

Example of critical thinking on jewish passover seder communication

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Jewish Passover Seder: Communication

Invitation to a Jewish Passover Seder poses numerous communication challenges due to the real and perceived differences in religious beliefs, cultures, rituals and other aspects of religious and cultural differences. In this regard, such invitation requires a substantial deal of planning in order to come up with a strategy to avoid the communication barriers that result from cultural differences. Preparing to attend a religious or cultural event for a different cultural group other than one's own involves learning as much as possible about the other culture, and identifying the expected behavior when interacting with members of the other culture.

As a Christian attending a Jewish event, one has to be prepared to overcome cultural differences in order to communicate effectively. The first step is avoidance of ethnocentrism and accepting that members of the other culture also feel that their culture deserves a chance (Jandt, 2010). Therefore, one should adhere to the stipulations of the festival by avoiding taboos and keeping with expectations. For instance, presents should be chosen carefully since yeast is prohibited; in case one cannot identify matzah, flowers, Passover recipes or fresh fruits are acceptable options.

In addition to appreciating and learning about the Jewish culture, one should identify the similarities between the Jewish culture and one's own (Jandt, 2010). This enables a person to participate in discussions and give meaning to the event without having to convert to the other religion. For instance, the Passover festival is common with the Christian and Jewish religions, which is good enough a justification for a Christian celebrating with Jews.

Nevertheless, the differences in interpretation of the event between the two

religions should be identified, which may save one from embarrassment based on a wrong interpretation. In this regard, Christians associate Passover with Jesus while Jews associate it with the Jewish exodus from Egypt, and one should endeavor to communicate with others about the festival as per the similarities.

According to Jandt, (2010), another approach to promotion of effective communication is by learning more about the individuals belonging to the other culture in order to avoid making generalizations based on misconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices. For instance, a person should understand that stereotypes about Jews have nothing to do with their beliefs, and each member of the culture is an individual in one's own merit. The best way to learn about misconceptions that could be a communication barrier is by consulting a Jewish friend prior to the festival.

During the Jewish Passover Seder, the story of the exodus from Egypt is retold from a Jewish perspective, whereby one of the young participants is expected to ask an elder in the festival (American-Israeli cooperative Enterprise, 2012). However, there is more to the story than is said by the elder, whereby the non-verbal communication aspect is intended to inform the curious, lazy, knowledgeable and ignorant youngsters. In addition, Jews have other non-verbal modes of communication that are typical to Jews but not unique. First, Jews talk fast due to the perception of urgency created by the belief that there is so much to learn in a relatively short time. Second, they use arms and body language to give emphasis and vigor to their speech. Finally, Jews do not have a great need for personal space, and one should be ready to accommodate closeness with others when

communicating (Lowenstein, 2002).

Finally, the Jewish hosts may be proficient in English, but due to differences in culture and religion, there are no English words for some ideas and objects. Therefore, before attending a Jewish Passover Seder, it is essential to learn these words together with their pronunciations from a Jewish friend or a digital thesaurus. In conclusion, the only way to avoid cultural barriers to communication is by having enough flexibility to learn the other culture and keep an open mind for new ideas.

References

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