

Feast of Firstfruits

Opening Songs:

Forever by Kari Jobe

Christ the Lord is Risen Today by Reawaken Hymns

Host: As the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread comes to a close, we are preparing to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits tomorrow. This is an important Biblical feast day that is all but overlooked, even in modern Judaism, but to those of us who follow Yeshua as our Messiah, it is a day of supreme importance!

Reader 1: That's right! Our Messiah fulfilled this Feast when He rose from the dead and presented Himself to the Father as the Firstfruits of the great harvest of all of us who will one day rise again!

Reader 2: As we gather for this sacred celebration in the presence of friends and loved ones, let us remember that we are rejoicing with the whole house of Israel, both young and old, natural-born and grafted in.

Reader 3: This feast links us with the past because it is an ancient tradition, given by Yah Himself in Leviticus 23, that has been handed down from generation to generation.

Reader 4: Our Messiah Yeshua celebrated this feast with His family and friends, and by doing the same, we are following His example.

Reader 5: We are able to celebrate this feast because we have been adopted into the family of Yah because of what our Messiah Yeshua did for us.

Reader 6: We who once were far off have now been brought near through the blood of our Messiah, our Passover Lamb, and we can rest in confidence of our future resurrection because He has become the Firstfruits of all of us who will be made alive!

Host: Let's pray as we begin! Yah our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us among all peoples and sanctified us with Your love, we praise You! With an everlasting love, You have given us feasts, holidays, and seasons for rejoicing. On this eve of the Feast of Firstfruits, we praise You for Your abundant provision for all our needs, we offer to You the first and the best of all that we have and all that we are, and we celebrate the hope of new life that You have given us in Your Son.

All: Yah our God, King of the universe, we bless You! You are more than worthy of all we could ever offer to You! Amen!

Youngest Child: What does the word firstfruits mean?

Reader 7: Firstfruits are the first yield of a harvest, or the first things to grow from something you have planted.

Reader 8: The Hebrew word for firstfruit is *bikkurim*—which literally translates as “promise to come.” The Israelites saw these firstfruits as an investment into their future. Yah promised them that if they brought their firstfruits to Him, He would bless all that came afterward.

Feast of Firstfruits

Counting the Omer

Write one thing you are thankful for each day until Shavuot!

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Shabbat
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							
Week 6							
Week 7							

Feast of Firstfruits

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Count the Days until Shavuot!

Color one box each day!

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Shabbat
	Heart	Star	Apple	Flower	Leaf	Four-petaled flower	Candles
Week 1	Circle with heart	Circle with star	Circle with apple	Circle with flower	Circle with leaf	Circle with four-petaled flower	Circle with candles
Week 2	Square with heart	Square with star	Square with apple	Square with flower	Square with leaf	Square with four-petaled flower	Square with candles
Week 3	Triangle with heart	Triangle with star	Triangle with apple	Triangle with flower	Triangle with leaf	Triangle with four-petaled flower	Triangle with candles
Week 4	Pentagon with heart	Pentagon with star	Pentagon with apple	Pentagon with flower	Pentagon with leaf	Pentagon with four-petaled flower	Pentagon with candles
Week 5	Square with heart	Square with star	Square with apple	Square with flower	Square with leaf	Square with four-petaled flower	Square with candles
Week 6	Diamond with heart	Diamond with star	Diamond with apple	Diamond with flower	Diamond with leaf	Diamond with four-petaled flower	Diamond with candles
Week 7	Octagon with heart	Octagon with star	Octagon with apple	Octagon with flower	Octagon with leaf	Octagon with four-petaled flower	Octagon with candles



Feast of Firstfruits

Reader 14: So while we are counting the fifty days to Shavuot, we can also use this as a time to count our blessings, to give thanks for the daily provisions Yah provides for us that we so often take for granted.

Reader 15: This will help keep us from slipping into patterns of complaining like the Israelites did in the wilderness and as we ourselves are so prone to do.

Reader 16: As we end our time together tonight, let's ask the Father to use this next fifty days to prepare our hearts for our next Appointed Time with Him, the Feast of Shavuot.

Closing Songs:

Counting My Blessings by Seph Schlueter

Lord, I Give You My Heart by Shane & Shane

Host: Father, we thank You for this time You have given us tonight to mark the Feast of Firstfruits together. As we begin the Counting of Days or the Counting of the Omer, please use these days to make us more grateful for Your daily provision, to give us more faith that You will take care of all our needs, and to prepare our hearts for an even deeper experience of the filling of Your Holy Spirit than we have ever had before.

All: Thank You for establishing this Appointed Time and inviting us through our Messiah to join with Your people in meeting with You at this time. We have felt Your presence among us, and we count it the deepest privilege to have been with You tonight. Amen.

Feast of Firstfruits

Reader 9: Leviticus 23:9-10 says, "Yah spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.'"

Reader 10: It is a great act of faith to give away the firstfruits of your harvest! After a long winter, the stored grain would be gone or almost gone. It would be very tempting to want to keep the firstfruits for yourself and then give to Yah once you knew you had enough.

Reader 11: Giving the firstfruits to Yah is telling Him that you trust Him to bring in the rest of the harvest to provide for your needs.

Reader 12: They were actually betting their lives on Yah by doing this! If He didn't provide more after they gave Him that first harvest, they would die of starvation!

Youngest Child: What if someone is not a farmer? Do they have any firstfruits to give to Yah?

Reader 13: That's a great question! And the answer is yes, they do!

