

Jewish Resources for Children's Shabbat



CHILDREN OF PROMISE: Closing Opportunity Gaps

In Rab's day, there was a teacher whose prayer for the rain was answered promptly. When asked to tell of his special merit, he said, I teach children of the poor as well as of the rich, I accept no fee from any who cannot afford it, and I have a fishpond to delight the children and to encourage them to do their lessons. (Taani 24a)

On this 25th anniversary year of the National Observance of Children's Sabbath weekend, the focus is on "Children of Promise: Closing Opportunity Gaps." Together, we will be praying and studying and committing to action to affirm that every child — children

of the poor as well as the rich and all that are in-between — has God-given promise and to close opportunity gaps in family income, early childhood development, and education so that all children fulfill their potential.

In the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association's *Rabbi's Manual*, we read: "God of the generations, God of new beginnings, children are Your promise of tomorrow made in Your image, a reflection of Your divine love. Teach us to raise our children worthy of this sacred trust of life." Too many children are not able to realize their full promise as ones made in God's own image because of the obstacles placed in their way. Children of color and children in poverty face enormous and growing opportunity gaps that leave them behind economically, in early childhood development, and in school.

The 25th annual Children's Shabbat falls at the conclusion of Sukkot and just before Simchat Torah. There could be no better time to join Judaism's Sukkot tradition of hospitality — with an emphasis of ensuring that all may benefit from the harvest and none hunger, with its recognition that shelter for many is frail and vulnerable — and Simchat Torah's affirmation of the importance of learning with the Children's Shabbat's determination to close opportunity gaps in family income, early childhood development, and school success so that all child can fulfill their innate promise.

The Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism observes about the Torah portion for October 22, 2016, Chol HaMo-eid Sukkot, "On the Shabbat during Sukkot, we are reminded of the age-old desire to know God. Moses implores God to let him see God. While God will not allow Moses to see God's face, God tells Moses, 'I will make My goodness pass before you...'. Perhaps we experience the divine presence through the goodness we create in the world. The Torah then sets forth the thirteen attributes of God, among them that God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. By emulating these very attributes, we create the goodness which allows us to know God." Sermons on the Children's Sabbath coupled with the study and commitment to action arising from the Children's Shabbat will surely contribute to creating goodness in the world as we close opportunity gaps so that every child is able to realize her or his full promise.

Children's Shabbat is about far more than one weekend, of course. After the services and education programs and activities of the weekend, our hope is that the *gemilut hasidim* — compassionate action— and the justice-seeking advocacy of your congregation in the year to come will help improve the lives of children in our communities and throughout our nation in deep and lasting ways.

The 2016 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is focusing on closing opportunity gaps in family income, early childhood development, and education so that every child may fulfill their innate promise.

Following you will find a range of Jewish resources for your Children's Shabbat:

- Suggestions for the services
- Passages from modern and traditional Jewish sources related to children, justice, equality, poverty, and education.
- Suggested readings and prayers for an Erev Shabbat Service for Children's Shabbat

Suggestions for the Services

Services on the Children's Shabbat are an excellent opportunity to help focus the congregation on the links between Torah readings, Jewish tradition, and the charge to pursue justice and protect children. The focus of the 2016 Children's Shabbat is closing opportunity gaps in family income, early childhood development, and education so that every child may reach their full promise and so that we — as religious communities and as a nation—keep our promise of justice and equality. Children's Shabbat services also serve as a time to affirm the work of your congregation on behalf of children and to challenge members to continue and expand their responses to the needs of children locally and nationally.

The following suggestions may assist you in planning your own unique Children's Shabbat service or supplementing your congregation's weekly prayer and discussion.

- **There are several options for the services:**
 - 1) Use or adapt the service readings provided in this section for an Erev Shabbat service or a Shabbat morning service;
 - 2) Develop your own Children's Shabbat that reflects the theme of children, justice, and the need for action; or
 - 3) Use readings from the prayer books that include a social action theme.
- **Determine ways in which the children of your congregation can participate in the various services on this Shabbat.** Involve children attending religious school, members of youth groups, and children who attend day schools. For example, religious school classes and youth groups could read prayers or Torah and Haftarah readings, lead songs or responsive readings, greet people as they arrive, or design and print the bulletin. Keep in mind, however, that this is an intergenerational family event and should not be “given over” to children as “performers” or only be intended for families with young children as in a Tot Shabbat.
- **Introduce the special Children's Shabbat focus at the beginning of the service.** The Union for Reform Judaism's online resources for Social Action Worship note, “The beginning of the service is the time to set the tone. By opening with a special reading, the congregation knows that the service has a special theme and we can consider how we might focus our prayers differently during this service. What is the connection between our prayers and our pursuit of *tikkun olam*? An introductory reading might help us begin to answer that question. In addition, candle lighting during Friday night services would also be an appropriate time to include a special reading. With the lighting of the candles, we reflect on what it means for us to be an *Or Lagoyim*, a ‘light unto the nations,’ and how that shapes our actions.”
- **Focus the sermon, D'var Torah, or Torah discussion on children, justice, and poverty and close opportunity gaps.** Emphasize how we can work to end child poverty. The Torah and Haftarah portions that fall on the Children's Shabbat this year, Chol Hao-eid Sukkot, remind us, observes the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, “of the age-old desire to know God. Moses implores God to let him see God. While God will not allow Moses to see God's face, God tells Moses, ‘I will make My goodness pass before you...’ Perhaps we experience the divine presence through the goodness we create in the world. The Torah then sets forth the thirteen attributes of God, among them that God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. By emulating these very attributes, we create the

