



*Unplugging
to Connect*

Shabbat



SHABBAT

The stress in our lives seems to be rising with the fast pace of modern living and technological advancements. But worrying is not new to our generation. My father-in-law shares a classic joke: “What does a Jewish telegram say? ‘Start worrying. Letter will follow.’”

Shabbat nurtures calmness of mind and soul.

Shabbat, perhaps more than any other ritual, is regarded as a rare and remarkable gem in the treasure trove of Jewish tradition. Yes, it is something that we have guarded for millennia, but even more than that – it is something that has guarded and shaped the Jewish family. What is so singularly special about Shabbat?

We are taught that on Shabbat we receive what Jewish tradition terms “an extra soul.” This extra soul brings with it a unique capacity for rejuvenating rest, deep joy, openness, and accessing our inner landscape.¹ This capacity is cultivated through the Shabbat choreography and its various rituals. The experiences and the relationships – with self, family, community,

and God – that are nurtured on Shabbat help infuse the rest of the week with this sacred consciousness.

In this unit, we will look at the life-changing lessons of Shabbat that are so essential to living a spiritually connected, joyous, and grateful life.

Some questions to ask yourself as you move through this unit:

- *How do I usually look at the world? Do I see beauty as well as brokenness, and even glimmers of perfection?*
- *How can Shabbat rituals strengthen my relationship with myself, my family, and my community?*
- *What are some of the ideas and choreography of Shabbat that I would like to incorporate into my life in order to focus on what’s most important to me and my family?*
- *How can I bring the gifts of Shabbat to the world around me?*

¹ In Hebrew, this is called *menuchah ha’nefesh*, which literally means calmness of soul.

SHABBAT: THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

As Shabbat approaches, the candles are lit and we begin a much-needed day of spiritual and physical nourishment. Shabbat supports our growth as individuals and as people who are connected to a community and to a nation.

Lori Palatnik, Momentum founding director, writes: “We enter Shabbat one way, and we leave another. When it is over, we have learned and grown, so that we can now give even more to our daily lives and to others.”

We were given the gift of Shabbat at the quintessential moment of the Revelation at Mount Sinai. At that soul-stirring experience, replete with thunder and lightning, trembling earth and resounding blasts of the shofar, God transmitted to us the Ten Commandments. In that divinely given “Top Ten” list of our people’s guiding principles, Shabbat shines as the fourth injunction.

Exodus 20:7–10

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work – you, your son or daughter, your

male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתָּךְ. וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלַאכְתָּךְ אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ עֹבֵד וְאִמְתְּךָ וּבְהֵמָתְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ. כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה ה' אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ.

- According to these verses, what is the rationale for Shabbat? How does that relate to your thinking about Shabbat?
- Who is on the list of those who are not to do work on Shabbat? What is important about avoiding work and resting? How might your rest be affected if those around you also rested? What community could be available to you if you were to slow down and savor Shabbat time?

IT'S ABOUT THE WHOLE WEEK!

Our lives these days are so frenetic throughout the week. How might taking a break one day a week make a difference?

The rabbis noticed that the commandment to keep Shabbat is specifically linked to the previous six days of labor. As it says, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, and the seventh day shall be Shabbat.” In the Midrash (rabbinic interpretations) below, the commentators reveal the connection between Shabbat and the other days of the week.

Avot d’Rabbi Natan 21

Rabbi Eliezer says: Great is work; for just as Israel was commanded to observe Shabbat, so were they commanded to work. As it is written, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work” (Ex. 20:9).

אבות דרבי נתן, נוסח ב', כא

רבי אלעזר אומר: גדולה היא מלאכה. שכשם שנצטוו ישראל על השבת, כך נצטוו על המלאכה, שנאמר “ששת ימים תעבוד, ועשית כל מלאכתך.”

Avot d’Rabbi Natan was composed c. 650–950 C.E. It contains ethical maxims of the sages, along with stories about their behavior.

The Mechilta is a legal commentary, *Midrash Halachah*, on the book of Exodus, c. 135 C.E.

Mechilta, ch. 7

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work” (Ex. 20:9). But is it possible for a human being to do all her work in six days? It simply means: Rest on Shabbat as *if* all your work were done. Another interpretation: Rest even from the thought of labor, as the prophet Isaiah says (58:13–14), “If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath...then you will delight in God.”

