

# Session Four

## A Time to Reconnect and Recharge

*(Shabbat)*



### Text 1 | Shabbat Kept the Jews

Ahad Ha-Am (1856-1927), founder of Cultural Zionism, is credited with saying:

More than Jews have kept Shabbat  
Shabbat has kept the Jews.

- ▶ Why do you think Ahad Ha-Am made this statement? Do you agree?
- ▶ What, if any, has been your experience celebrating Shabbat?

### Text 2 | Powering Down

Excerpted & shortened from an article that Jennifer Bleyer wrote for [Tablet Magazine](#) (6/16/11).

When my husband turned to me one day and said he thought we should start observing Shabbat, it was only a little less surprising than if he had said he wanted to start crocheting tea-pot cozies. "Shabbat?" I said "Are you serious?"

My husband, you see, is a proudly secular Jew who thinks that religion amounts to at best harmless superstition and at worst nefarious brainwashing. So, it was somewhat shocking when he came up with this Shabbat idea, although I knew what had inspired it. We'd been feeling that something just wasn't right about answering non-emergency work-related phone calls at 10:30 on a Friday night, or checking email reflexively upon awakening on Saturday. We yearned to carve out a space in our week to shut it all down....

So, here we were, my husband daring to acknowledge a value to Shabbat that has nothing to do with God, and me trying to let go of my internalized Orthodox expectations and accept that Shabbat need not be an all-or-nothing affair.

- ▶ How do members of your family differ in their feelings about Shabbat?

### Text 3 | The Fourth Commandment

Here are the two versions of the fourth commandment to keep/remember Shabbat as they appear in the Torah.

#### Exodus Chapter 20: 8-11 (*Shemot*)

Remember the Shabbat day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work; But the seventh day is the Shabbat of Adonai your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates; For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Adonai blessed the Shabbat day, and made it holy.

ח זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: ט שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֶאכֶתֶךָ: י יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלֶאכֶת אַתָּה | וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ עֹבְדֶיךָ וְאֹמְתֶיךָ וּבַהֲמוֹתֶיךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: יא כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ:

#### Deuteronomy Chapter 5:12-15 (*Devarim*)

Keep the Shabbat day to sanctify it, as Adonai your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; But the seventh day is the Shabbat of Adonai your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is inside your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Adonai your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm; therefore Adonai your God commanded you to keep the Shabbat day.

יא שְׁמֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, לְקַדְּשׁוֹ, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ. יב שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד, וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֶאכֶתֶךָ. יג וְיוֹם, הַשְּׁבִיעִי--שַׁבַּת, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: לא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלֶאכֶת אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ-וּבִתְּךָ וְעֹבְדֶיךָ-וְאֹמְתֶיךָ וְשׂוֹרְךָ וְחֹמְרֶךָ וְכָל-בְּהֵמֹתֶיךָ, וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ--לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ עֹבְדְּךָ וְאֹמְתְּךָ, כַּמֹּד. יד וְזָכַרְתָּ, כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וַיֹּצִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה; עַל-כֵּן, צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לַעֲשׂוֹת, אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת.

- ▶ Compare and contrast these two versions of the fourth commandment.
- ▶ How do the reasons for Shabbat compare in the two accounts?

## Text 4 | The Purpose of Shabbat

Below are shortened excerpts from Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer's, *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home, A Step-by-Step Guidebook with Blessings and Songs, Rituals and Reflections*. (2004), pp. 32-33 and Shelly Fredman's 2010 article in *The New York Jewish Week* entitled, *A Day For Wonder*.

### **Shabbat Surrender** (Wayne Muller, spiritual teacher and author)

The Torah says; "Six days shall you labor and do all your work." (Exodus 20:9) "But [the Rabbis challenged] is it possible for a human being to do all their work in six days? No, rather the Torah means act as if all your work were finished." (*Mechilta* 20:9). Sabbath requires surrender. If we only stop when we are finished with all our work, we will never stop. With every one accomplishment there arises a new responsibility. Every swept floor invites another sweeping, every child bathed invites another bathing. When all life moves in such cycles, what is ever finished? The sun goes around, the moon goes round, the tides and seasons go round, people are born and die, and when are we finished? If we refuse rest until we are finished, we will never rest until we die. Sabbath dissolved the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.