goodness which allows us to know God.” (<http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/chol-hamo-eid-sukkot>) On Children's Shabbat this year, connections can be made to creating goodness as we close opportunity gaps so that every child may achieve their God-given potential, embodying divine attributes in our compassionate actions to improve the lives of children, along with Sukkot's reminder that shelter and food are tenuous for many in our nation and an opportunity for hospitality and advocacy.

- **Invite a professional from the congregation or the community who works with or on behalf of children to give the sermon.** For example, this might be a community organizer or child advocacy staff working for systemic change to end child poverty, or a staff person from an agency or organization serving low-income families, an educator, or an early childhood development program director.
- **Bless the children.** On Friday night, incorporate the parental blessing for children into the service. Alternatively, incorporate the need to bless all children into the Shabbat morning blessing of Bar/Bat Mitzvah children.
- **Honor congregation members who are working to nurture and protect children.** This year, invite those who are engaged in efforts to close opportunity gaps in family income, early childhood development, and education. Ask them to lead certain prayers or give them Aliyot during the Torah reading.
- **Collect Tzedakah in religious school to benefit a program serving children,** such as a struggling public school, a Head Start program, mentoring or tutoring program, an organization working to end or alleviate the effects of poverty, or after-school program.
- **Distribute or insert the bulletin inserts** which can be found in Promoting Your Children's Sabbath at www.childrensdefense.org/childrensabbaths.
- **With the help of your Cantor, prepare some new music to be sung by the children at the service.**
- **Encourage families to invite grandparents and other relatives to join them for the service.** If you wish, plan a special recognition of grandparents during the service.
- **Arrange for a special kiddush/oneg Shabbat/luncheon/ se'udah shlishit in honor of the occasion.** As a resource, see “Planning a Shabbat or Holiday Family Meal” and “A Family Shabbaton,” both from the Youth/School Liaison Department of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism.
- **Continue the celebration of Children's Shabbat** with Havdalah and/or a M'laveh Malkah during the Saturday evening or the Sunday morning minyan/religious school sessions.
- **Plan a “Closing Opportunity Gaps” educational session for adults or youth group members,** drawing on the session outline provided in the Actions Section of the Children's Sabbath resources.
- **Be sure to read the “Actions” section of the Children's Sabbath manual, available for download from www.childrensdefense.org/childrensabbaths,** to select actions for the congregation collectively or individual members to take on the Children's Sabbath weekend and in the year to follow to seek justice for our nation's children. Children's Shabbat is about much more than one Shabbat a year, but is intended to support long-term efforts to improve the lives of our nation's children throughout the years to come. Additional resources for action planning include Lirdof Tzekdek: *A Guide to Synagogue Social Action* (by Evely Laser Shlensky and Rabbi Marc D. Israel, ed.) and *Mitzvah Magic: What Kids Can Do to Change the World* (by Danny Siegel with Naomi Eisenberger).

Suggestions for Simchat Torah

The following activities are designed to connect the Children's Sabbath with Sukkot which concludes on Sunday, October 23, 2016 — the last day of the Children's Sabbath weekend.

- Decorate your sukkah with nonedibles (gourds, Indian corn, wild berries, peanut shell mosaics) to dramatize the problem of hunger, which afflicts one in eight children in the United States. Talk with your children about why you are not using edible fruit that would rot and be wasted. Discuss the problem of childhood hunger, poverty, homelessness, and inadequate housing in an age-appropriate way with children and youths. Together, collect fruits, vegetables, and nonperishables and donate them to a program serving children and families.
- Make an effort to extend hospitality to single-parent families, families with foster children, and non-member families to share a meal in the sukkah.
- Deliver a sermon that connects Sukkot with children's needs. The holiday of Sukkot brings us out of our homes into the frail structure of the sukkah and reminds us of our own vulnerability and of the precarious situation facing vulnerable and dependent children.
- Explore providing a team from the congregation to work with Habitat for Humanity on building a permanent home for a family in poverty to mark Sukkot this year.