Reader 14: Proverbs 3:9 says "Honor Yahweh with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your income."

Reader 15: That verse shows us that our firstfruits can come from any income we have, so whenever we make any money, we can and should give the firstfruits of it to Yah.

Youngest Child: But we don't have a priest to take it to! How can we give our firstfruits to Yah now?

Reader 16: That's another really good question! You're right — there is no temple or priesthood here on earth at this time for us to take our firstfruits offerings to.

Reader 1: But we do have a Priest! Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us that Yeshua is now our Priest! It says, "Having then a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Yeshua, the Son of God, let's hold tightly to our confession.

Reader 2: "For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.

Reader 3: "Let's therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for help in time of need."

Reader 4: If we can draw near through Yeshua our Priest to find mercy and grace, surely there is a way we can bring our offerings to Yah through Him!

Reader 5: There is! Yeshua taught us how in Matthew chapter 25. He said that when we give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothes to those who need them, we are giving them to Him! That's how we can bring our firstfruits to our Priest! By taking care of the needy around us!

Feast of Firstfruits

Reader 6: Wow! I love that we have a way to bring our firstfruits to Yah through our High Priest, Yeshua!

Youngest Child: I thought you said at the beginning that Yeshua IS our Firstfruits. How can He be both our Priest AND our Firstfruits?

Reader 7: One thing we learn the more we celebrate Yah's feasts is that they all point to Yeshua in a bunch of different ways all at the same time. Just like at Passover, He was the Lamb, the Unleavened Bread, and we even saw His blood represented in the Wine, now in the Feast of Firstfruits, He is both our Priest, and He is our Firstfruits!

Reader 8: In John 20, right after Yeshua was raised from the dead, He appeared to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Feast of Firstfruits to comfort her, but He told her not to hold onto Him because He hadn't yet ascended to His Father.

Reader 9: He needed to go and present Himself as the Firstfruit offering that day to fulfill this Feast. It was only later that He appeared to His other disciples and allowed them to touch Him.

Reader 10: Paul says in I Corinthians 15:20-26, "Messiah has been raised from the dead. He became the firstfruit of those who are asleep. For since death came by man, the resurrection of the dead also came by man.

Reader 11: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Messiah the firstfruits, then those who are Messiah's, at his coming.

Reader 12: "Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Reader 13: "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."

Reader 14: Do you remember how the Israelites bet their lives on Yah when they gave Him their firstfruits and trusted Him to bring in the rest of the harvest? It's just like that for us when we celebrate Messiah as our Firstfruits, our *Bikkurim* or "promise to come."

Reader 15: We are telling Yah that we believe He raised Yeshua from the dead as the first harvest, and we are betting our very lives on Him to bring in a full harvest.

Reader 16: We are saying that we are willing to die with Yeshua to ourselves and to our sins, trusting that if we do, He will raise us to eternal life as well. We are the rest of the harvest!

Reader 1: Yeshua longed for the final harvest to be a full and plentiful one! Matthew 9:36-38 says, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.

Reader 2: "Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest."

Feast of Firstfruits

Host: Let's listen and pray for that now along with this song:

Lord of the Harvest by Lindy Cofer

Host: Abba Father, we pray earnestly to You, the Lord of the Harvest, that the final harvest of souls will be a full and abundant one. We ask You to call and send out laborers into Your harvest field that they might know Your love and that they might know You as the Deliverer who saves their souls forever.

All: Yah, we pray this prayer because it was the heart's desire of our Messiah, and it is our heart's desire as well. Amen.

Reader 3: We mentioned at the beginning that the Feast of Firstfruits is an ancient tradition that links us to the past, but it is a feast that connects us to the future as well.

Reader 4: That's true! The Feast of Firstfruits connects Passover to Shavuot because it is the day that we begin counting the fifty days, including seven Sabbaths, to Shavuot, which is to be the day after the seventh Sabbath — the fiftieth day.

Reader 5: That's why Shavuot is sometimes called Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks. The word *Pentecost* is the Greek word meaning "fiftieth," and the name "the Feast of Weeks" refers to the counting of seven weeks.

Reader 6: It is believed that the Feast of Shavuot commemorates the giving of Torah at Mt. Sinai, and we know for sure that, in the year Yeshua died and was raised, it was on Shavuot that the Holy Spirit was given to His followers.

Reader 7: And that fulfilled the promises in Ezekiel and Jeremiah that Yah would make a renewed covenant with His people and would give them a new Spirit and would write His Torah on their hearts!

Reader 8: So we can think of Passover as marking our deliverance and Shavuot as marking the time we began to walk in the Spirit in obedience to Torah.

Reader 9: Yes, and our time spent counting these next fifty days can serve to help us understand that it takes time to grow from being a newly freed slave to the point at which one understands that ultimate freedom comes from obedience to Yah's law.

Reader 10: It is during this in-between time of growth that the Father shows us we aren't truly free after deliverance until we are walking in step with His Spirit in obedience to Torah.

Reader 11: Jews traditionally call this time of counting "The Counting of the Omer." An omer refers to a bundled sheaf of barley which is what was commanded to be waved by the priest at the Feast of Firstfruits.

Reader 12: An omer is also a unit of measurement and was the amount of manna each Israelite was allowed to collect in the wilderness each morning, so it has come to mean the amount of provision needed for one day.

Reader 13: Yeshua referenced this idea of an omer of provision in the model for prayer He taught His disciples when He said, "Give us this day our daily bread."