### **I-Thou with Nature** (Rabbi David Hartman, PhD (1931-2013))

The setting of the sun ushers in a unit of time where the flowers of the field stand over and against man as equal members of the universe. I am forbidden to pluck the flower or to do with it as I please; at sunset the flower becomes a "thou" to me with a right to existence regardless of its value for me. I stand silently before nature as before a fellow creature of God and not as a potential object of my control, and I must face the fact that I am a man and not God. The Sabbath aims at healing the human grandiosity of technological society.

### **A Day to Inspire** (Shelly Fredman, teacher and writer)

We are to live, only for one day a week, as if the world were perfect. For some of us, that is a tremendous leap, especially given the real time state of our world. But the idea is to step back, to gain a crucial distance we lack, in order to see more deeply into the nature of things. Then, to use the day itself as an inspiration that infuses the other six days of the week.

- ▶ According to these authors, what is the power and purpose of Shabbat?
- ▶ What choices can we make to help us attain the emotional benefits of Shabbat?

## Text 5 | The Sabbath Day

Passionate and graceful, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's *The Sabbath* (shortened and excerpted below) has been hailed as a classic since its original publication in 1951.

The Sabbath as a day of abstaining from work is not a depreciation but an affirmation of labor, a divine exaltation of its dignity. Thou shalt abstain from labor on the seventh day is a sequel to the command: Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. The duty to work for six days is just as much a part of God's covenant with man as the duty to abstain from work on the seventh day.

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature—is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man's progress than the Sabbath?

The solution of mankind's most vexing problem will not be found in renouncing technical civilization, but in attaining some degree of independence of it. On the Sabbath we live, as it were, independent of technical civilization: we abstain primarily from any activity that aims at remaking or reshaping the things of space. Man's royal privilege to conquer nature is suspended on the seventh day.

The seventh day is the armistice in man's cruel struggle for existence, a truce in all conflicts, personal and social, peace between man and man, man and nature, peace within man; a day on which handling money is considered a desecration, on which man avows his independence of that which is the world's chief idol. The seventh day is the exodus from tension, the liberation of man from his own muddiness, the installation of man as a sovereign in the world of time.

In the tempestuous ocean of time and toil there are islands of stillness where man may enter a harbor and reclaim his dignity. The island is the seventh day, the Sabbath, a day of detachment from things, instruments and practical affairs as well as of attachment to the spirit.

- ▶ In what ways do our lives need an “exodus from tension”?
- ▶ What types of Shabbat breaks might you consider instituting in your family?

## Text 6 | The Rewards of Shabbat

Below are three *aggadot* (Jewish legends/stories) about the rewards of Shabbat.

### Joseph Who Honors Shabbat

“Remember the day of Shabbat” (Exod. 20:8). R. Eleazar ben Hananiah said: Remember it continually from the first day of the week. If a good portion happens to come your way, prepare it for use on Shabbat. (*Mekhilta, Parshat Yitro, BaChodesh 7*)

Joseph-who-honors-the-Shabbat had in his neighborhood a certain Gentile who owned very much property. Soothsayers told him: All the property you have, Joseph-who-honors-the-Sabbath will eventually enjoy. So the Gentile went and sold his property, and with the proceeds he bought a pearl, which he secured in his headdress. As he was crossing a bridge, the wind blew off the headdress and carried it out to sea, and a fish swallowed it. The fish was caught and brought to the marketplace on the eve of a Shabbat at twilight. They asked, “Who will buy a fish at this late hour?” They were told, “Go, take it to Joseph-who-honors-the-Shabbat. He is always eager to buy [fine food in Shabbat’s honor]. So the fish was brought to him, and he bought it. When he cut it to open, he found the pearl in it, which he sold for enough gold denars to fill thirteen upper chambers. A certain venerable elder met him and said: The Shabbat will repay he who lends to it. (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 119a*)