Suggestions for Simchat Torah

The following activities are designed to connect the Children's Sabbath with Simchat Torah which begins on Monday, October 24, 2016 at sunset.

The 2016 Children's Sabbath, "Children of Promise: Closing the Opportunity Gaps," looks in part at the gaps in early childhood development and in education that hinder millions of low-income children from fulfilling their God-given promise and potential.

The Children's Shabbat is an excellent opportunity to engage your congregation — children, teens, adults, and seniors — in new, expanded, or existing efforts to improve the early childhood development and educational opportunities of children in poverty and those who face obstacles because of their race, ethnicity, language, disability, or other factors.

- Enlist volunteers to help with tutoring programs, Head Start classrooms, and under-resourced public schools.
- Collect new or gently used books — especially those featuring children of various races, ethnicities, and other characteristics — to donate to programs serving children from low-income families.
- Hold a Jewish read-a-thon, to culminate in November's Jewish Book Month, in which children secure pledges from congregation members for each book they read. Designate the proceeds from the read-a-thon to purchase books for a program serving children in poverty.
- Consider "adopting" a nearby under-resourced public school for the year and work with the principal to identify a range of ways that the congregation can help, such as volunteers, in-kind donations, financial support, and professional expertise. Or, "adopt" a Head Start program or child care program serving low-income families.

Passages from Modern and Traditional Jewish Sources on Poverty, Early Childhood Development and education, the Importance of Children and Justice

On Poverty

A small bit of bread may be life to the poor; one who deprives them of it sheds blood.

(Ben Sira 34:21)

Do not neglect the children of the poor, for from them will go forth the law.

(Babylonian Talmud, Nedarim 81a)

Defend the poor and the orphan; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

(Midrash Tehillim 82:3)

You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow's garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I enjoin you to observe this commandment...when you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

(Deuteronomy 24:17-18, 21)

Rabbi Abba said in the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish: "He who lends money [to a poor person] is greater than he who gives charity; and he who throws money into a common purpose [to form a partnership with the poor person] is greater than either."

(Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 63b)

Although the giving of charity is a sacred obligation, the ultimate aim of tzedakah is to abolish poverty and to enable the poor to help themselves.

(Talmud, Shabbat 63)

God says to Israel, "My children, whenever you give sustenance to the poor, I impute it to you as though you gave sustenance to Me." Does God then eat and drink? No, but whenever you give food to the poor, God accounts it to you as if you gave food to God.

(Midrash Tannaim on Deuteronomy 15:10, citing Numbers 28:2)

Anyone who withholds what is due to the poor blasphemes against the Maker of all, but one who is gracious unto the needy honors God.

(Proverbs 14:31)

On Early Childhood Development and Education

Take care of the children of the poor, for they will be the ones who advance knowledge.

(Nedarim, 81a)

The guardians of a city are the teachers of the young and the instructors of the old...If you see cities uprooted, know that it came about because they did not maintain their teachers' salaries.

(Hagiga 1:7)

In Rab's day, there was a teacher whose prayer for the rain was answered promptly. When asked to tell of his special merit, he said, "I teach children of the poor as well as of the rich, I accept no fee from any who cannot afford it, and I have a fishpond to delight the children and to encourage them to do their lessons."

(Taani 24a)

Even in neighbors complain from the noise, they cannot shut down a school that teachers children. Raba said, this refers to Joshua ben Gamla, for without his ruling, Torah would have been forgotten in Israel.

(Baba Batra 20b-21a)

In his day, if one had a learned father, the father would teach, and if not, one did not learn. Then they instituted a publicly funded school in Jerusalem. But those with parents were brought up to Jerusalem, and those without still did not learn. They then set up a school in each district, and the children were to enter at 16 or 17, but when the teachers tried to discipline them, they rebelled and left. They then instituted publicly funded schools for any child six or older. And if there was a long way, or a bridge to cross, they could compel the town to build another school.

(Bab Batra 21a)

Rabbi Hamnuna said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because the children did not attend school, and loitered in the streets.

(Pesikta Rabbati 29b)

The flowers (of the great menorah of the Sanctuary): These are the children who learn in school.

(Numbers Rabba 3:1)

Teachers and schoolchildren are society's most beautiful ornaments.

(Shir Ha-shirim Rabbah 1:10)

One who teaches a child Torah is considered to have taught that child and that child's children and grandchildren, to the end of the generations.

(Kiddushin 30a)

"They that are planted in the house of the Lord," (Psalm 92:13). Rabbi Hanan ben Pazzi taught: "While they are yet saplings, they are in the house of the Lord; these are the children who are in school."

(BT Baba Batra 21a)

On the Importance of Children and Justice

And Israel beheld Joseph's sons and said, "Whose are these?" And Joseph said to his father, "These are my children, whom the Lord has given me in this place." And he said, "Bring them to me, and I will bless them."