מכילתא פרשת בחודש פרשה ז'

ששת ימים תעבוד. וכי איפשר לו לאדם לעשות מלאכתו בששת ימים אלא שבות כאלו מלאכתך עשויה. דבר אחר שבות ממחשבת עבודה ואומר ישעיה נ"ח אם תשיב משבת רגליך ואומר שם אז תתענג על ה':

- According to these texts, what is the relationship and synergy between the six weekdays and Shabbat? Where and how do you feel a synergy between work and rest?
- The second Midrash tells us that we need to make a consciousness shift on Shabbat, beyond just physically resting from our labor: we must set aside thoughts of our weekday work. What helps you switch from constantly thinking about the work that you need to do?
- What could a consciousness shift look like in your own life? How could it affect your entire week, rather than just the one day of Shabbat?

FOCUSING ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US

The Hebrew word for the “not-doing” of Shabbat is *menuchah*, usually translated as “rest.”

The great commentator Rashi explains that *menuchah* was – paradoxically – an essential element in the otherwise very active creation of the world. What is so special about “not-doing”? How is it different from leisure time or laziness?

Rashi, commentary on Genesis 2:2

Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (France, 1040-1105), was a great commentator on the Bible and Talmud.

What did the world lack [before the seventh day]? Rejuvenating rest (*menuchah*)! When Shabbat came, rejuvenating rest came; the work [of Creation] was completed and finished.

מה היה העולם חסר? מנוחה, באת שבת באת מנוחה, כלתה ונגמרה המלאכה.

- Rashi says that the world was not completed until it included *menuchah*. What is so essential about rest? Is true rest just the absence of work?
- In what way do you think the world around you needs rejuvenating rest?

Writing Exercise

Think about a time when you experienced truly rejuvenating rest. What was that experience like? In what ways did it differ from leisure time

or doing nothing? How did your experience of rest impact you at the moment and in your activities after it?

Take a few minutes to quietly reflect, writing your thoughts about Shabbat on the reflection chart at the end of this section.

In the following excerpt, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks describes the rejuvenating rest of Shabbat as a revolutionary idea that is an absolute key to Jewish values and life.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks was a rabbi and Jewish leader who served as the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the United Kingdom for twenty-two years.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Renewable Energy: Beshalach 5776*

The Greeks could not understand the seventh day, Shabbat, as itself part of the work of creation. What is creative about resting? What do we achieve by not making, not working, not inventing? The idea seems to make no sense at all.

Indeed we have the independent testimony of the Greek writers of that period, that one of the things they ridiculed in Judaism was Shabbat. One day in seven Jews do not work, they said, because they are lazy. The idea that the day itself might have independent value was apparently beyond their comprehension. Oddly enough, within a very short period of time, the empire of Alexander the Great began to crumble, just as had the earlier city-state of Athens that gave rise to some of the greatest thinkers and writers in history. Civilizations, like individuals, can suffer

from burnout. It's what happens when you don't have a day of rest written into your schedule....

Shabbat... is one of the greatest institutions the world has ever known... What Shabbat did and still does is to create space within our lives and within society as a whole in which we are truly free. Free from the pressures of work; free from the demands of ruthless employers; free from the siren calls of a consumer society urging us to spend our way to happiness; free to be ourselves in the company of those we love. Somehow this one day has renewed its meaning in generation after generation, despite the most profound economic and industrial change. In Moses' day it meant freedom from slavery to Pharaoh. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century it meant freedom from sweatshop working conditions of long hours for little pay. In ours, it means freedom from emails, smartphones and the demands of 24/7 availability.

The human spirit needs time to breathe, to inhale, to grow. The first rule in time management is to distinguish between matters that are important, and those that are merely urgent. Under pressure, the things that are important but not urgent tend to get crowded out. Yet these are often what matter most to our happiness and sense of a life well lived. Shabbat is time dedicated to the things that are important but not urgent: family, friends, community, a sense of sanctity, prayer in which

we thank God for the good things in our life, and Torah reading in which we retell the long, dramatic story of our people and our journey. Shabbat is when we celebrate *shalom bayit* – the peace that comes from love and lives in the home blessed by the *Shekhinah*, the presence of God you can almost feel in the candlelight, the wine and the special bread. This is a beauty created not by Michelangelo or Leonardo but by each of us: a serene island of time in the midst of the often-raging sea of a restless world.

Finding Time for What Is Important

Rabbi Sacks says that Shabbat helps us focus on matters that are important, even if they are not urgent. Fill in the chart below² and consider how you usually spend your time, and how you can make time for the things in life that are important even if they are not urgent.