### The Special Shabbat Spice

Caesar asked R. Joshua ben Hananiah: “Why do Shabbat dishes have such a fragrant aroma?” R. Joshua said: “We have a certain seasoning called Shabbat which we put into the dish, and that gives it its fragrant aroma.” Caesar said: “Give us some”. R. Joshua replied: “For him who keeps the Shabbat, it avails; but for him who does not keep the Shabbat, it will not avail.” (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 119a*)

### The Shabbat Glow

“And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it” (Gen. 2:3)—blessed the Shabbat with radiance in a man’s face; hallowed it with radiance in a man’s face. The radiance in a man’s face on the weekdays is not like that on the Shabbat. (*Bereshit (Genesis) Rabbah 11:2*)

- ▶ What do you consider the rewards of Shabbat?
- ▶ How can we create anticipation for Shabbat in our homes?

## Text 7 | A Day of Delight

Excerpted from Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer's, *A Day Apart*: p. 135.

“Call Shabbat a Delight!” (Isaiah 58:13) means a delight for both body and soul, a delight for celestial and earthly realms.” *Talmud Yerushalmi* [Jerusalem Talmud], *Kiddushin* 4:12

What a radical message Isaiah the prophet taught 2500 years ago! God’s holiest day is designed to be a day of pleasure, a different delight—*Oneg*. Shabbat is a return to the Garden of Eden—whose name means literally a “garden of delights”—and at the same time is a foretaste of the world to come. Isaiah’s prophecy is read on Yom Kippur morning and it preaches that God rejects fast days of mere self-affliction and prefers feast days in which we share all we have with the poor. Sanctity does involve distancing ourselves from the mundane, our everyday business, but it does not entail an ascetic denial of physical pleasures and human joys.

- ▶ How can we make Shabbat a day of delight in our homes?

## Text 8 | The Choreography of Shabbat at Home

Adapted from Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer's, *A Day Apart*:

1. *Likrat Shabbat*— Setting the Shabbat Mood
2. *Nerot*— Lighting Candles
3. *Shalom Aleichem*— Welcoming the Angels of Peace
4. *Birkat Banim*— Blessings our Children
5. *Shirim*— Blessings for Spouse
6. *Kiddush*— Sanctifying the Day of Shabbat over Wine
7. *Hallah*— Sharing our Bread and Eating the Meal
8. *D'var Torah*— Shabbat Table Talk
9. *Zemirot*—Singing at the Shabbat Table
10. *Birkat HaMazon*— Gratitude for Nourishment
11. *Oneg Shabbat*— A Day of Delights
12. Shabbat Morning and Afternoon Meals
13. *Havdalab*— Separating the Holy from the Profane



- ▶ What components of Shabbat are attractive to you?

## Text 9 | Blessing of Children

It is traditional to bless your child(ren) as part of Friday night dinner. If it is not to your taste, you can replace with another blessing or make up your own. Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer introduce the blessing in the following way:

Shabbat at home is ... about renewing our deep connection with our family and friends--with our parents, our siblings and our children, and all those with whom we have chosen to share our lives. That is the concept of *Shalom Bayit*, making peace at home, an essential part of the sanctity of the day. It was only natural that Shabbat became a day for blessing one's children and an occasion to offer our blessings to others close to us.