(Genesis 48:8-9)

Speak up for [those unable to speak], for the rights of all the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and needy.

(Proverbs 31: 8-9)

One violates Shabbat for the sake of a one-day-old baby, but not for the corpse of David, King of Israel.

(Shabbat 151b)

As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs. We know that every moment is a moment of grace, every hour an offering; not to share them would mean to betray them. Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately.

(Elie Wiesel, *Night*)

Thus said the Eternal: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone. Thus said the Eternal: Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is reward in your labor — declares the Eternal. They shall return from the enemy's land, and there is hope for your future — declares the Eternal, and your children shall return to their country.

(*Jeremiah 31:15-17*)

When the children are blessed, the parents by this very token are blessed.

(*Zohar*, i, 227b)

Rabbi Meir said: When the Israelites came to receive the Torah, God said to them, "Bring me good sureties that you will observe it." They answered, "Our ancestors shall be our sureties." God replied, "Your sureties need sureties themselves. I have found fault with them." They answered, "Our prophets shall be our sureties." God replied, "I have found fault with them also." Then the Israelites said, "Our children will be our sureties." They proved acceptable, and God gave Israel the Torah.

(*Shir HaShirim Rabbah*)

If one person is able to save another and does not save him, he transgresses the commandment, "Neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor." (Leviticus 19:16) Similarly, if one person sees another drowning in the sea, or being attacked by bandits, or being attacked by wild animals, and, although able to rescue him either alone or by hiring others, does not rescue him; or if one hears heathens or informers plotting evil against another or laying a trap for him and does not call it to the other's attention and let him know; or if one knows that a heathen or violent person is going to attack another and although able to appease him on behalf of the other and make him change his mind, he does not do so; or if one acts in any similar way — he transgresses in each case the injunction "Neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor."

(*Maimonides' Code, "Laws Concerning Murder and the Preservation of Life," Chapter 1, Sections 14 and 16*)

Therefore, man was created singularly to teach you that a) whoever destroys a single soul of Israel, is considered as if he destroys an entire world, and one who saves one soul of Israel, it is considered as if he saves an entire world; b) no one could say to their fellow that my father is better than your father; c) none of the heretics could say "There are many powers in Heaven;" d) again, to declare the greatness of the Holy One of Blessing, for man stamps out many coins with one die, and they are all alike. But the Ruler of all Rulers, the Holy One of Blessing, stamped each person with the seal of Adam, and not one of them like his fellow. Therefore, each and every one is obliged to say, "For my sake the world was created."

(*Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5*)

“Righteousness and only righteousness you shall pursue” (Deut. 16:20). The term “pursue” carries strong connotations of effort, eagerness, persistence, inflexibility of purpose. This implies more than merely respecting or following justice, walking in the way of righteousness; righteousness may be hard to attain; it may escape us if we do not pursue it.

(Abraham J. Heschel, in *The Prophets*, p. 264)

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

(Elie Wiesel)

Help me perfect my ways of loving and care.
Inspire me to make myself whole
so that I may honor your name and
create a world of justice and peace.

(Martin Buber, as quoted in *Mishkan T'filah*, p 121)



The following readings, reflections, and prayers may be incorporated into your services to focus attention on the Eternal's call to justice and care for children. Choose as many or as few as is appropriate for your congregation. Each reading suggests a particular point in the service for which it may be especially appropriate (in some instances, several options are offered), but there are, of course, many ways to incorporate these resources and you should do what works best for your service.

Suggested Readings and Prayers for An Erev Shabbat Service

**“Children of Promise: Closing Opportunity Gaps”
Friday, October 21, 2016**

Kabbalat Panim

Reflection before the Candle Lighting

Hadlakat Neiroi Shabbat

As the great doors of night are opening we come into the clean, quiet room of Shabbat.
Let us be thankful as we light these candles like eyes of holiness on this moment of peace.
Let us savor the fruit of the vine, the blood of the earth that quickens us.
Let us be thankful for grain, fruit of grasses that feed the cow, the gazelle, and us.
Let us be grateful for the children and the work of the week that are our own fruitfulness.
Let us as we eat never forget that food comes from the earth.
We must cherish and heal through labor, we must respect and reward.

(By Marge Piercy from *Kol Haneshamah, Shabbat Vehagim*.)

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O Source of light and truth,
Creator of the eternal law of goodness,
Well-spring of justice and mercy,
Help us to find knowledge by which to live.
Lead us to take the words we shall speak
Into our hearts and our lives.

Bless all who enter this sanctuary in search and in need,
All who bring to this place the offering of their hearts.
May our worship here lead us to fulfill our words and our hopes
With acts of kindness, peace, and love.

(From *Mishkan T'filah: The Siddur for Reform Jewish Prayer*)

May the door of this synagogue be wide enough
to receive all who hunger for love, all who are lonely for fellowship.