- What are some important issues for you in terms of yourself, your family, and your community?
- Think about what you have done over the past week, and complete the table below. Where would each of these tasks fit in to this table?
- What are some of the things you would include as “important and not urgent”? When do you make time for those things? How could Shabbat help you make time for the things in your life that are important but not urgent?

² For more on this, see the excellent book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Stephen Covey.

	Important consider: self, family, community	Not Important
Urgent		
Not Urgent		

CONNECTING TO THE GOOD AROUND AND INSIDE US

Research has shown that people are more likely to act based on their fear of negative experiences than on their desire for positive experiences. Two Israeli behavioral economists, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, showed in a set of experiments that when people make decisions, they give more weight to possible losses than possible gains. In 2002, Kahneman shared the Nobel Prize in Economics for this work.³

Can we see Kahneman and Tversky's findings play out in our own lives? Do we spend more time worrying about what's wrong – with our our jobs, our marriages, our children, our homes – than focusing on what is actually overwhelmingly right? Building on the good is powerful, especially in times of challenge. To do this, we need to overcome our tendencies to focus on problems and instead deliberately notice what's going well in our lives.

Shabbat consciousness helps us pivot away from focusing on the negative, to truly appreciating the good that surrounds us every day.

Shabbat is a taste of heaven on earth. The Talmud⁴ tells us that Shabbat is one-sixtieth of that “heaven on earth” of our most idyllic dreams.

Shabbat is a time when individuals, families, and communities gather to co-create the conditions for relishing a taste of this much-anticipated state of being. We turn away from all our workaday business to be more present. When visiting the theater, we turn everything off and focus on the show. So it is when we

unplug on Shabbat in order to connect and focus on what's already good and delightful in front of us right now.

In the children's ward at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, a quote from Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach hangs on the wall. It reads, “When you put your children to bed at night, tell them how wonderful they are; and when they wake up in the morning, tell them how wonderful the world is.”

Babylonian Talmud, *Beitzah 16a*

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said, “The Holy One, blessed be He, gives humans an additional soul on the eve of Shabbat, and at the end of Shabbat He takes it back.”

דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש נשמה יתירה נותן הקדוש ברוך הוא
באדם ערב שבת ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו.

- *What might an “additional soul” feel like for you? If there is an “additional soul” on Shabbat, could it also impact the rest of the week? If so, how?*
- *The classic Jewish commentator Rashi explains that the additional soul that we receive on Shabbat is “a greater ability for rest and joy, an openness to well-being, and an added capacity to healthfully eat and drink.” Which of these do you find challenging? Whats gets in your way of doing it? How might you work through it?*

³ Unfortunately, Amos Tversky had already passed away.

⁴ Brachot 57b.

THE HOME FRONT

Amidst a culture suffering from different ailments, how might you support the well-being of your family? Momentum's work with parents stems from evidence that the home has powerful leverage on its members' spiritual and emotional wellness. It's not a new idea; the blessing following the verse of the *Shema* already guides us to "teach your children when you sit at home." Our children's core identity is created at home. Their sense of self, their habits, their mental models, where they feel belonging and develop relationships to the larger Jewish family, is rooted in the home. For us, too, when our home is a place of connection and meaning, it can nurture our hearts and shield us from the isolation of contemporary life.

Jewish tradition has a tool kit of accessible spiritual technology for home celebrations – daily, weekly, and annual strategies that help us infuse our lives with meaning. For example, there are daily practices related to how we wake up⁵ and how we go to sleep,⁶ and how we begin and end our meals.⁷ There are practices that help us experience holidays not simply as a pause from the hustle of life; they are actual holy days that renew our soul through

connection with loved ones, family stories, and shared memories.

Shabbat is one of the strongest tools in this tool kit of Jewish spiritual technology. "Call Shabbat a Delight!" said the prophet Isaiah. There's a full choreography for turning Shabbat into a sensual and spiritual delight, called *oneg* in Hebrew. While the holiness of the day involves distancing ourselves from everyday, mundane business, it is to be done in ways that engage us with physical and spiritual pleasures. Shabbat is a journey that can give us a taste of our inner Garden of Eden. May we be blessed to visit this inner landscape, and from there move to taking action that brings holiness into our outside endeavors.

The choreography of Shabbat takes some preparation. Experimenting with it is a great way to explore the journey, which can lead you to new inner vistas. Remember, "it's not all or nothing."