Blessing one's children was ordained in the Torah, when Jacob gave two of his grandchildren [Ephraim and Menashe] and then twelve of his children a personalized blessing. In the Middle Ages it became customary on Yom Kippur eve for parents to bless their children before *Kol Nidrei*. .... In recent centuries, many parents have begun to bless their children on every Shabbat and holiday eve. (*A Day Apart*, p. 49)

### Traditional Blessing

Place your hands on your child and say:

(For a boy or man of any age)	(For a girl or woman of any age)
<b>May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.</b>	<b>May God make you like Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah.</b>
<i>Y'sim-keha Elohim ke'Ephraim v-kehi-Menashe</i>	<i>Y'si-meikh Elohim ke'Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v-Leah.</i>

For all:

**May God bless you and guard you.  
May God's face shine on you  
and be gracious unto you.  
May God's face smile at you  
and grant you peace.**

*Y'va-re-ke'kha Adonai v-yish-m'rekha.  
Ya-er Adonai panav ei-lekha vi-kehun-e-ka.  
Yisa Adonai panav ei-lekha  
v-yasem lekha Shalom.*

- ▶ How do you bless or want to bless your children?
- ▶ How does/could this blessing work for your family?

## Text 10 | Guarding the Shabbat-Classical Shabbat Observances

Below the traditional observances of Shabbat are explained.

Tradition divides Shabbat observance into two parts:

**Zachor**--*Remembering Shabbat* (from Exodus) by performing certain rituals, such as saying a blessing over the wine. Also, certain behaviors are doubly blessed on Shabbat—like eating well, taking naps and marital sex!

**Shamor**--*Guarding Shabbat* (from Deuteronomy) by refraining from actions deemed “work,” such as cooking. The rabbis understood the prohibition against work on Shabbat to mean to refrain from any of the activities that were involved in the building of the *Mishkan*, the ancient sanctuary. The *mishnah* below (*Mishnah Shabbat* 7:2) lists the 39 acts of labor (*melakhot*) for building the *Mishkan* (tabernacle) which are traditionally not permitted on Shabbat.

The chief categories of acts of labor [prohibited on Shabbat] are forty less one: one who sows, ploughs, reaps, binds sheaves, threshes, winnows, selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], grinds, sifts, kneads, bakes, one who shears wool, washes it, beats it, dyes it, spins, weaves, makes two loops, weaves two threads, separates two threads, ties, unties, sews two stitches, tears in order to sew two stitches, one who traps a deer, slaughters it, flays it, salts it, cures its hide, scrapes it, and cuts it up, one who writes two letters, erases two letters in order to write two letters, one who builds, tears down, one who put out a fire, kindles a fire, one who hits with a hammer, one who transports an object from one domain to another (associated with commerce).



- ▶ Describe the difference between the “zachor” and the “shamor” practices.
- ▶ What groupings of labor do you see in the *Mishnah* (last paragraph of text)?
- ▶ What experience of Shabbat does this text offer us?

## Text 11 | Contemporary Approaches to Shabbat Observance

Below are a few contemporary approaches to Shabbat.

### On Shabbat (by Rabbi Arthur Green)

Shabbat is needed now more than ever.... It may be the best gift we have to offer the world. The idea is that one day a week you say no to our new master, the computer. You turn off the modem, look away from the screen and toward those around you, exercising a talent that may become rare in this age: the cultivation of real human community. My bumper-sticker slogan for Shabbat reads “Visit people, not websites.” (from Rabbi Green’s *Judaism’s 10 Best Ideas*, pp. 40-41).

### Rabbi Green’s Ten Commandments of Shabbat

1. Stay at home and spend quality time with family and friends.
2. Celebrate with others, at the table, in the synagogue, or with those who can best share appreciation of God’s world.
3. Study or read something that will edify, challenge, or make you grow.
4. Be alone. Take some time for yourself, review your week, ask yourself where you are in your life.
5. Mark the beginning and the end of this sacred time with candle lighting and kiddush on Friday evening and havdalah on Saturday night.
6. Don’t do anything you have to do for your work life. This includes obligatory reading, fulfilling unwanted social obligations, homework for children, and preparing for work.
7. Don’t spend money. The atmosphere of Shabbat is best protected by a complete separation from commercial culture.
8. Don’t do business. No calls to the broker, no paying bills. Relax; it can all wait.
9. Don’t travel. This refers especially to long distances, involving traffic, airports, hotel check-ins, and other similarly depersonalizing commercial situations. Stay free of encounters in which people are likely to tell you: “Have a nice day!”
10. Don’t use commercial or canned entertainment. Stay in situations where you are face-to-face with those around you, rather than staring at the all powerful screen.

