

Sabbath

Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word Shabbat, meaning rest.

“Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwelling places.” Leviticus 23:3

Sabbath in Jewish tradition has been celebrated from sundown on Friday night to sundown on Saturday night. Christians may decide to celebrate Sabbath from sundown on Saturday night to sundown on Sunday night.

There are symbols that help us say “hello” to Shabbat. Just before sundown, the family gathers. This prayer as a family may be done right before eating dinner.

What you will need:

2 white candles

2 loaves of bread (challah is a traditional Sabbath bread) - 2 loaves are used to represent the double portion given to us by God

Napkin or cloth to cover the bread - this cloth is symbolic of the dew that was around the camp when the Israelites woke up in the desert and were reminded again that God does provide.

Grape juice or wine

Woman (Mother or other leader): Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us through faith in Jesus the Messiah, the Light of the world, and in his name we kindle the Sabbath lights.

Woman (Mother or other leader) says the following blessings while lighting the candles:

Creation (lighting the first candle): This candle represents creation. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth light out of darkness.

Redemption (lighting the second candle): This candle represents redemption. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”

(More candles may be used if daughters or other women would also like to light candles along with these blessings.)

Parent’s Blessing (Father or other leader places their hands on the child’s head, blesses the child): Bless your children individually according to their gifts and abilities.

For a large or mixed group of children, the Aaronic Benediction may be used.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you: the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 ESV)

Father (or leader) recites the Kiddush over the cup of wine/grape juice: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Either one cup of wine/grape juice is passed and each family member drinks or you can give each person their own cup to drink.

Beginning with the leader, each person in turn repeats a blessing over the bread: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Pass the challah bread (or other bread) and each person breaks off a piece.

Eat dinner or continue on with your activities for the evening.

Shabbat Shalom! - May you be restored to wholeness on the blessed Sabbath!

Saturday (or Sunday evening)

We also have symbols that help us say “goodbye” to Sabbath. Sabbath ends on Saturday (or Sunday) night as soon as we can see at least three stars in the sky.

What you will need:

Havdalah candle - pair of white candles twisted together - havdalah means separation and the twisted candles are symbolic of linking creation and redemption. It can also be symbolic of our joining together in the Messiah and in His Shabbat and Festivals.

Spice box - small jar or box containing fragrant spice - whole cloves will work - or cloves and cinnamon - reminds us of the sweetness of Sabbath, a little of which we carry over into the new week

Wine or grape juice

Small glass placed in a bowl

Bible

Mother (or other parent) says farewell prayer: O God, the beloved Sabbath is departing. We pray your purposes in our lives would be accomplished, that in the new week to come we would somehow be changed by the work of your Spirit, that you would be active in us, ever sanctifying our desires and Christ-shaping our hearts.

Light the wicks on the twisted candle and let one of the children hold it.

Another child holds the spice box.

Read Scripture together. Some suggestions are John 1:1-17 or Luke 23:54 to Luke 24:1-8

Place a small glass in a bowl. Pour wine (or grape juice) into the glass until it overflows as a visual sign of the fullness and completion of the week. As the wine spills, Sabbath departs.

All People Together: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Psalm 23:5

Father (or other leader) says a prayer: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the week that was, for the day that is, and for the week that is yet to come. Knowing that as You have been faithful, so are You faithful, and so will You be faithful forevermore. Amen.

The twisted candle is extinguished by dipping the wick in the spilled wine.

Leader: As the Sabbath departs, its sweet scent lingers. The fragrance of Jesus' death and resurrection will carry you through the pressures of life until, "I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3).

Pass the spice box. Take a deep breath and remember the sweetness of Sabbath. Begin the new week with joy.

Resources

Celebrating Biblical Feasts. Martha Zimmerman.

Walk with Y'shua Through the Jewish Year. Janie-sue Wertheim and Kathy Shapiro.

Feasts of the Bible. Dr. Sam Nadle.

Messianic Shabbat Siddur. Jeremiah Greenberg

Every Moment Holy. Douglas Kaine McKelvey