- *How might you bring this potent delight to your children?*
- *If you were to start with what you are most drawn to and what will fit your family, what might that be?*

5 See *The Dawn of a New Day*, p. 157.

6 See activities for families with young children, p. 201.

7 See *Blessings for Food*, pp. 248–249.

Reflect on the choreography of Shabbat at home⁸ and consider which components are attractive to you:

1. Setting the Shabbat mood
2. Lighting candles
3. Welcoming the Shabbat
4. Blessing our children
5. Acknowledging our spouse
6. Sanctifying the day of Shabbat over wine
7. Sharing our bread and eating a meal
8. Shabbat table talk
9. Singing at the Shabbat table
10. Gratitude for nourishment
11. Delights
12. Shabbat morning and afternoon meals
13. Separating the holy from the mundane

⁸ Adapted from Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields Meyer's *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home*, a wonderful resource for families which can be ordered at <http://www.haggadahsrus.com/Shabbat.html>.

BLESSING OUR CHILDREN

The Blessing of the Children ritual on Friday night is one of Shabbat's most touching and beautiful customs. Blessing our children is a powerful tool for focusing on the things that we love and value about them, especially after a week in which we may have paid more attention to their shortcomings and areas for improvement.

Add to the traditional blessing a personalized blessing, sharing bright spots you've observed over the course of the week in your children. Make it your practice all week long to gather observations about the wonderful nature of your children, their efforts and their actions, so that you can include your observations as part of your personalized blessing to them. You can offer the blessing after candle lighting, before Kiddush, or, if your children are away, you can even offer the blessing by phone before Shabbat or at the Shabbat table virtually.

For a video guide on how to bless your children, do a search for a video of "How to say a Jewish blessing over children."

The words of the blessing we give our children come from the Priestly Blessing (Num. 6:24–26). They are preceded by an introduction that differs according to gender.

Place your hands on your child and recite the following:

For boys

*Yesimchah
Elohim k'Efrayim
v'chiMenashe.*

May you be like
Ephraim and
Menashe.

יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם
וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה.

For girls

*Yesimech Elohim
k'Sara, Rivka, Rachel,
v'Leah.*

May you be like Sarah,
Rebecca, Rachel, and
Leah.

יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה רִבְקָה
רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

Continue here

Yevarechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha
May God bless you and guard you

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

Ya-er Adonai panav elecha v'y'chuneka
May God show you favor and be gracious to
you

יֵאָר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ

*Yisa Adonai panav elecha v'yasem lecha
shalom*
May God show you kindness and grant you
peace

יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

WHAT'S IN A BLESSING?

Consider, as a group, the concept of blessing, being blessed, and being a blessing

- God tells Abraham, “You will be blessed” and “All the families of the earth shall find blessing through you.” Is there a relationship between being blessed and being a blessing to others?
- Partner with another sister and talk with each other about what blessing you would wish for. Take turns offering each other a blessing. Notice what it feels like to give a blessing and what it feels like to receive a blessing. How is the space between you both affected?
- If you give a blessing to your child, consider the following: How does this impact your child? How does it affect you? How does it affect the relationship between the two of you? For you, what might giving a blessing to your child be about? How do you bless or want to bless your children?



LEARN WITH YOUR SISTER

Spotlight on Israel: A Year of Reflection

Where in our lives, beyond the weekly practice, could the notion of rejuvenating rest and disconnecting in order to connect be helpful?

Israelis are leveraging this concept in many new ways.

The idea of a sabbatical year is well-known in the world of academia. It is when academics remove themselves from their usual work in order to gain fresh insights and inspiration.

This concept of a sabbatical year comes directly from the Torah, which tells us to do a remarkable thing every seven years in the Land of Israel: to observe a sabbatical year, *shmita*. The *shmita* year offers a rest to the land and to the people who work it. We are called to refrain from planting, pruning, plowing, harvesting, and any other form of agricultural work. All seventh-year produce becomes ownerless, and free for all people to take and enjoy equitably.

Another aspect of this seventh year is forgiving loans from one Jew to another. It is a remarkable national ritual which has been revived in the modern State of Israel since our people's return.

And yet today Israel is no longer an agricultural society. Recently, a group of Israelis came together to consider how to restore the meaning of the *shmita* year when most Israelis are not farmers. They founded the Israel *Shmita*

Initiative, an effort to bring the message and meaning of the seventh year to modern Israeli society. They frame it as a time of personal reflection, learning, social involvement, and environmental responsibility in Israel.