**SabbathManifesto.org** (The Sabbath Manifesto is a creative project, in the spirit of the Slow Food movement, designed to slow down lives in an increasingly hectic world.)

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Avoid technology        | 6. Light candles |
| 2. Connect with loved ones | 7. Drink wine    |
| 3. Nurture your health     | 8. Eat bread     |
| 4. Get outside             | 9. Find silence  |
| 5. Avoid commerce          | 10. Give back    |

- ▶ What is your reaction to these “Ten Commandments” for Shabbat?
- ▶ What makes Shabbat meaningful for you?

## Text 12 | Balance in a Non-Stop World

Adapted from Dasee Berkowitz's article entitled *Work/Life Balance* (from [Kveller.com](http://Kveller.com) on July 24, 2017).

A few months after my son was born, I was at a loss about how to incorporate being a mom with the old, more familiar parts of my life. How could I spend my time so that I could actually enjoy each of my roles? My first step was to recognize that I needed to draw distinctions between my work time, time with my son, date nights with my husband, dates with girlfriends, and dates out by myself.

Lucky for me, there was something from Shabbat celebration that set guidelines to help address my questions. Shabbat recognizes and even blesses distinctions. The final ceremony of Shabbat, *havdalah*, is very clear about this. Over a cup of wine, spices, and a braided candle, we say, "Thank you God for making distinctions, between the holy and the regular, light and darkness, and between Shabbat and the days of the work week."

The Shabbat celebration models for us how to make distinctions. There's a whole list of positive commandments, or things to do in order to enhance the holiness of Shabbat and a whole list of negative commandments, or things we should refrain from doing to keep Shabbat sacred. Using these concepts of Shabbat observance, I created instructions for balancing and managing my time:

### Havdalah— A Beautiful Way to Say Goodbye to Shabbat

Just as we bless the candles, wine and challah to mark the beginning of Shabbat, so too we bless a braided candle, wine and spices to mark the end of Shabbat.

1. **Create rituals upon entering and exiting each new role.** Just like I light candles to mark the beginning of Shabbat, I now turn off my BlackBerry when I come back from work to spend time with my son. Or after I put him down to sleep at night, I have a ritual of reading the newspaper for 20 minutes to nourish and reclaim my "intellectual self."
2. **Initiate positive ways to make each role significant.** When I'm working, I try to devote some time each week to professional development, reading a new article or making a new professional contact. In my role as a mom, I try to initiate a new activity that will keep me attuned to my son's growth, or delight in trying out a new meal with him.
3. **Create negative statements to maintain boundaries.** When I am at work, I try to refrain from doing too many things related to my son (making Shutterfly albums can wait!). And when I'm on a date with my husband, we won't talk about things that stress us out. These negative statements allow us to more easily focus on nourishing our relationship.

- ▶ How do you create distinctions in your life?
- ▶ What rules/limitations around digital usage (screens, phone, etc.) make sense to you?
- ▶ What rules have you established or do you plan to establish for your child(ren)?

## Text 13 | Our Shabbat Plunge

Excerpted from an article that Jennifer Bleyer wrote for *Tablet* on June 16, 2011. This is a continuation of the text that opened this session—an account of one family’s experiment in bringing Shabbat into their lives.

Casting around to envision our own customized day of rest, we quickly found models. In the *New York Times*, Mark Bittman ... popularized the term “secular shabbat” to describe his practice of going tech-free for 24 hours. In last year’s *The Sabbath World*, Judith Shulevitz argued for observing some kind of Sabbath not necessarily because God said so but because it’s socially useful and psychologically beneficial. Advocating for a digital-free Sabbath is all the rage these days; there’s even a National Day of Unplugging, spearheaded by the media-savvy Jewish group Reboot, which recently released a no-irony-intended iPhone app that enables users to announce their unplugged status to their Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

After my husband and I decided to take the plunge, we came to the task of setting our parameters. We agreed that would shut down our phones and computers, really shut them down, none of that wimpy silent crap. We would light Shabbat candles. We would bless and drink wine (as well as gin martinis). We would try not to use money or travel except by foot, but, in an unapologetic departure from Orthodoxy, we would allow cooking, playing music, writing, and even occasional DVD-watching.