May it welcome all who have cares to unburden,
thanks to express, hopes to nurture

May the door of this synagogue be narrow enough
to shut out pettiness and pride, envy and enmity.

May its threshold be no stumbling block
to young or straying feet.

May it be too high to admit complacency,
selfishness and harshness.

May this synagogue be, for all who enter,
the doorway to a richer and more meaningful life.

Welcome

I begin with a prayer of gratitude
for all that is holy in my life.

God needs no words, no English or Hebrew,
no semantics or services.

But I need them.

Through prayer, I can sense my inner strength,
my inner purpose,

my inner joy, my capacity to love.

As I reach upward in prayer,

I sense these qualities in my Creator.

To love God is to love each other,
to work to make our lives better.

To love God is to love the world God created
and to work to perfect it.

Today marks the 25th anniversary of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. We join congregations of many faiths all across our nation to celebrate children made in God's own image, focus on the urgent needs of children in our nation, and respond to the Eternal's call to justice and kindness. This year's Children's Shabbat theme is "Children of Promise: Closing Opportunity Gaps." As we stand at the end of Sukkot and look toward the beginning of Simchat Torah, we will commit anew to closing opportunity gaps — ending child poverty, hunger, and homelessness and improving early childhood development and education — so that each and every child may fulfill their God-given promise. Let that be *our* promise to the one who has blessed us with children that we may be a blessing.

Kabbalat Shabbat — Welcoming Shabbat

Introduction to Lecha Dodi

As we prepare to sing *Lecha Dodi*, pause to reflect on the words of comfort and promise in the third verse of the translation in *Siddur Sim Shalom*: "Holy city, majestic, banish your fears. Arise, emerge from your desolate years. Too long have you dwelled in the valley of tears. God will restore you with mercy and grace." This evening, as we sing, may the words be our prayer for the children and families throughout our nation who live in fear, with the desolation of poverty, and in a valley of tears.

Ar'vit I'Shabbat

Chatzi Kaddish

Sh'ma Uvirchoteha — Sh'ma and Its Blessings

Reflection after the Bar'chu

One must repeat from time to time: The world was created for my sake. Never say: What do I care about this or that? Do your part to add something new, to bring forth something that is needed, and to leave the world a little better because you were here briefly.

(Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav)

Prayer after the Maariv Aravim

God of the generations, God of new beginnings, children are Your promise of tomorrow made in Your image, a reflection of Your divine love. Teach us to raise our children worthy of this sacred trust of life. Sustain us and our children in health and love. We are thankful for the beauty of our lives and the ability to bring new life. We are thankful to all those who help us to raise our children in love.

(Adapted from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association *Rabbi's Manual*. Used with permission.)

Reading after Ahavat Olam

“One who teaches a child Torah is considered to have taught that child and that child's children and grandchildren, to the end of the generations.”

(Kiddushin 30a)

Reflection after the Sh'ma and V'ahavta

Love God with all the power of your heart,
with its yearnings and passions.
Love God with all you hold dear in life,
and with the fullness of whatever the world offers you,
Both joy and sorrow.

Teach children to cope,
to dream and to stretch,
to become their purpose,
to live holy lives.

Wrap these words around every deed,
a garment of holy expression.
Let these words shape your home,
a dwelling of peace.
Wherever you go,
scatter the words as seed,
or as drops of water into the thirsty earth.
Nurture trees of life in your garden.

Seal these words upon your heart;
let them course through
and cleave soul to body
that the sacred permeates all your being.

(Mishkan T'filah, p. 67)

Emet Ve-Emunah

In a world torn by violence and pain,
a world far from wholeness and peace,
give us the courage to say, Adonai:
there is one God in heaven and earth.

*The high heavens declare Your glory;
May earth reveal Your justice and love.*

From bondage in Egypt, we were delivered;
At Sinai, we bound ourselves to Your way.

*Inspired by prophets and instructed by sages,
Time and again, we overcame oppressive forces.*

Though our failings are many and our faults are great,
It has been our glory to bear witness to our God,
Keeping alive in dark ages
Your vision of a world redeemed.

*Let us continue to work for the day
When the nations will be one and at peace.
Then shall we rejoice as Israel did,
Singing on the shores of the Sea:*

(Adapted from Chaim Stern in Mishkan T'filah, p. 157)

Reading after Mi Chamocha

“You cannot find redemption until you see the flaws in your own soul, and try to efface them. Nor can a people be redeemed until it sees the flaws in its soul and tries to efface them. But whether it be an individual or a people, whoever shuts out the realization of their flaws is shutting out redemption. We can be redeemed only to the extent to which we see ourselves.

The world is in need of redemption, but the redemption must not be expected to happen as an act of sheer grace. Our task is to make the world worthy of redemption. Our faith and our works are preparations for ultimate redemption.”