Some of the projects they instituted for the 2015 *shmita* year were:

- An economic recovery program to help Israeli families in severe financial need, of which debt forgiveness is the first step;
- Group study sessions across the spectrum of the Israeli population;
- Musical evenings in community gardens;
- Programs where Israelis shared their talents with one another for free;
- A traveling Israeli *shmita sukkah* with a free café serving Israeli fruits and vegetables, a reading and lending library, a recycling center, and an invitation to stop for a collective moment and remind ourselves of the truly important things in our lives, while dreaming of ways to repair the world and our communities.

Watch these videos about the Initiative:

<http://bit.ly/2rxMXe9>

<http://bit.ly/2s0KLxg>



Israel Shmita Initiative Sukkah

• The seventh year is called both “Shabbat of the Land,” a “letting go” of farming activity, and shmita, a “letting go” of ownership. Where in your life might the concept of letting go be especially rejuvenating? What other ideas related to the shmita year resonate with you?

• How could you incorporate some of these ideas into your life?

• What kind of project would you want to be involved in that incorporates some of the ideas of the shmita year? With whom might you collaborate?

LEARN WITH YOUR SISTER

Human Beings and Human Doings

By Adrienne Gold Davis



Adrienne Gold Davis

When I was a young girl, my mother had a rule that we had to come in the house from playing outside (an archaic custom now, but back then it was paradise) when the lights came on.

My friends, however, had a later come-home time; and so, in the time between entering my house and an hour later when I knew my friends were going in, I was paralyzed with fear. Fear that something would happen to the balance of

relationships we shared. Fear that “everything would change” and I would be left behind the next day! Fear that new allegiances would be forged without my say-so... my manipulations. Fear that the next day I would be outside of the action. Isolated. Obsolete. I think I invented the concept of FOMO. I ached from it.

In my teen years I felt the same way about every party I went to, every boy I dated, every club I frequented. There was always a nagging sensation that the “real party” was happening elsewhere, that the real boy of my dreams was dating someone else... that the real “action” was somewhere else. And so I went from place to place, from boy to boy, convinced, to paraphrase Groucho Marx, that I didn’t want to be part of any club that would let me be a member. My mind was like that of a chess master. I would anticipate every conceivable outcome, and pre-plan for it: If you say this, I will say that; and if you then say that, I will have a response ready. I will protect myself from all inevitabilities that will render me vulnerable, out of control, and not appearing at my best. I even avoided activities I didn’t excel in. God forbid anyone should see me as mediocre.

And then came Shabbat.

When I learned the concept of *being* rather than *doing*, disconnecting in order to connect, I had to face my deep convictions that the world would cease to turn without my agitation, and that I was a human doing and not a human being.

In short, I was terrified of twenty-five hours of disconnection. How would life go on? Who would I be in the face of it?

I started slowly.

I went Shabbat mornings to a learner's service in a synagogue basement. My favorite part was the extensive *kiddush* that followed, the social connections, and the lunches at people's homes. Before I knew it, the day was almost over. At 3:00 pm, as we stepped away from the lunch table filled with food and wisdom and connection, I knew that in only a few short hours I could be back in the rat race, searching for the ultimate piece of cheese!

Then we stopped driving. We still used our phones and our televisions, still cooked and did other forms of work – but we stopped driving. That meant there was not much to do except go to the park in the afternoon, play the board games and card games my children loved so much and which we never played during the week, and sometimes even take an afternoon nap together!

As the years progressed and we grew accustomed to the “pause that refreshes,” we added more and more ritual to our Shabbat experiences. In the process I discovered something profound.

Apparently, I do not run the world. Apparently, it turns quite well on its own without my agitation. Apparently, I have a wealth of serenity and quiet inside myself that I had never accessed. I stopped looking over my shoulder to see who

was coming through the door. I learned to be in the moment: to speak to a person as if there were no one else in the world but them to focus upon, to cherish quiet, and to understand with bone-deep clarity that all I thought I was controlling was a delusion and that life is not a chess game. Its greatness and joy is not to be found in the winning or losing illusion, but in the person you are in the face of whatever “moves” life gives you.

I was free in a way I had never been. The Midrash on Song of Songs (5:2) says: “Open up for me an opening like the eye of a needle and in turn I will enlarge it to be an opening through which wagons can enter.” This means that we begin the process, and when we do, God does the rest of the work for us. Sometimes it is the fear of being called a hypocrite that prevents us from taking the first steps toward this tremendous gift we keep rejecting. It is not hypocrisy to believe in a concept even if you are not able to fully integrate it into your life. That is called being human!