Our experiment began around New Year’s. On a Friday afternoon, we called our parents to remind them that we would be unreachable for a day, as if bidding them farewell before a long plane flight. We turned off our phones and computers with the kind of high drama that seemed to warrant its own blessing (“*borei pri ha power button*,” perhaps). Then we sat down and took a deep breath, suddenly becoming aware that we actually had lungs. On Saturday, we ate good food, took a walk, and read. We listened to music carefully, focused on every lyric and instrument. We played and laughed with our young daughter.

And there were corporeal pleasures too. Say what you will about hazelnut gelato or Swedish massage, but is there anything more indulgent than sex in the afternoon? I recalled the popular teaching that it’s a “double mitzvah” to have sex on Shabbat, as both observing the day of rest and having sex with your spouse are *mitzvot*.

But our greatest enjoyment was simply being suspended in a day of being rather than doing. Piled on the couch together as a family without the distractions of interactive technology, divorced from the acquisitive and aspirational impulses that drive most of modern life, we understood in the most visceral way how the deprivations one enforces on the Sabbath enable a kind of liberation. Our attention was reserved for each other. The world was overlaid with glittery stillness. We stepped back from the buzzing of our lives and said, “Here we are.”

Without being able to articulate exactly what holiness is, we agreed that it felt holy. Even my non-believing husband, who did not revise his ideas about God, was convinced. He became nearly fanatical about Shabbat.

It's been nearly six months since we began observing our modified Sabbath. There have been relapses, certainly. We turned on the computer one Saturday to look up guitar chords for a certain song, and the next thing I knew we were absentmindedly scrolling through real-estate listings. On a few occasions, when an airplane flight or work meeting has been unavoidable on a Saturday, we have wondered if it would be so terrible to move Shabbat to Sunday.

But largely we have stuck with it. Mindful of the invocation to enjoy the seventh day with community, we invite family and friends over for Shabbat lunch, labeling the meal "brunch" and serving waffles and omelets, all the more comfortable for the secular. We fantasize, perhaps naively, that once our toddler daughter is allowed TV and computer time, we will continue to enforce Shabbat as a timeout from screen absorption. We explain to others why we don't answer their phone calls on Saturdays and see them respond with equal amounts of amazement, admiration, and envy. Their eyes widen and they inquire in hushed tones, as if we had stumbled upon a stash of an amazing new illicit drug. Really? What's it like?

What we tell them, with nearly evangelical fervor, is this: Shabbat is like exercising. You avoid it. You groan about it. You think of a million other things you would rather do. Finally, you drag yourself to do it and you feel amazing. You vow that you will keep doing it over and over again and become a whole new super healthy glowing you. You approach Oprahish levels of inner calm and rejuvenation. And you may just feel so present that you forget about your plugged-in life altogether. It's a religious ritual that even an atheist can love.

## Next Steps

1. Make challah or other special food or ritual items for Shabbat.
2. Create a “Shabbat Box” with your children that contains the following items: candlesticks, wine goblet, challah cover, etc.
3. Get ready for Shabbat by having your children drop coins into a tzedakah box before lighting candles.
4. Plan a Shabbat meal in your home, saying the blessings over wine and challah. Have family members share their highlights and challenges of their week during this meal. Sing songs at the table.
5. Relax! Shabbat meals should be special but they do not need to be hard! Instead of laboring, pick up prepared food, from pizza to sushi! Make it special with a tablecloth or favorite dessert.
6. Bless your children as part of your Friday night ritual at home, either using the blessing card provided in class or finding/creating your own.
7. Ask your children for a blessing over you too!
8. Try “unplugging” for Shabbat as a way to reconnect with your family.
9. Go on a family nature walk, sing songs or play games with your children.
10. Read stories to your children about Shabbat or related topics. Check the resources section for suggested children’s books on Shabbat and on striving for contentment, a Jewish value central to Shabbat.
11. Find a community in which you can celebrate Shabbat. Attend a Tot Shabbat, or a service for older children.
12. End Shabbat with *havdalah*, a short service that your children are sure to love. Kveller, Interfaith.Family.com, and numerous other websites offer full instructions for conducting a havdalah service. For “Havdalah Made Easy,” download the booklet on interfaithFamily.com.

