

# The Jewish Parent Page

VOL. VII, NO. VIII • SHABBAT • Day of Joy, Day of Gladness, Day of Peace



## Holiday Schedule

Shabbat arrives every Friday evening at sundown and ends when three stars appear in the Saturday night sky. Many consider Shabbat the most sacred of Jewish holidays. It is a special gift for the Jewish people, giving us the opportunity for meaningful rest, celebration and prayer.

## Meanings and Observances

In the Torah we read, “And the heaven and the earth were finished and all their array. On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.” (Genesis 2:1-2)

Jewish tradition asks us to emulate God on the Sabbath day—just as God ceased working and rested, so we too cease working and rest. Whether we believe in a literal God of creation, a God who set into motion the evolution of the world, or another interpretation of how God works in our world, we set aside one day each week to celebrate the magnificence of creation and our partnership with God. In celebrating Shabbat, we reach out toward holiness while God is reaching out to us.

- **Shabbat Preparation:** It is a tradition to prepare both our homes and ourselves for Shabbat by making sure our homes are clean before Shabbat begins and by dressing in clothes that honor Shabbat. These preparations help create a peaceful and calm atmosphere for the celebration of Shabbat.
- **Setting the Table:** Candles are placed in candlesticks, wine or juice is poured into *Kiddush* cups (special decorative cups or wine goblets), and a challah with a challah cover is placed on the table.
- **Sabbath Home Ceremony:** When the family gathers at the table, a blessing is said over the candles, wine or juice, and challah. Additionally, a blessing is said over the children.
- **The Candles:** There are many interpretations as to why we light candles. A comment found in the Zohar (a medieval work of mystical Judaism) teaches that when the table is set, the candles lit, and family members are happy, the *Shechinah*—the Divine Presence—dwells within the home. The candles set the tone for the holiday to begin.
- **The Wine:** The blessing over the wine is called *Kiddush*. The word *Kiddush* means sanctification. We sanctify Shabbat by the blessings we say. Wine is associated with joy and celebration. The rabbis of the talmudic period established the tradition of sanctifying the Sabbath through the blessing over the wine.
- **The Challah:** Typically a challah is a braided loaf of bread. The blessing over the challah is called *HaMotzi*. *HaMotzi* means “to bring forth.” When we bless the challah or bread, we thank God for bringing forth bread from the earth. The challah is covered with a cloth; it can be a napkin or a specially decorated cloth for the specific purpose of covering the challah. Different explanations have been given for the use of the challah cover. One

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interpretation is that the challah is covered so that it is not “embarrassed” by being blessed after the wine and not before it. Another explanation is that the challah represents the breads that would have been given to the priests as an offering in the Temple in Jerusalem. These breads would have been placed on the altar upon a beautiful cloth. Since the destruction of the Temple, our homes have come to represent the Temple in miniature, and the table upon which we eat the altar. Some families have two challot (pl. of challah) on Friday evening, commemorating the double portion of manna that God provided the Children of Israel on Fridays during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land.

- **The Friday Evening Meal:** Many families prepare a special Friday evening meal, which may be take-out food from a restaurant, pre-made dishes from the grocery store or home cooking. The ritual candles, wine and challah create the atmosphere of the Sabbath table.
- **Shabbat Services, Evening and Morning:** Synagogue services are usually held on *Erev Shabbat* (the evening of the Sabbath) and on Shabbat morning. Check with your local synagogue for the schedule of services, including any special worship services for families with children.

As a family, become part of your community’s Shabbat worship. In addition to the benefits of praying together, participating capably and communally in holiday observance will help your children see the relevance of what they study in religious school.

- **Shabbat Meals:** In addition to the Friday evening meal, all the meals eaten on Shabbat are (and can be) special meals. For many busy families, it is better to have guests at lunchtime on Shabbat than at the end of a busy workday.
- **Shabbat Rest:** The rest we observe on Shabbat is meant to be unique. Rest on Shabbat should be both physically and spiritually restoring. Rest on Shabbat includes festive meals, prayer, and time together with family and friends.
- **Havdalah:** Observe the ceremony of *Havdalah*, which signifies the end of the Sabbath. *Havdalah* is celebrated once there are three stars visible in the night sky.

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## Teach Your Children Well...the mitzvot and ethics of Jewish life

There are four mitzvot associated with Shabbat. These mitzvot are derived from four verses found in the Bible:

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (Exodus 20:8)

“Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (Deuteronomy 5:12)

“...if you call the Sabbath ‘delight,’ God’s holy day ‘honored’; and if you honor it and go not your ways, nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains; then you can delight in God.” (Isaiah 58:13-14)

To fulfill the commandments to (1) remember, (2) observe, (3) delight in, and (4) honor Shabbat, the rabbis specified certain actions—such as refraining from work, lighting the candles, eating delicious meals, and dressing in special clothing.