In this age of endless connectivity and virtually no connection, we are desperately in need of the gift of Shabbat. The digital world feeds our delusions of control. Those delusions keep us imprisoned in our egos and prevent us from accessing the utter joy of vulnerability. Imagine the slave who was told, “You get one full day off to rest, to study, to connect to your family.” Would he say “Naah... don't wanna miss anything”?

TRY IT OUT

PRACTICAL TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Ideas for bringing the values of Shabbat into your family life

For Yourself or with a Partner

- Check out the podcasts, videos, and articles on MomentumUnlimited.org.
- Select a phrase that inspires you, write it on a card, and place it where you'll see it. Repeat the phrase to yourself a few times each morning with enthusiasm. Phrases you could consider:
 - Shabbat affects my full week
 - Rejuvenating rest calms my mind and soul
 - See good, say good

For Families with Children of All Ages

- Together with your children, create your own Shabbat family ritual items. This experience deepens their connection to the traditions of Shabbat. Joining their very own artistic creations together with other family ritual items honors your child's role and elevates their participation in the celebration.
- The crafts below are most fitting for young children. With older children, ritual items could be created with clay, painting, ceramics or glass, or the like.

Create a place mat to catch the Shabbat candle drippings

- Provide your child's favorite art materials: paint, tissue and construction paper, stamps and stamp pads, etc.
- Decorate a piece of construction paper with them, adding Shabbat-themed colors and shapes if you like.
- When the artwork is dry, cover with clear contact paper to make it wax-proof.
- Place under your Shabbat candles to catch wax drippings.

Decorate Shabbat candleholders

Collect the following materials: glass tea light holders, craft jewels, paint pens, white craft glue, and tea light candles. Then get creative as you work together to decorate your new Shabbat candleholders, using the paint pens and jewels to embellish.

Once the paints and glue are dry, you will have a new, personalized set of candlesticks for Shabbat!

Design your own Kiddush cups

Using tissue paper, children can create their own colorful Kiddush cups. Collect plastic wine cups (can be purchased at a party store),

multicolored tissue paper, scissors, clear or white school glue, painter's tape, and a clean paintbrush.

- Cover the top 1-inch of the cup with painter's tape.
- Work together with your child to cut or tear the tissue paper into small pieces, about 1 inch around. Depending on their age, they can do more/less unassisted.
- Once the tissue paper is cut, children can cover sections first with glue and then place pieces of tissue on top.
- After the cup is covered, decoupage the top of the tissue with the glue.
- Once dry, remove the painter's tape for a colorful and usable "stained glass" style Kiddush cup.
- Your children can learn about the Shabbat dinner blessings from a fun, karaoke-style video, "Shabbat Dinner (Learn the Blessings!)," produced by Moishe House Rocks. A guest comes to dinner at Moishe House and gets a surprising challenge: Can he lead the Shabbat dinner guests in four ritual blessings?! <https://bit.ly/2HwMHTh>.

Infusing Shabbat into your week doesn't need to be difficult! There are simple actions you can take to make it a joyful day that works for you:

Enjoy delicious food

For some families, this means cooking for hours and serving multiple courses on beautiful china dishes; for others, it might mean an outdoor picnic, bringing in dinner from their favorite takeout place, or doing something different, like breakfast for dinner. Think about what a special meal could look like for you and your family: remember, "special" doesn't need to mean "stress!"

Celebrate being together

Some families will sing and dance around the Shabbat table together, while others will play games or read books aloud. Think about how you can set aside a special time to be together as a family: What do you enjoy doing? How can you do something fun and meaningful to set Shabbat apart from the rest of the week?

Take time to learn

Shabbat is when the Jewish people have traditionally come together to pray and learn. Think about how you could spend some time with your children learning about and

discussing a Jewish teaching. For little ones, do they have a favorite book from PJ Library that they love talking about? With your older children, consider taking a moment to read an idea from the week's Torah portion and discussing its relevance to your lives. There are many online resources available, including Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' "Covenant & Conversation: Family Edition": <https://bit.ly/2QfhSVT>.

For more ideas on how to integrate Shabbat into your family's life, check out Kveller.com, a website full of Jewish parenting tips.