## Resources

### Children's Books about Shabbat

- Cohen, Deborah Bodin. *The Seventh Day: A Shabbat Story*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2005.
- Glaser, Linda. *Hannah's Way*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2012.
- Hest, Amy. *Friday Nights at Nana's*. Somerville: Candlewick, 2001.
- Jules, Jacqueline. *Once Upon a Shabbos*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 1998.
- Kimmel, Eric. *Joseph and the Sabbath Fish*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2011.
- Kimmelman, Leslie. *The Shabbat Puppy*. New York: Two Lions, 2012.
- Manushkin, Fran. *Many Days. One Shabbat*. Tarrytown: Marshall Cavendish, 2011.
- Marshall, Linda Elovitz. *Grandma Rose's Magic*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2012.
- Newman, Tracy. *Shabbat Is Coming!* Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2014.
- Rauchwerger, Diane. *Dinosaur on Shabbat*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2006.
- Rocklifee, Mara. *Chik Chak Shabbat*. Somerville: Candlewick, 2014.
- Rosenberg, Madelyn. *The Schmutzy Family*. New York: Holiday House, 2012.
- Schwartz, Howard. *Gathering Sparks*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2010.
- Shulimson, Sarene. *Lights Out Shabbat*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2012.
- Simpson, Lesley. *The Shabbat Box*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2001.
- Snyder, Laurel Baxter. *The Pig Who Wanted to Be Kosher*. Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 2010.

### Children's Book about Contentment

#### Toddler

- Bang, Molly. *All of Me! A Book of Thanks*. New York: Scholastic, 2009.
- Recht, Rick. *Thank You for Me*. Jewish World Productions, 2013.
- Teis, Kyra. *Today* [Thank you]. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2015.

#### Preschool/Kindergarten

- Barash, Chris. *One Fine Shabbat*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2016.
- Edwards, Michelle. *Chicken Man*. Montgomery: NewSouth Books, 2009.
- Forest, Heather. *A Big Quiet House*. Atlanta: August House, 2005.
- Schram, Peninnah. *The Apple Tree's Discovery*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2012.
- Souhami, Jessica. *The Little, Little House*. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2005.
- Zemach, Kaethe. *Just Enough and Not Too Much*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2003.

## Early Elementary

- Chapman, Carol. *The Tale of Meshka the Kvetch*. New York: Penguin.
- Clement, Gary. *Just Stay Put*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 1996.
- David, Aubrey. *Kishka for Koppel*. Victoria: Orca Books, 2011.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Someone for Mr. Sussman*. New York: Philomel Books, 2008.
- Stampler, Ann Redisch. *The Wooden Sword*. Park Ridge: Albert Whitman & Company, 2012.

## Adult Books about Shabbat

- Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.
- Mogel, Wendy. "The Blessing of Work: Finding Holy Sparks in Ordinary Chores." In *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*. New York: Penguin Compass, 2001, pp. 133-158.
- Paul, Marilyn. *An Oasis in Time: How a Day of Rest Can Save Your Life*. Emmaus: Rodale Books, 2017.
- Shulevitz, Judith. *The Sabbath World*. New York: Random House, 2011.
- Telushkin, Joseph. "You Shall Rejoice in Your Festival." In *Jewish Wisdom*. New York: William Morrow, 1994, pp. 382-289.
- Zion, Noam Sachs and Fields-Meyer, Shawn. *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home, A Step-by-Step Guidebook with Blessings and Songs, Rituals and Reflections*. Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2004.

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