(Adapted from Martin Buber, in Siddur Sim Shalom, p. 32)

Responsive Reading after Hashkiveinu

As a mother comforts her children,
so I Myself will comfort you, says Adonai.
And you will find peace in Jerusalem.

*Past troubles will be forgotten, hidden from sight.
Jerusalem will be a delight, her people a joy.
And you will find peace in Jerusalem.*

None shall hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,
says the Creator whose throne is heaven,
says Adonai who also seeks peace in Jerusalem.

*Each month at the new moon, each week on Shabbat
all people, all My children, shall worship Me,
says Adonai who will also find peace
and consolation in Jerusalem.*

(Jules Harlow, in *Siddur Sim Shalom*, p. 33).

Prayer after the V'shamru

O God of Israel,
May our worship on this day help us to grow
in loyalty to our covenant with you
and to the way of life it demands:
the way of gentleness and justice,
the path of truth and of peace.

(*Mishkan T'filah*)

Amidah

Readings for the Amidah

Prayer invites
God's Presence to suffuse our spirits,
God's will to prevail in our lives.
Prayer might not bring water to parched fields,
nor mend a broken bridge,
nor rebuild a ruined city.
But prayer can water an arid soul,
mend a broken heart,
rebuild a weakened will.

(Abraham Joshua Heschel, adapted, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 165)

*Pray as if everything depended on God.
Act as if everything depended on you.*

“Never again’ becomes more than a slogan: It’s a prayer, a promise, a vow. There will never again be hatred, people say. Never again jail and torture. Never again the suffering of innocent people, or the shooting of starving, frightened, terrified children. And never again the glorification of base, ugly, dark violence. It’s a prayer.”

(Elie Wiesel, *Hostage*)

Prayer after the Avot v'Imahot

Source of All Being, we turn to You as did our people in ancient days.
They beheld you in the heavens, they felt You in their hearts,
They sought You in their lives. Their quest is ours.

Help us to see the wonder of being.
Give us the courage to search for truth;
teach us the path to a better life.
So shall we, by our lives and our labors,
bring nearer the world we envision,
one of justice, freedom and peace.

(Chaim Stern, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 274)

Responsive Reading after the G'vurot

Your might, O God, is everlasting;
Help us to use our strength for good and not evil.

You are the Source of life and blessing;
Help us to choose life for ourselves and our children.

You are the support of the falling;
Help us to lift up the fallen.

You are the author of freedom;
Help us to free the captive.

You are our hope in death as in life;
Help us to keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Your might, O God, is everlasting;
Help us to use our strength for good.

For blessing and not for curse,
For life and not death,
For abundance, not want.

(Chaim Stern, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 349)

Reflection after the K'dushat HaShem and K'dushat HaYom

Disturb us, Adonai, ruffle us from our complacency;
Make us dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the peace of ignorance,
the quietude which arises from a shunning of the horror, the defeat,
the bitterness and the poverty, physical and spiritual, of humans.

Shock us, Adonai, deny to us the false Shabbat which gives us
the delusions of satisfaction amid a world of war and hatred;

Wake us, O God, and shake us
from the sweet and sad poignancies rendered by
half forgotten melodies and rubric prayers of yesteryears;

Make us know that the border of the sanctuary
is not the border of living

and the walls of your temples are not shelters
from the winds of truth, justice and reality.

Disturb us, O God, and vex us;
let not Your Shabbat be a day of torpor and slumber;
let it be a time to be stirred and spurred to action.

(Mitchell Salem Fisher, adapted, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 173)

Reading after the Avodah and Hodaah

For the good in us, which calls us to a better life, we give thanks.

For the strength to improve the world with our hearts and our hands,
we offer praise.

For the desire in us which leads us to work for peace, we are grateful.

For life and nature, harmony and beauty, for the hope of tomorrow,
All praise to the Source of Being.

(Chaim Stern and Abraham Rothberg, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 281)

Readings after Shalom

We oughtn't pray for what we've never known,
and humanity has never known:

unbroken peace,
unmixed blessing.

No.

Better to pray for pity,
for indignation, discontent,
the will to see and touch,
the power to do good and make new.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 259)

Reflection after T'filat HaLev

Holy One,
give me a quiet heart,
and help me to hear the still,
small voice that speaks within me.
It calls me to come close to You
and to grow in Your likeness.
It teaches me to do my work faithfully,
even when no one's eye is upon me.
It counsels me to judge others kindly
and to love them freely,
for it persuades me to see divinity
in everyone I meet.
Help me, O God,
to come to the end of each day
feeling that I used its gifts wisely
and faced its trials bravely.

(Chaim Stern in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 261)

Introduction to the Misheberach

One in five children in our nation is poor. Poverty exacts a terrible toll from children — including hunger, health problems, and even early death. Tonight, as we say/sing the Misheberach, may we pray for their blessing and healing.

