



Creating a Sense of Shabbat

Submitted by Shanti Finney-Krigel

Subject Area

Understanding the practices that help children and their families participate meaningfully in Shabbat meals and community worship.

Background

Beit Sefer Chadash operates a K-6 community Sunday school attended not only by students from member families of Nevei Kodesh, but also from unaffiliated or interfaith families. Some of these families do not celebrate Shabbat regularly at home nor attend Shabbat services. The theme of this year's program, Three Shabbat Moments, gives us an opportunity to introduce students and families to an appreciation of Shabbat.

Learning Objective

To understand the meaning and relevance of Shabbat as a central feature of life in a Jewish home. One main objective is to teach the children so they will be able to participate in some Shabbat home and synagogue activities.

Content covered

- ❑ *Concept:* Shabbat is the 7th day, a day of rest. God rested on Shabbat./ Text: Selections from Chapter 1 of BeReshit.
- ❑ *Concept:* There is an order to how we celebrate Shabbat./Names, appearance and use of eight ritual objects.



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- *Concept:* Shabbat is special and we celebrate it with special acts and special food/ *Realia:* A beautiful Friday night table.
- *Concept:* Songs and shorter prayer elements of Friday night service: Shalom Aleichem, chorus of Lecha Dodi, Barchu, Sh'ma, Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu.

Methods and Activities:

1. **“Dance of Creation”**- A text-based movement activity to help children "live" the seven days of creation.

First, a short reading from the first chapter of BeReshit, describing a few aspects of each day of creation.

1. G-d created Light and Darkness
2. G-d Created Evening and Morning and Heaven and Earth
3. G-d created dry land, plants, and fruit trees
4. G-d created Moon, Sun, and planets
5. G-d created animals and fish
6. G-d created Humans
7. G-d rested---Shabbat

Then show some possible movements to describe the seven days (listed above). Bring the children in to the gym and turn on music. Music should creatively mirror the seven days. Give each day 3-5 minutes for creative improvisation. Guide with suggestions of movement and noticing what movements the children take on.



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Examples:

1. How would your body move if it was pure light? Notice how your movement changes if you now embody darkness? There is no right way and not wrong way move. All ways are good.
2. How would you move if you were the Heavens? Would your movement be smooth or sharp?
3. Imagine you are a tree, rooted in the earth. Along comes a gust of wind and blow your branches. Now it is autumn and you turn into a leaf and fall to the ground. You can also have them be a seed and pretend to water them and watch them grow
4. If you were the moon how would you dance?
5. What kind of animal would you be and how would you move?
6. Now dance however you feel, be a creative as you like.
7. Have all the children lie quietly on the ground noticing their breath and allowing their body to be still peaceful.

2. "Rainbow of Shabbat" - A triptych/project board, with a colorful rainbow across the top illustrates the flow of Shabbat ritual moments, from the sun setting to havdalah.

Eight drawings on 6" x 8" paper are distributed to pairs of children—Sun setting, candlesticks, kiddush cup, challah, havdallah candle, havdallah kiddush cup, spice box, three stars.

(35 minutes) Children use art and craft materials such as scrap paper, feathers, glitter, markers, and paints, etc to beautify their object. This is an opportunity to talk about how beautify and make Shabbat special to separate it from all other days.



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As the children do their art work, the children hear a description of the symbol without hearing its name. Everyone is listening carefully because it could be their symbol being described. The pair whose symbol is being described is then encouraged to raise their hands and then get a chance to say anything else they know about this symbol and how relates to Shabbat. All eight symbols are described in this way.

(10 minutes) After all the symbols have been decorated, described, identified, and discussed by the group to their fullest, the blank project board gets pulled out and the children sit around the board with their beautiful symbols laid before them. The children asked which symbol comes first, second third, etc. in the sequence or seder (order) of Shabbat. This is an opportunity for more teaching about the order and flow of Shabbat.

As objects are identified, children individually put their creation on the triptych in the prop sequence, demonstrating understanding of Shabbat observance. Starting first with the lower left hand corner, the students make the shape of a rainbow with the symbols. The symbol of the rainbow can also bring up a discussion about the covenants that Hashem made with the Jewish people, describing that Shabbat is one aspect of the brit or cove

(15 minutes) A large print text describing each symbol is placed under each symbol*. Then the whole class can decorate the Shabbat Rainbow board. The teacher writes “Shabbat Rainbow” across the top of the board. The children are encouraged to draw anything else that they relate to Shabbat around the rainbow. You end with a brightly and beautifully decorated triptych that was both full of fun to decorate, but had a lot of teaching and learning as part of the process.



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*Symbols with texts

- ❑ *Sunset* -- Shabbat begins and ends with sunsets. It begins just before sunsets on Friday and ends just after sunset on Saturday.
- ❑ *Shabbat Candles* – On Friday evening, we light and bless Shabbat candles to turn our home into a place of peace and rest.
- ❑ *Kiddush cup*- We bless and drink wine to make Shabbat a holy and happy time. The blessing over wine is called kiddush. We drink wine from a Kiddush Cup.
- ❑ *Challah* -- We also bless and eat a yummy braided bread called challah. It makes us feel warm and full inside and it makes Shabbat meals special. Before we eat challah we say a blessing called hamotzi.
- ❑ *Havdalah Candle* -- On Saturday night, we light a big, braided Havdalah candle. It is used in the havdalah ceremony. Havdalah is a way of saying good-bye to Shabbat at the end of the week that has passed and saying hello and welcome to the new week.
- ❑ *Spice Box* -- During havdalah, we pass around a spice box filled with sweet smelling things like cinnamon or chocolate. While we are sad that Shabbat is over when we take a long sniff we feel better right away!
- ❑ *Kiddush Cup* -- During Havdalah, we fill a kiddush cup up to the very top and say kiddush. A little bit of wine usually spills. This is Okay. It is a wish that the new week will be overflowing with happiness.



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- Three Stars- We know that Shabbat is over and it is time for havdalah when we see at least three stars in the sky.

The Symbols of Shabbat and descriptions were derived from:

Torah Aura Productions 1988

4423 Fruitland Ave Los Angeles, California 90058

3. “Friday Night Dinner Table”- A rehearsal for welcoming Shabbat at home. Children, with coaching and practice, enact a Friday evening at home with a table set with candles, flowers and other objects of ritual significance or beauty. Children learn the Friday night blessings for candles, wine, hand washing and challah. They also learn the song ‘Shalom Alecham’, bringing in the shabbat angels. The prayers are taught with their English meaning as well. Bring in the concept of blessings as a process of making the ordinary holy.

4. “Making Shabbat Ritual Objects”-

In addition to learning concepts, prayers and songs the students participate in activity circles, or *Hugim*, that spark their creativity and appreciation for the many elements of Shabbat with hands-on projects. The K-1 students are given choices of making colorful, delightfully hand-decorated candles, baking challah and aleph-bet cookies (to spell Shabbat Shalom) or painting challah plates and covers. Teachers and guest hugim leaders provided teachings about the particular item that students were making and how each related to celebration of Shabbat.



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5. "Showing What We Know"-

A Friday evening family dinner was held where students demonstrated their knowledge of Erev Shabbat table rituals and participated in a school wide service. Student's creations---challah plates, challah covers and a large artwork were used at the dinner.