

BREAKING BADNESS

choosing goodness

an interfaith prayer service



Jewish-Christian
Discovery Center



Catholic Church of
St. Ann



HERITAGE
BAPTIST CHURCH

Breaking Badness, Choosing Goodness

An interfaith liturgy

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Environment:

- tables with tablecloths
- bowl for discarded matzah
- plate for each participant, each with a whole piece of matzah on each plate
- bowl of honey at each table
- program with speaking parts for the participants
- half sheets of papers and pencils (one for each participant)
- designated place to discard matzah (trash, burial spot, fire pit/lighter/lighter fluid, etc)

Opening song: (song suggestions are listed at the end of this document)

Welcome & Introduction: (Why we are here)

Opening prayer: (create your own)

Event leader: Bread is a blessing to our lives. Bread can feed us, nourish us and make us healthy and strong. But just like we can feed on things to make us healthy and whole, we can feed on things that can make us broken and hurt: things like hatred, misinformation, prejudice.

We will now start a special and unique ritual in which we break the unleavened bread, which will symbolize us breaking our bad habits and sins.

Each person now take your own piece of matzah and break it in half. Place one half aside for later.

Let us take our matzah and together recite each line of the confession below, breaking off a piece and placing it in the communal bowl as we recite each line; showing that we are not alone in our sins.

All: For the times that I have hardened my heart against others (*Break off a small piece of matzah and place it in the bowl.*)

All: For the times that I have gossiped or spoken poorly of others (*break piece*)

All: For the times that I have been prideful, arrogant or thought I was better than others (*break piece*)

All: For the times I have disliked or hated others (*break piece*)

All: For the times I have rashly judged others (*break piece*)

All: For the times I have not loved my neighbor (*break piece*)

All: For the times I have turned a blind eye to those in need (*break piece*)
[use this area to add any additional sins or omissions here that may need to be addressed in your parish or congregation]

Event Leader: We have most certainly not listed all our sins; therefore, we will now have some time at our tables to add additional sins, bad habits, or omissions that we would like to get rid of. You may record them on your program or go around your table and name them out loud. Once you have done so, please place your final piece of matzah in the communal bowl.

Table leader: Does anyone have anything to add?

For the times I have _____. (*leader add your own moment of weakness here*)(*break piece*)

(Give people permission to add their own omissions or sins that are specific to not loving our neighbors. They can do so quietly or aloud.

Space to write in any silent sins or omissions:

Event leader: Now, let's take this moment to discuss as a community how these actions and attitudes can harm others. Let's take 5 minutes to share at our tables.

Event leader: We will now take our broken pieces of matzah to [your designated space]. Let us please leave here momentarily. We will return to this room for the second portion of this event, so please leave your belongings, but bring your broken matzah and your programs.

(Participants and leaders will transition to the designated area to discard of broken pieces of matzah. Suggestions are burning, burying or throwing away the matzah.)

Instrumental music for the time of movement

Event leader: Let us pray:

All: As fire cleanses, so cleanse us, oh Lord, from our past offenses, mistakes and brokenness.

Event Leader: We invite you to get rid of your offenses [designated place] and take a moment to reflect, letting go of your past actions. *(Action of burning, burying, or throwing the matzah away and pausing to reflect)*

First play instrumental music while the matzah is being discarded to allow participants the time for quiet reflection and meditation. Then, play a communal song to sing together, such as “Let there be Peace on Earth.” (see other songs suggested in list below)

Event leader: Let us all return to our seats to complete the second portion of our ceremony.

Instrumental music for the time of movement

Give time for transitioning back to the tables.

Event leader: We have made known our mistakes and brokenness, but now we come together, with your help, oh Lord, to choose to remake and repair the pieces of our past and choose goodness. Help us in our future choices and promises to do our best to love you and love our neighbor.

We will now take the other half of our matzah. However, instead of breaking it after naming an offense, we will break it after making a positive commitment together as a group. Keep these broken pieces on your own plate because we will be consuming them.

Let us say the following together:

All: I choose to love my neighbor. *(Everyone breaks off a small piece of matzah places it on their own plate.)*

All: I choose to open my heart to others. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to speak kindly and lovingly to others and of others. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to see the value in others. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to protect others' dignity. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to promote equality. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to work for justice. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to advocate for those in need. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to see others' needs above my own. *(break piece)*

All: I choose to respect the differences in people as gifts from God. (*break piece*)

All: I choose to appreciate the gift of life in all forms and faiths. (*break piece*)

Event Leader: Just as before, we certainly have more promises that we can make. We invite you now to take this time to record an action or a promise you would like to undertake to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Do so now on your programs.

Space to write in a positive change, action or promise you'd like to make:

Event leader: Join me in as we continue our positive response.
Breathe in (*pause*) God's grace, God's mercy, God's peace;
Exhale (*pause*) our feelings of fear, of anger, of hate;
Breathe in (*pause*) God's kindness, God's generosity, God's patience;
Exhale (*pause*) our prejudice, our indifference, our selfishness;
Breathe in (*pause*) God's hope, God's joy, God's love;
Exhale (*pause*) all that is stale and poisonous in us;
Breathe in (*pause*) God's Spirit, God's light, God's life.
Exhale (*pause*) the serenity and shalom-ness of God back into the world.
(*pause*)

I, now, invite you to please take the matzah and dip it in the honey and consume our pledge to choose love by eating the matzah and enjoying its sweetness.

Instrumental music

Event leader: Let us take this moment to acknowledge each other and show one another a sign of peace, such as a handshake, hug, symbol of peace, or verbal greeting.

Final Blessing and closing remarks: (create your own)

Song: What the World Needs Now is Love, by Burt Bacharach or other song from list below

Possible songs for singing:

Amazing Grace

Down in the River to Pray

Imagine, by John Lennon

What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love

Let There Be Peace on Earth
Give Peace a Chance
I've Got Peace Like a River
He's Got the Whole World in his Hands
Dona Nobis Pacem
Lord, Listen to your Children Praying
We Shall Overcome
Healer of our Every Ill
There is a Balm in Gilead

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