Mi Shebeirach avoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah l'imoteinu.

May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah laavoteinu.

Bless those in need of healing with *r'fuah sh'leimah*,
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say, Amen.

(Debbie Friedman)

Prayer for Our Country

We pray for all who hold positions of leadership and responsibility in our national life.
Let Your blessings rest upon them, and make them responsive to Your will, so that our nation may be to the world a beacon of justice and compassion.

Deepen our love for your country and our desire to serve it. Strengthen our power of self-sacrifice for our nation's welfare. Teach us to uphold its good name by our own right conduct.

Cause us to see clearly that the well-being of our nation is in the hands of all its citizens; imbue us with zeal for the cause of liberty in our land and all lands; and help us always to keep our homes safe from affliction, strife, and war. Amen.

Aleinu v'Kaddish Yatom

The Sukkah

You have designed for us a Temple, O God,
More radiant and enduring than Solomon's,
of leaves through which the Heavens are seen,
of doorways open to our brothers and sisters,
adorned with gifts of Your fields and trees

These booths were once the homes of freedom
and of freedom's children,
the tabernacles of humanity's true equality.

Out of the squalor of Egyptian slavery,
our ancestors marched in equal ranks,
sharing the hazards of the wilderness
in homes of equal worth, the humble Sukkah.

The Sukkah is Your Temple, O God ,
and choirs of singing leaves proclaim:
The land belongs to God...
Let each of my children dwell upon it,
sowing in faith and reaping in thanksgiving.

Leave the corners of your fields to those in need.
The grapes left on the vine after the vintage,
these and more give to your friends
that they many share in all your blessings.

And so if forgetful of Our Parent, O God,
the truth of equality becomes a feeble dream,
remind us, once we were free!

And when we shut Your sunlight out
With ornate walls of selfishness and pomp,
remind us, once we were free!

When our wealth so masters us
that we become its slaves,
remind us, once we were free!

Help us to break down the man-made walls
which estrange Your children one from another.
May the Sukkah symbolize the tabernacle of peace
which You will yet spread over all humanity.

(Adapted from Ben Aronin in Likrat Shabbat)

Reflections after the Aleinu

The Sukkah reading is found in the box currently on p. 29 and 30

Rejoice in the everlasting creation,
Give praise to the greatness of the world!
Divine glory is revealed in the heavens above,
and in the earth below.
Yet creation is never ended,
and the universe never full.
Potential is unrealized, promises unfulfilled.
Our place is to affirm the present, even as
We commit to the future,
through the ideals of sacred living,
as revealed in our sacred Teaching.

(Chaim Stern, adapted, in Mishkan T'filah, p. 589)

Meditation Before Kaddish

When I die give what's left of me away
to children and old men that wait to die.
And if you need to cry,

cry for your brother walking the street beside you.
And when you need me, put your arms around anyone
and give them what you need to give me.

I want to leave you something,
something better than words or sounds.
Look for me in the people I've known or loved,
and if you cannot give me away,
at least let me live in your eyes and not in your mind.

You can love me best by letting hands touch hands,
by letting bodies touch bodies,
and by letting go of children that need to be free.
Love doesn't die, people do.
So, when all that's left of me is love,
give me away.

(Merrit Malloy in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 592)

Blessing of the Children

We call upon the child advocates and educators in the congregation who are working to end poverty and close opportunity gaps, and their children, to come to the bima, and lead us as together we bless our children.

Blessed is the parent, and blessed the child, when their hearts are turned to one another. Blessed is the home filled with gladness and light, the spirit of Shabbat. May God bless you and guide you. Seek truth always, be charitable in your words, just and loving in your deeds. A noble heritage has been entrusted to you; guard it well.

For a Boy

Y sim'cha Elohim k'ephrayim u' menasheh

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and Menasheh, who carried forward the life of our people.

For a Girl

Yismech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Leah, v'Rachel

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, who carried forward the life of our people.

For Both Boys and Girls

Y'varech'cha Adonai veyishm'rehcha
Yair Adonai panav eleycha vichuneka
Yisa Adonai panav eleycha veyasem lecha shalom

May God bless you and keep you. May God look kindly upon you and be gracious to you. May God reach out to you in tenderness and give you peace.

(Excerpted from *On the Doorposts of Your House*, © 1994, Central Conference of American Rabbis.
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Supplementary Readings and Prayers for the Shaharit:

Children's Shabbat Morning Service "Children of Promise: Closing Opportunity Gaps" Saturday, October 22, 2016

Welcome

Today marks the 25th anniversary of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. We join congregations of many faiths all across our nation to celebrate children made in God's own image, focus on the urgent needs of children in our nation, and respond to the Eternal's call to justice and kindness. This year's Children's Shabbat theme is "Children of Promise: Closing Opportunity Gaps." As we stand at the end of Sukkot and look toward the beginning of Simchat Torah, we will commit anew to closing opportunity gaps — ending child poverty, hunger, and homelessness and improving early childhood development and education — so that each and every child may fulfill their God-given promise. Let that be our promise to the one who has blessed us with children that we may be a blessing.

