

Recreating Shabbat

The editors of *Oneg Shabbat: A Sabbath Evening Table Companion* Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Rabbi Jeffrey Schein share ideas for a meaningful Shabbat dinner table experience including Friday evening blessings. They invite you to put away technological distractions for a while, take a deep breath, and create sacred moments with your grandchildren.

A note from the editors:

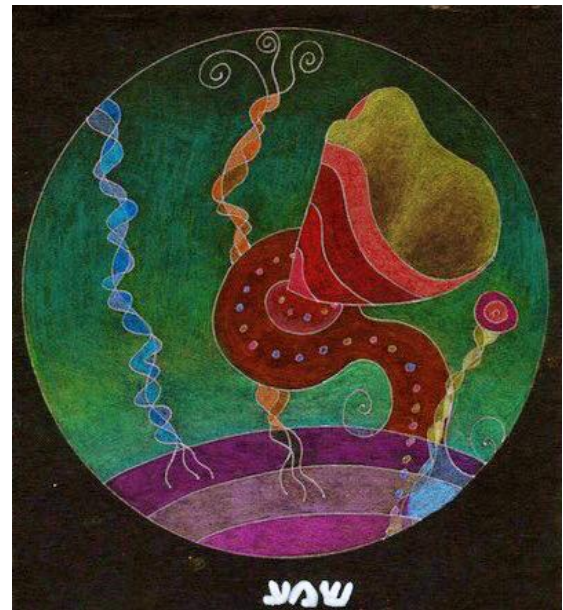
The translations of the blessings, while based on the Hebrew, are not literal; rather, they are meant to bring deeper meaning to the rituals.

Blessings

Candle Lighting Blessing — Hadlakat Nerot

In the beginning, there was light. It was not the light of the sun or the moon. It was not the light of a lamp or a flame. It was a light by which you could see from one end of the world to the other. It is said that the light shone for thirty-six hours through the first Shabbat. Then the sun set for the first time, and that special light was hidden. We see a glimmer of that light in the Shabbat candles (based on midrash).

We kindle Shabbat candles, gather the light into our hands, cover our eyes, and say the blessing.



ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת
Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam asher kid'eshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed is the Source of light, who wraps all of creation in light, making us holy through mitzvot, and calling us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

Family Blessing — Birkat Hamishpachah

In the Torah, after Jacob receives his father Isaac's blessing, Jacob's brother, Esau, comes for Isaac's blessing as well. He asks his father, "But do you have only one blessing?" On Shabbat, we remember that there are enough blessings for all of us.

We bless our children in the names of Ephraim and Menasseh. As they were the siblings who lived in peace, may our children be among those who make peace. We bless our children in the names of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. As they were often strong and loving, may our children be strong in heart and deed.



Grandparents place their hands upon their children and grandchildren and say:

May God bless you like Ephraim, and Menasseh, like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

יְבָרֶכֶךָ ה' וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

Yevarech'cha adonay ve'yish'mer'echa

May the Source of blessing bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ

Ya'er Adonai panav elecha viy'chuneka

May the Source of blessing uplift you and be gracious to you.

יְשֹׁא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yisa Adonai panav elecha veyasem lecha shalom.

May the Source of blessing guide you to the presence of peace.

(Numbers 6:24–26)

Spread your arms around those next to you, forming one community.

Remember, your table is bigger than you might think. It extends to include Jews all over the world celebrating Shabbat. Think of the ways we are connected to our families who are far away and to Jews everywhere experiencing Shabbat. Invite those gathered to share who is missing at the table.

Blessing Over Wine — Kiddush

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, the Source of All, for the fruit of the vine,
For your gift of Shabbat that reminds us of the beauty of the world,
For the joy of mitzvot, for the pleasure of rest, for the blessing of freedom.
Blessed are You for the holiness of Shabbat.

Blessing Over Bread — Hamotzi

As the challah consists of twisted strands, like intertwined arms, so are we reminded that our lives are interwoven. We are stronger together. "The triple cord is not easily broken."
(Ecclesiastes 4:12)

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.

At weekday meals, traditionally we bless our bread before anything else. But on Shabbat we begin with the blessing over wine. We cover the challah on Shabbat to protect it from feeling overlooked, just as we are taught to protect the dignity of everyone.

We give thanks for the earth that holds the seed that grows into wheat, that the farmer harvests, that the miller grinds, that the baker makes into bread. Blessed is the Source of Creation who makes partners in bringing bread from the earth.

A Thanksgiving Activity

"In the time to come when prayers will no longer be necessary, only the prayer of thanksgiving will remain." (Leviticus Rabbah 9:7)

Here is an activity to help enrich the Shabbat experience in which we and our grandchildren celebrate gratitude.

Set aside a bowl to be called a Blessing Bowl that you will use weekly or on special occasions such as other holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries. Ask all those who have joined you for Shabbat dinner to write on a piece of paper how they feel blessed or grateful on this Shabbat or how they would like to offer blessing or thanks to another. Put all the papers in the Blessing Bowl. Have guests randomly choose and read a note from the bowl. Collect these pieces of paper from week to week — a reminder that even in difficult times, we have reason to be grateful.

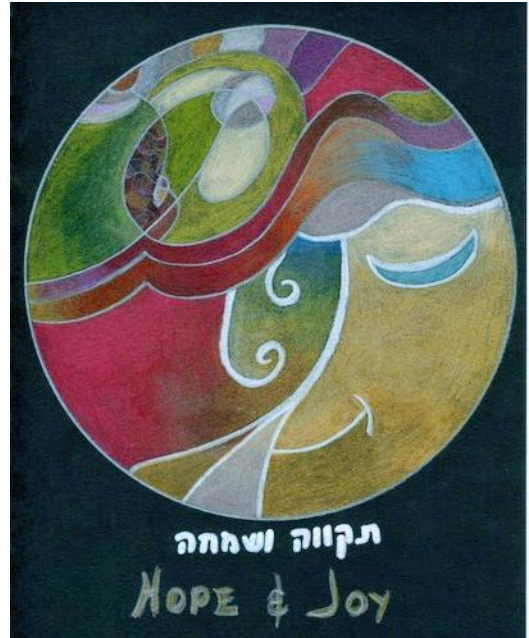
A Poem for Shabbat by Our Children

Shabbat is Our Stop Sign

All week long we look at screens. We rush from place to place.
Hurry! Hurry! Do not delay. There is no time! We are going to be late.
On Shabbat we look at each other. We slow down and take a breath.
Take it easy! Enjoy the shade. There is time to wait.

Shabbat is our stop sign.
Shabbat means
To give thanks for the making of the earth,
Rest and being with family,
Peace,
Time to relax,
Love,
Saying blessings,
Kindness and renewal.
We should stop and enjoy creation.
Shabbat is our stop sign.

Written by students from University Synagogue,
Irvine, California and Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis,
Indiana



With these selections, we hope you will be able to create family traditions that enrich and uplift you.

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso is the first woman to be ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. She is Senior Rabbi Emerita of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis and an award-winning children's author.

Rabbi Jeffrey Schein is the former executive director of the Mordecai Kaplan Center for Jewish Peoplehood and their current senior consultant for Jewish education. He is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

The art featured is by Jill Minkoff.