For Families with Young Children

- To help young children understand the traditions and values of Shabbat, watch Shalom Sesame's video, "Shabbat Shalom Grover!," together. Kids will discover what Shabbat is all about along with Grover, as he experiences the preparations and celebrations with his friend Shoshanna.
- As you prepare for Shabbat, bake challah together with your children. The process of making the dough, watching it rise, braiding it into shape, and ultimately eating it is a wonderful learning and bonding experience. Read *It's Challah Time!* by Latifa Berry Kropf to get you started.
- If you have older preschool and elementary aged children, read the PJ Library book, *Lights Out Shabbat*, by Sarene Shulimson. The book explores the values of blessings and separating the sacred from the ordinary. PJ Library recommends following your reading with these suggested questions:
 - When we notice something we are thankful for, Jewish tradition teaches us to recite a blessing. What are the things that make you thankful and might cause you to say a blessing?
 - What do the words *holy* or *special* mean to you?
 - When something is special, how do we treat it?
- Consider these ideas for your family, adapted from PJ Library's classroom activities, to honor the sacredness of Shabbat:
 - Create a photo album or slideshow of special moments spent together on the weekend or preparing for Shabbat at home.
 - Create a sacred space within your home; a place to think or quietly talk about feelings.



- Take a family nature walk and point out things for which each of you are thankful.

For Families with Older Children

Consider which activities can engage your tweens and teens

- Periodically, plan a “nature Shabbat” and take time to be outdoors together, playing games together and appreciating the glory of Creation.
- Plan to have a family Shabbat activity together and rotate who in the family will choose and lead the planning. It could be a meal, a board game, a wrestling activity, reading aloud, looking at old family photos, sharing family stories, or other things that are a favorite for a family member.
- Listen to Jewish music as you prepare for Shabbat. Tune into JewishRockRadio.com, or invite your teens to share Jewish music or other music with words that they find especially uplifting. Ask them to play a favorite song for you, and talk about why it’s a favorite.
- Find or decorate a jar and designate it as a gratitude-jar. Select a spot for it in your home, perhaps next to where you light Shabbat candles. Invite each family member to write three slips of paper with an appreciation and place them in the jar each weekday. During a Shabbat meal, take turns reading the notes.
- Host a gathering in which individuals and small groups – young and old – share a story, song, teaching, magic trick, poem, painting, or the like. Make it a joyful time for appreciating each other and the gifts we’ve been given.
- Choose a family *tzedakah* (justice) project. Before lighting Shabbat candles, there’s a tradition to give money to a cause. You may want to keep a *tzedakah* box by your Shabbat candles to gather your offerings. Every few months you can jointly change your family priority for how you contribute to *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.
- Schedule a family meeting to plan meaningful Shabbat family time. Allow time for each person to suggest ideas. Together consider how to protect some family time from work, homework, athletics, chores, and devices taking over the whole weekend. If fitting for your family, invite one of the teens or tweens to facilitate the meeting. If so, talk through the plan with them before the meeting.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

In this session, we explore the value of Shabbat

The guiding questions in this unit are:

- *How do I usually look at the world? Do I see brokenness or glimmers of perfection? How can Shabbat help me focus on all the good that exists around me?*
- *How can the rituals of Shabbat strengthen my relationships with my family and community? How can I bring the gifts of Shabbat to the world around me?*
- *What are some of the ideas and practices of Shabbat that I would like to incorporate into my life?*

Meaningful Vocabulary

<i>menuchah</i>	מנוחה	rejuvenating rest
<i>oneg</i>	ענג	delight or pleasure
<i>shmita</i>	שמיטה	the sabbatical year of the earth's rejuvenating

Facilitating the Session

1. Seek Participant Input

Well before the session, invite a few sisters to take a small role in leading it. For example:

- Planning an activity to accompany the study session (see **Extra! Program Ideas**)
- Hosting the event
- Co-facilitating **Soul Sparks** discussions
- Sharing a memory about Shabbat, perhaps from childhood

Involving participants helps them take ownership over their learning, and prepares them to take the lead in their family and community!

2. Choose Your Session Activities (in advance)

You know what will best engage your participants, and we encourage you to tailor the session to their interests and needs. **Soul Sparks** activities carry a particular power, and we encourage you to include them where possible!

3. Prep Your Space

Before the session begins, prepare the room, for example, by arranging the space or seating to support connection.

4. Welcome and Warm-Up

Make a ritual of transitioning your participants from their hectic, everyday lives to your safe space of learning and growth. Consider engaging your sisters in a short stretching exercise, or have them focus on taking deep, relaxing breaths. Invite a few women to share how they brought home the learning from the previous session.

