



On Saturdays (*Shabbat*) we celebrate God as Creator; on Sundays ('the Day of the Lord') we celebrate Jesus Christ as Redeemer. The two days are distinct and complementary, enhancing our sense of sacred time as we move 'from holiness to holiness'.

And you thought you just had a weekend off!



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## Celebrating *Shabbat*

### A simple outline for Christians

Invite family and friends to your home for a *Shabbat* meal on a Friday evening or Saturday. Offer hospitality (food, drink, warm conversation) as they arrive. Greet each other with 'Shabbat shalom!' (Hebrew for: 'Sabbath peace.')

At the start of the meal:

1. Light two candles and pray the blessing.
2. Read from Genesis 2:1-3
3. Pour a glass of wine and pray the blessing.
4. Break apart a nice loaf of bread and pray the blessing.
5. Extend the blessing to the people at table. This can take any form. Some examples:
  - Pray for a gift for the person beside you. Anoint his/her forehead with a sweet smelling oil; or
  - Name one quality in the person beside you and light a small tea light placed in front of him/her; or
  - Invite spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving, praising God for the gifts of those at table.

Enjoy the meal. Encourage positive and affirming conversation. Avoid negativity and criticisms.

After the main meal, and before dessert or coffee, invite some sharing. This can take any form but usually needs to be prepared beforehand. Some examples:

- Read and discuss the Torah portion of the week (or part of). "Light of Torah" leaflets will help here; or
- Read and discuss another bible passage; or
- Discuss a table topic such as "One blessing of my past week was..." or "An aspect of God's creation which I enjoyed today was..."

*Enjoy the Sabbath!*



# *Celebrating* **Shabbat**

**Home-based rituals for Christians**



## ***Lighting of the Sabbath candles***

*There are two candles to symbolise our love relationships with God and one another. As one person lights the two sabbath candles, another says the blessing:*

In Genesis we read that 'God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.' The Jewish people have always celebrated this day as *Shabbat*, 'the Sabbath', a time to remember with joy and delight God's creative, loving presence.

While the Jews have a special relationship with the Sabbath, the Sabbath is enshrined in God's act of creation and is God's gift to all humanity.

Blessed are you Lord God, King [or: Sovereign] of the Universe, whose commandments have made us holy, and who ordained that we kindle the Sabbath lights.

*You can also say it in Hebrew...*

Baruch ata Adonai  
eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
ve-tzivanu l'hadlik  
ner shel Shabbat.

## ***Bible (Torah) Reading***

*One person reads from the Book of Genesis (2:1-3):*

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

## ***Blessing over the Sabbath Wine***

*One person pours the wine or raises the cup, and another says the blessing:*

Blessed are you Lord God,  
King of the Universe,  
who creates the fruit of the vine.

*You can also say it in Hebrew...*

Baruch ata Adonai  
eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
borei pri ha-gafen.

## ***Blessing over the Sabbath Bread (Challah)***

*As one person uncovers or breaks the bread, another says the blessing:*

Blessed are you Lord God,  
King of the Universe,  
who brings forth bread from the earth.

*You can also say it in Hebrew...*

Baruch ata Adonai  
eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.



Sabbath and Sunday are two distinct holy days, one celebrating creation, the other celebrating the resurrection. For Christians the prime weekly celebration is Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, the 'Day of the Lord.' However Christians can also celebrate Saturday as the *Shabbat* (as indeed was the practice in the earliest centuries of Christianity). In this way we remember that Jesus was a Jew who celebrated Sabbath according to the customs of his day. We remember that our Church emerged from the Jewish people.