With your children, generate ideas and family activities that will fulfill these four mitzvot:

As a family we can *remember* Shabbat by \_\_\_\_\_

As a family we can *observe* Shabbat by \_\_\_\_\_

As a family we can *honor* and *delight* in Shabbat by \_\_\_\_\_

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- It is a tradition to give *tzedakah* before Shabbat begins. Usually this means that family members place a few coins in a *tzedakah* box. With your family, generate a list of worthy causes.
- Choose Jewish-themed books and/or music to share at Shabbat bedtime or during the day with your children.
- Spend time out in nature on Shabbat by taking a family walk outside and/or having a Shabbat picnic.

# A Jewish Family's Bookshelf

From the URJ Press and Transcontinental Music

## urjbooksandmusic.com

*Celebrate Shabbat* (CD) Produced by Craig Taubman

A treasure of Sabbath songs from some of contemporary Jewish music's most beloved musical artists—listen to MP3 samples on the URJ Press website!

*CHAI Jewish Family Education: Shabbat Family Workbook* By Michelle Shapiro Abraham, illustrated by Lisa Rauchwerger

Family activities, discussion guides, recipes, blessings and songs.

*Do It Yourself Shabbat*

Blessings for *Erev Shabbat* (Friday night) on a laminated fold-out card

*An Invitation to Shabbat: A Beginner's Guide to Weekly Celebration* (with CD) By Ruth Perelson

A step-by-step guide to Shabbat rituals from candle lighting to *Havdalah*

*Shaarei Shabbat: Songs and Blessings for Your Jewish Home* (CD) Produced by Doug Cotler

Folk melodies, contemporary classics and synagogue standards sung by cantors and soloists, with a track list and MP3 samples available on the URJ Press website

*The Shabbat Angels* By Maxine Segal Handelman, Illustrated by Joani Keller Rothenberg

A contemporary version of a talmudic tale teaching the value of Shabbat peace

*A Shabbat Reader: Universe of Cosmic Joy* By Dov Peretz Elkins

A collection of spiritual essays, poetry, and meditations on the transcendent meaning of the seventh day, with an online discussion guide

*Shabbat Shalom!* By Michelle Shapiro Abraham and illustrated by Ann Koffsky

A wonderful way to teach toddlers about lighting Shabbat candles, reciting the *Kiddush*, saying the blessing over the challah and more

*Shabbat Shalom! Jewish Children's Songs and Blessings for Shabbat* (CD)

A companion to the book of the same name, suitable for newborns to six-year-olds, with track list and MP3 samples available on the website

## Recipe Corner

### Yummy Sabbath Crescents

A quick and easy Shabbat treat

Ingredients:

1 8 oz. can refrigerated crescent roll dough

1/3-cup brown sugar

2 teaspoons cinnamon

Raisins, optional

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Open the container of crescent roll dough and separate the dough triangles. Arrange the dough triangles on an un-greased cookie sheet.

Blend the brown sugar and cinnamon. Spread this filling on each triangle.

If desired, sprinkle 4-5 raisins down the middle of the dough.

Roll up the dough triangles beginning with the wide end and rolling toward the point.

Bake for approximately 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Transfer the baked rolls onto a wire rack to cool.

Allow rolls to cool before enjoying the treat. Makes 8 rolls.

Optional: Blend 1/4 cup of confectioners sugar with 1 teaspoon milk. Drizzle over the Yummy Sabbath Crescents as they are cooling. Enjoy warm or at room temperature.



# Gathering Around the Shabbat Table

## **Hadlakat neiroi: The Blessing over the Shabbat Candles**

Kindle the Shabbat candles (typically 2 candles), and chant or recite:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו  
במצוותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir shel Shabbat.*

We praise you, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to kindle the Sabbath lights.

## **Blessing the Children**

Place your hands on your child's head and say:

### **For boys:**

ישמך אלהים כאפרים וכמנשה.

*Y'simcha Elohim k'Ephrayim v'chiM'nasheh.*

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and Menasheh, who carried forward the life of our people.

### **For girls:**

ישמך אלהים פשרה רבקה לאה ורחל.

*Y'simeich Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Lei-ah, v'Rachel.*

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, who carried forward the life of our people.

### **For both:**

יברכך יי וישמרך.  
יאר יי פניו אליך ויחנך.  
ישא יהוה יהוה פניו אליך וישם לך שלום.

*Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.*

*Ya-eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.*

*Yisah Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom.*

May God bless you and keep you.

May God look kindly upon you, and be gracious to you.

May God reach out to you in tenderness and give you peace.

*If you choose, add personal thoughts and blessings.*

## **Kiddush: The Blessing Over the Wine\***

Lift the cup(s) of wine or juice and say:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הנפח.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the wine or juice.*

(\*For the full text, see *On the Doorposts of Your House*, CCAR Press.)

## **HaMotzi: The Blessing Over the Bread**

Uncover the challah and say:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*Cut or break off pieces of challah for each family member to eat.*

*Enjoy your Sabbath meal.*

The Jewish Parent Page is a publication of the Union for Reform Judaism and is written by  
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