



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) or Rabbi Kim Herzog Cohen (kherzogcohen@tedallas.org).

How/when does community enrich my life?

Hamotzi

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu,
Melech haolam,
hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of all creation,
who brings forth bread from the earth.

COMMENTARY

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals*

“Nothing—not a conversation, not a handshake, not even a hug—establishes friendship so forcefully as eating together.”

Shefa Gold's *Brich Rachamana*

Brikk rahamana
Malka d'alma
Ma'arey d'hi (oh!) pita

You are the source of
Life for all that is
And your blessing
Flows through me

Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

“Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.” – March 2020

Leonard Cohen

“There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.”

Cantor Leslie Niren

Each time we sit down to a meal, Jewish tradition calls upon us to bless the meal both before and after we eat. The HaMotzi and Birkat HaMazon prayers give us the opportunity to utter words of gratitude to God for providing food and sustenance to our lives. These prayers also offer us the space to frame our meal and our gathering as a spiritual practice. It's easy to take the miracle of food and family and friendship for granted sometimes, but these blessings help to remind us of our unique bounty, especially during these challenging times.

Creator Spirit, I offer thanks to You for the vast assortment of nature's bounty that adorn my Shabbat table. For the vibrant colors and miraculous shapes that nature created, to the rich vitamins and nutrients which keep us healthy, to the intoxicating aromas of the fresh spices and herbs. I offer gratitude to the farmers and drivers and markets that all played a hand in helping this food make it to this table for this Shabbat meal. And finally, Infinite Source of Life, I offer gratitude for the people who are literally and figuratively around this table, celebrating the gift of Sabbath joy, peace and rest.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Reading Jonathan Safran Foer's words may further bring to light the loss of connection we feel at this time. However, friendship and love can also cross boundaries of physical distancing. As we make our way through this pandemic, how have you discovered new ways that community can enrich your life?
2. If you were to write your own version of a blessing before a meal, what would you include?