewish Seder supper on this night to remember the event. (See Passover theme for details.)

Easter is both a sad and happy time for Christians. It begins with sadness on Good Friday, the day Jesus was killed. It continues all the next day (Saturday) and ends on Easter morning. According to the New Testament, on the first Easter morning, some women who knew Jesus went to his tomb with spices to finish preparing his body for burial. To their surprise he was gone. An angel told them he had risen. Shortly after, they spoke to him. The women ran to tell the disciples but most were sceptical. One hotly refused to believe the story; but a week later, after Jesus appeared to him, he too believed. Over the next 40 days Jesus appeared to many people including a large crowd of over 500. Soon thousands of people had joined his disciples, risking severe persecution by the Romans. After this time, Jesus rose into heaven where he intercedes for his people.

The Sacrificial Lamb

Jesus represents the sacrificial, Passover lamb of God sent to take away the world's sins. Christians point to many Old Testament Hebrew prophets (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah), saying that Jesus' life and death completes their Messianic prophecies.

Easter Eggs, Rabbits and Treats

Early Christians saw eggs as a symbol of Jesus' birth and adopted them as an Easter gift. In North America a tradition has grown that Easter eggs are delivered by rabbits. In European folklore doves, cranes and even foxes deliver the eggs. Children from France believe that all church bells fly away on Good Friday and bring the eggs back with them on Easter Sunday.

Candy Hunt

Scatter candy eggs and jelly beans over the meeting area or outside. Carrying a small bag each, send your Beavers out to collect the treats. After all the candy has been found, gather in lodges to share the goodies. Remember chocolate allergies.

Crafts

Little Lamb Easter Card

Draw around your hand on a piece of black or white construction paper. Cut the shape out. The thumb is the lamb's head and the four fingers are its legs. Cover the rest of the body with bits of cotton so it appears like wool. Use a small circle of coloured paper for the eye. Tie a piece of yarn around the neck and make a bow.

Cut a small card out of coloured paper and write an Easter message on it, signing your name. Punch one hole in the card and one where the lamb's tail might be. Slip a piece of yarn through both holes and tie the ends.

**Little Lamb
Easter Card**

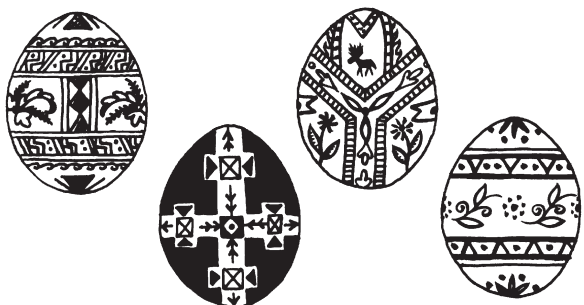


Ukrainian Easter Eggs

Ukrainians make elaborately decorated Easter eggs for their family and friends at Easter. The eggs are tokens of love and respect; they represent a wish for health, happiness and God's grace in a home. The colours and designs of Ukrainian Easter eggs are very symbolic. Yellow represents light and purity (Jesus). A star signifies God's love for his people. The only words ever written on a Ukrainian Easter egg is, "Khrystos voskres", meaning "Christ is risen."

Older Beavers will enjoy painting intricate, colourful designs of their own choosing on their eggs. You will need a number of hard-boiled eggs, pencils, crayons/markers/paints, and egg cups to hold the creations. Get the Beavers to sketch a design on their egg before colouring it. Other children might want to paint an Easter morning picture on their eggs.

A variant of this activity for younger Beavers involves dipping a hard-boiled egg into a bowl of food colouring after the child has drawn a picture on it with crayon.



Games

Easter Basket Quiz

(Like a Kim's game)

Fill a basket with various objects from Easter. These might include a decorated Ukrainian Easter egg, a bunny rabbit, a lily, an angel (Christmas decoration), a crucifix, a little lamb, Easter candy, and more. Briefly show the group the items in the basket, then take it away. See how many objects your Beavers can remember. As you take objects out of the basket, discuss the significance of each.

Egg Rolling

Rolling games with hard-boiled eggs are popular in Britain at Easter. Get some hard-boiled eggs, draw a target on the floor and see how close your Beavers can roll their lop-sided 'marbles' to the centre. Make a small ramp out of cardboard and get the Beavers to see how close they can get to an object on the other side.

Story

Three Little Trees

All of us have dreams. Perhaps you dream about becoming a fire fighter, a mountain climber or even a pilot. As the years go by our dreams often change, just as they did long ago for three little trees who dreamt of great things.

The trees grew on a quiet hillside forest in a sunny land by the Mediterranean Sea. They talked together about how they would like to be used when someone eventually cut them down.

"I'd like to be a cradle for a young baby," said the first tree. "I would rock him gently and soothe him to sleep. My sides would be very smooth so I would not hurt his tiny hands."

"I'd like to be part of a great ship sailing the oceans," said the second tree. "I'd travel around the world, experience all sorts of adventure and provide sailors with a safe place in raging storms."

"Well I'd like to be something beautiful, something carved with love so that it brings joy and hope to everyone who sees it and fame to the artist who carved it," said the third tree.

Gently blessed by the sun and refreshed by the rain, the trees grew. Then, over a period of years, a forester came and cut them down, one after the other, to make into useful objects.

The first tree to be cut down went to a carpenter's shop where he heard he was to become a manger. So much for my dream of becoming a cradle, he moaned. Instead of living in a fine house, cattle and donkeys would soon be eating out of me.

The second tree to be cut down was very excited when the forester took him to a boat builder. Was his dream coming true? Oh no, he thought when he heard what the carpenter planned. He was going to become a fishing boat. All he could look forward to was having smelly fish tossed into him and the same weary, boring journey every day. Some adventure!

The third tree was filled with disgust when, instead of being carved into a thing of great beauty, he was made into a rough wooden cross.

And so, the destiny of the trees was not what they'd first imagined. However, much to their surprise, they were soon all delighted because of a unique chance to serve God's Son. The manger became the cradle for the baby Jesus; the smelly fishing boat carried him as he spoke to the crowds about God; the cross carried his weight on Good Friday.

May we also dream dreams, but let's never miss opportunities that come our way to serve our God.