

Miniatures Marketplace - February 1999

CELEBRATING PASSOVER IN MINIATURE

By Barbara Schuckman

Miniatures BY BARB

I have had many requests for information about the springtime, Jewish holiday of Passover and how it can be displayed in miniature. In this small space I will attempt to give you a short explanation of the holiday and its symbols with some suggestions for celebrating and displaying the holiday in miniature.

This joyous holiday commemorates the Jews' escape from slavery in ancient Egypt. The celebration centers around a dinner feast called a "Sedar". The Passover ceremony takes place at the dinner table. Participants in the ceremony are given a Hagaddah, the book in which the story of the Jews' escape from slavery is written. On the table sits the Sedar plate. In the center of the Sedar plate is placed a wine glass. This wine glass awaits the prophet Elijah. Surrounding the wine glass are the symbols of the Passover story. The roasted shank bone symbolizes the Passover offering. A roasted egg reminds us of the hardened hearts of the Jewish people under slavery. Bitter herbs are a reminder of the embittered existence of the Jewish people in Egypt. A mixture of apples, wine and nuts symbolizes the mortar used for the bricks made by the slaves. Lettuce to be dipped in salt water depicts the tears shed by Jewish slaves. Parsley is a reminder of the coming of spring. Three Matzos also placed on the table represent the three tribes of Israel. The participants in the Sedar lean on pillows recreating the reclining position of a free man.

This holiday can be represented in miniature in a variety of ways. Here are just a few. Find a beautiful diningroom table and set it for the Passover ceremony. This miniature table can then be used as a centerpiece for the holiday meal, as a teaching tool at the ceremony or for children, or it would make a wonderful gift for the hostess of the holiday celebration. A vignette of a diningroom with a Passover theme would be another exciting project. Set the table for the ceremony. Display a collection of Sedar plates and wine glasses on shelves or in bookcases in the setting. Then set out an assortment of food for the Passover meal on a sideboard or buffet. Some other suggestions I have for displaying Judaic miniatures include starting a collection of Sedar Plates, wine glasses, Chanukah menorahs and other Jewish items to put on shelves, or in a china cabinet in your dollhouse. A similar collection can be displayed in a curio cabinet in your real home. Of course a mini Judaic shop would be a wonderful place to display a collection of Jewish miniatures.

My catalog contains a drawing depicting how to set a Passover table. It also contains a list of the Jewish holidays for upcoming years..