A bout to gain their freedom, the Israelites were told that they were to become a nation of educators... Freedom is won not on the battlefield nor in the political arena but in the human imagination and will. To defend a land you need an army, but to defend freedom you need education. You need parents, families and homes and a constant conversation between the generations. Above all you need memory – the kind of memory that never forgets the bread of affliction and the bitter herbs of slavery.” (The Jonathan Sacks Haggada)

Rabbi Sacks exquisitely encapsulates the essence of Seder Night. In perhaps the widest celebrated ritual service across the Jewish world, we ensure future generations are socialized into our national narrative, identity, and values. At the seder table, there are two central actors, the Parent-Educator (an archetype Jewish personality in Jewish civilization) and the child.

Rabbi Sacks also hints at the pedagogy utilized by the Parent-Educator with the help of the haggada: memory. National memories are transmitted through ritual and storytelling, and Seder night combines these two magnificently. What do ritual and storytelling have in common? They are both experiential. They facilitate the experiencing of values and narrative in a way that other more cerebral modes cannot. To quote Rabbi Sacks once again: “Tell the story while you are doing the deed, because values are caught not taught. They are communicated by what we do more than by what we say.”

The haggada itself, using language from the Talmud, tells us how best to do this: “In every generation each person must see himself as if he had come out of Egypt”. In an obvious attempt to advise us how to best achieve this, the Rambam, in his Mishneh Torah, changes the language somewhat from “see himself (lirot)” to “present himself (leharot)”. By controlling every aspect of the Seder, including the way we dress, eat, sit and act, we can imagine ourselves and each other as if we are there at that moment in history when we were freed from Egypt. This is the moment when national memories become personalized.

We created the new Koren Magerman Youth Haggada with all of this in mind and designed a haggada that places the child at the very center of Seder night. It aims to transmit our national and religious heritage in a way that children can comprehend by using experiential education techniques and activities that draw inspiration from the rituals of the evening itself.

Each page asks the reader a question, suggests an activity (suitable for all present around the table) that highlights the themes addressed on that particular page, features a quote or story connected to the ideas on the page, and shows a beautiful illustration that can be approached as a commentary in itself on the text.

All of the tools and resources in the Koren Magerman Youth Haggada, together with the explanatory Parent-Educator Companion (available free with purchase from www.korenpub.com) give parents and educators everything they need to ensure the Seder will revolve around the children at the table, and make Seder Night a magical evening of impactful, engaging, and fun, experiential education.

Daniel Rose is the editor of the Koren Magerman Educational Siddur series and developed the Koren Magerman Youth Haggada.