Reminder! Sisterhood Safe Space

Remind everyone that they are in the Sisterhood Safe Space of confidentiality and compassionate listening, free of judgment and unsolicited advice.

5. Intro and Inspiration

Ask the women to share with the group three words that they associate with Shabbat. After everyone has shared, think together about the themes, longings, and conflicts that emerged. Make a note for yourself about which of these themes you can explore later in this session, and which themes you would like to follow up on in future meetings.

Alternatively, if you have more time, consider inviting women to share a memory about Shabbat or to share a question they have about *Shabbat*. Eliciting questions allows you to address some of them during the session.

6. Soul Sparks Activities

There are different activities you can try that will encourage learning and growth; we suggest choosing one or two for your session. Below are some of our favorites:

Focusing on What's Important to Us (p. 44)

What is so important about rejuvenating rest; in Hebrew, *menuchah*? The great Jewish commentator Rashi tells us that on the seventh day, God created rejuvenating rest. What does this mean? Isn't rest just the absence of doing? Ask participants to think of a time when they experienced true rest, and ask for volunteers to share with the group. Read together Rabbi Sacks' article about the significance of Shabbat rest (p.44-45), and how it helps our human spirit

“breathe, inhale, and grow,” and find time for those things that are important but not urgent.

Give the women some time to fill out the “Finding Time for What Is Important” chart (p. 46). Ask them to consider what is important to them – even if it is not urgent – in terms of themselves, their families, their communities, and Israel. Then ask them to think about their activities from the past week or so, and fill them in the appropriate quadrant of the chart. Chances are that most people will have filled the quadrants in the “urgent” categories, but may not have as many entries in the “important but not urgent” category.

Talk about how Shabbat can free us from constant urgency so that we can find time for the things that matter dearly but are not urgent. Give the women some extra time to think deeply about the “important but not urgent” matters they would like to attend to, and what practices – including Shabbat – they can use to make time for what matters. Ask how the women can help each other be accountable to grow in the practice of attending to what is “important but not urgent.”

The Home Front (pp. 48–49)

Participants will be familiar with some, but likely not all, aspects of the choreography of Shabbat. Your time together can be an opportunity for women to share with each other Shabbat experiences they've discovered within this Shabbat choreography, and what they would

like to introduce into their families. The book, *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home*, by Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer, is one of many that unpack this choreography for contemporary readers.

Prepare to share a bit about various aspects of Shabbat, and engage participants in a conversation about a time in which they experienced one of these aspects. Have them consider which aspect or element they might want to bring into their own homes. No matter anyone's existing practices, listening to each other's ideas can encourage sisters to explore ways to deepen their family's Shabbat experience. Encourage them to consider how they might help each other to do so.

Blessing Our Children (p. 50)

A beautiful custom in many Jewish families is for the parents to bless their children on Friday night. Teach the women how to say the traditional blessing. Give them enough time to practice, until they feel confident. A lovely custom is to add a personal message after a parent gives the traditional blessing. Women can practice by offering each other both the words of the traditional blessing and a personal addition. Some parents have a practice during the week to look for, and take note of, their child's good points, thoughtful actions, and efforts, and then to mention them in their personalized blessing after the traditional words.

7. Reflection and Closing

Recall the main ideas explored in the session, and create an opportunity for reflection.

Reflection Suggestion: Ask participants to reflect on the following: "What is one takeaway

you'll be going home with after our session today?" or "A Shabbat idea or practice that I would like to begin with my family is."

Invite sisters to respond to the prompt by writing, drawing, or thinking silently. After individual reflection time, you might ask them to partner with one other participant and share their reflections, which can be followed with voluntary group sharing.

Direct the women's attention to the "**Try It Out: Practical Tips and Resources for Families**" section (pp. 56–59). These suggestions will help them bring home to their families the learning they have done today, in fun and interesting ways. Encourage them to choose at least one thing they will do with their families and to report on how it went at the next session. Give a brief overview of the rest of the unit.

Provide participants with the opportunity to schedule a time with their learning partner before they leave the session today (see "**Learn With Your Sister**", pp. 52–55). Let the women know when you'll be meeting again and what theme will be explored. Encourage them to continue to share with each other how they plan to bring the ideas and practices of Shabbat into their lives.

Extra! Program Ideas

To enhance your session, you may want to consider one of the activities below:

- An art project illustrating the Blessing of the Children
- A Shabbat cooking demonstration
- A meditation session
- A talk by a psychologist about how to open ourselves up to seeing the good in the world



Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.



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