PESAH, how to have a succesuful SEDER?

Monday April 14th and Tuesday 15th at night, are probably the most important nights of the Jewish Calendar. During those nights we will fulfill a very special Mitsva: □□□□ □□□□□ teaching our children the story of Pesah. Instilling in their minds and hearts the collective memories that will shape their personalities and identity for the rest of their lives. But, how to do that? We have the Haggada, the narrative of the Exodus. And we also have the clear instructions of our rabbis: teach and talk to your children at the level of their understanding.
But, how should we do that? How should we teach our children Jewish History (or Jewish memory) in the era of youtube, Instagram and iPads? In a time where their attention span is so short and erratic…

The secret for a successful and meaningful Pesah Seder could be summarized with three words: Preparation. Preparation. Preparation.

Some ideas

1. DIVIDE AND CONQUER: Write an email, text or whatsapp today to each member of your family and guests. Assign to each one of them one part of the Haggada. Ask them to be ready to read and/or explain at least one short text of the Hagada in Hebrew, English, etc. Encourage them to search at least in the following websites: www.torah.org, aish.com, ou.org, for material related to the texts they will read. The little ones should prepare themselves to sing (and perhaps explain) ma nishtana' or 'abadim hayinu or had gadya. Those who have difficulties reading Hebrew should search online and be ready to explain one particular idea of the hagada (=Pesah, matsa, maror, 4 cups, eating reclined, haroset, etc.).

2. MAKE IT RELEVANT: Encourage some of the participants of the Seder, even your prospective guests, to briefly (5 minutes, max!) debate among themselves one subject related to the Exodus from Egypt, which is still relevant today.
Two examples.
a. rab ve'atsum mimenu (Ex. 1:10). "Although they were only a small minority, the Egyptians feared that the Jews were too powerful and decided to eliminate them". Although Jews make less than 3% of the American population the list of "50 Most Influential Commentators in America" (as per Atlantic Magazine, 2010) included 26 Jews. Are we Jews too powerful? Not powerful enough? Is the "Jewish disproportional influence" in larger society an excuse to justify antisemitism? Should we keep it all to ourselves?
b. Vayare'u otanu hamitsrim vaya'anunu (Deut. 26:6). "The Egyptians demonized us and oppressed us". Since the beginning of our history, our enemies first demonizing us to justify their animosity against us. Is "demonization of the Jews" a strategy that is still used by anti-Semites to justify their hatred? Is Israel, "the Jew among the nations", demonized today in media, UN, etc. to justify anti-semitic behavior?

3. MAKE IT FUN: Ask the funniest guys of the family to play some parts of the Haggada, for example, the Ten Plagues. Have someone (a more serious guy) to explain briefly each plague while the actors play the play. One person has to play Moshe (with his head covered with a Talit) and someone else Pharaoh (use your imagination…). Make it visual. Get small plastic frogs, animal masks for deber and ping pong balls for hail. Make it short. No more than 5 -7 minutes play.
Have games for the children, a Pesah treasure hunt or Pesah trivia, etc. To find great games you must see **THIS** and **THIS**.
Have 20 questions ready, and most importantly 20 (or more) small prizes to reward the correct answers. Anytime the Seder is about to get out of control, or boring or you need everyone's attention you can ask one of your questions (show the prize first!). Guaranteed to work..

4. MAKE IT DEEP: Recommended modern Haggadot: Rabbi Shimon Appisdorf **see here**.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks **See here**

For the advanced students I recommended **THIS** old but fantastic Sephardic commentary of the Haggada written by Rabbi Don Ytshaq Abarbanel (1437-1508). I'm going to use it this year. Do not skip the introduction (the tragic personal story of the author). Easy Hebrew. Courtesy of www.hebrewbooks.org .

PRICELESS for SPANISH SPEAKING JEWS

Click **here** to download an ancient Spanish (not "Ladino") Hagadda, published by rabbi Ytshaq Yehuda Leon Templo, in Amsterdam, 1728

Click **HERE** to read: **"TO SELL or NOT TO SELL my HAMETS?"**