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## ABOUT OUR LEARNING MATERIALS

“And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” *Genesis 2:3*

Shabbat. Each week we have the opportunity to gather together, to find comfort, to restore our souls. Shabbat is a reminder to create space in our lives for what is most important and sacred, to affirm our part in making the world more whole. Shabbat is a gift.

How do we create this holy gift each week? How might we deepen our understanding and practice of Shabbat? This year, journey with your Sh'ma group through learning materials which explore different aspects of Shabbat. You will discuss prayers, ancient and modern interpretations, reflections from Temple clergy and more.

As always, if you have any questions, please be in touch with Alexandra Horn ([ahorn@tedallas.org](mailto:ahorn@tedallas.org)) or Rabbi Kim Herzog Cohen ([kherzogcohen@tedallas.org](mailto:kherzogcohen@tedallas.org)).

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# Why bring Shabbat light into my life?

## SHABBAT BEGINS WITH THE RITUAL OF LIGHTING CANDLES

### Candle Blessing

*A.W. Binder*

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

## COMMENTARY

### Tim Kreider, *The Busy Trap*

“Idleness is not just a vacation, an indulgence or a vice; it is as indispensable to the brain as vitamin D is to the body”

### Will by Marcia Falk

Three generations back  
my family had only  
to light a candle  
and the world parted.  
Today, Friday afternoon,  
I disconnect clocks and phones.  
When night fills my house  
with passages,  
I begin saving  
my life.

### Rabbi Rami Shapiro

What is more vulnerable than the Sabbath flame?  
And yet what is more enduring?  
A single breath has ever blown out its light.  
We kindle the Sabbath with the fires of the heart.  
We kindle the Sabbath with the warmth of human  
love and kindness.  
We kindle the Sabbath with our daring to live  
despite the fragility of the world.

### Rabbi David Stern

I don't know how they knew, but they knew.  
“Six days shall you labor”—at your laptops, in  
your airport lounges, washing dirty field hockey  
uniforms, cleaning the bathroom floor after the  
stomach bug strikes, staying late for one more  
patient, one more case, one more deal, one  
more sale.

And so they knew we would need a break. Our  
tired bodies would need it. Our cluttered minds  
would need it. Our strained marriages would  
need it. Our over-extended families would need it.  
Even our dogs deserve the occasional longer walk.  
Shabbat is a weekly sanity practice.

My wife Rabbi Nancy Kasten teaches that Shabbat  
is the most important tool in every marriage's  
starter kit. A night every week for dinner by  
candlelight. An already scheduled time to refocus  
on each other and open to gratitude. Judaism  
invented date night a very long time ago. It's  
called Shabbat.

And with the possibility of Sabbath respite, the  
reminder of Sabbath revolution. The Shabbat  
Kiddush bids us remember not only creation  
(God's day of rest and ours), but Exodus. This day  
a taste of the freedom that all people deserve. This  
day a taste of the dignity that all people inherently  
possess. This day a reminder of our capacity to  
move the world from a fleeting taste of wholeness  
to a lived reality of it, seven days a week. We kindle  
flame against darkness. We lean into the light.  
The rest we so deeply need. The rest all people so  
deeply deserve.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does Shabbat open our lives? How does it restore us?
2. What realities have shaped your Shabbat practice to this point? Going forward, how do you imagine “kindling the Sabbath” in new and different ways?