Sh'ma Uvirchoteha — Sh'ma and Its Blessings

Reflection after the Bar'chu and Yotzeir Or

In the beginning, even then,
a new light was sown for the righteous;
a promise that Your light would become
the catalyst, first for Order
and then for Hope.
Author of language and light,
help us to use words as You have,
to cast light into dark waters
and draw out justice and truth.
Baruch atah, Adonai, yotzeir ham'orot.

(Elyse Frishman, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 229)

Responsive Reading after Ahavah Rabbah

In a world where the weak were tormented by oppressors, our Torah taught us to love the poor and the stranger.

A heritage of justice has come down to us.

Where the sword was sovereign, we were commanded to seek peace and pursue it.

A heritage of peace has come down to us.

All this now is ours. Ours the teaching, ours the task, to make the heritage live.

For it is our life, and the length of our days!

(*Gates of Prayer*)

Responsive Reading after the Sh'ma and V'ahavta

True, we are often too weak to stop injustices;

but the least we can do is protest against them.

True, we are too poor to eliminate hunger;

but in feeding one child, we protest against hunger.

True, we are too timid and powerless to take on all the guards of all the political prisons in the world;

but in offering our solidarity to one prisoner, we denounce all the tormentors.

True, we are powerless against death;

*but as long as we help one man, one woman, one child live one hour longer in safety and dignity,
we affirm a human's right to live.*

(Elie Wiesel, *Sages and Dreamers*)

Responsive Reading after Emet v'Yatziv

The eternal truth

is that You alone are God and there is none else.

*May the righteous of all nations
rejoice in Your love and exult in Your justice.*

Let them beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

*Let nation not lift up sword against nation
nor learn war any more.*

You shall not hate your brother or your sister in your heart.

*The stranger that sojourns with you
shall be accepted as your equal,
for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

"Why do you crush My people and oppress the poor?" asks God.

*We know that the Eternal One defends the poor
and upholds the rights of the needy.*

Praise to God Most High;

Blessed is God and deserving of blessing!

(Solomon ben Isaac in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 239)

Reading after Mi Chamocha

The good in us will win,

over all the wickedness, over all the wrongs we have done.

We will look back at the pages of written history, and be amazed,
and then we will laugh and sing,

and the good that is in us, children in their cradles, will have won.

Our hearts beat with certainty

that there is a day and an hour, and a mountain called Zion,

And that all of the sufferings will gather there and become song,

ringing out into every corner of the earth, from end to end,

and the nations will hear it,

and like the caravans in the desert will all to that morning throng.

(Hugh Nissenson, adapted, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 241)

Amidah

Reflection for the Amidah

"Never again" becomes more than a slogan: It's a prayer, a promise, a vow. There will never again be hatred, people say. Never again jail and torture. Never again the suffering of innocent people, or the shooting of starving, frightened, terrified children. And never again the glorification of base, ugly, dark violence. It's a prayer.

(Elie Wiesel, *Hostage*)

Reading after Avot v'Imahot

Our fathers and mothers prayed,
each through their own experience of God,
each through their own visions which we have come to share.
 Abraham with the fervor of justice, pleaded the cause of cities.
 Sarah, in the pain of waiting, dared to hope for new life.
Isaac, meditating alone in the field, lifted his eyes to find love.
Rebecca asked for the ability to discern God's call.
 Jacob climbed the rungs of his night into heaven, seeking destiny.
 Leah dreamed of love; and Rachel sought harmony.
We as they seek God's Presence.

(Richard Levy, adapted, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 245)

Responsive Reading after G'vurot

Your might, O God, is everlasting;
Help us to use our strength for good and not evil.

You are the Source of life and blessing;
Help us to choose life for ourselves and our children.

You are the support of the falling;
Help us to lift up the fallen.

You are the author of freedom;
Help us to free the captive.

You are our hope in death as in life;
Help us to keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Your might, O God, is everlasting;
Help us to use our strength for good.

For blessing and not for curse,
For life and not death,
For abundance, not want.

(Chaim Stern in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 349)

Reading after K'dushah

How shall we sanctify God's name?
By being holy ourselves.
How do we accomplish this?
Let our prayers bring us to sacred deed,
to actions that promote justice, harmony and peace.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 351)

Reading after K'dushat HaYom

For the good in us
which calls us to a better life,
we give thanks.

For the strength to improve the world
with our hearts and hands,
we give praise.

For the peace in us
which leads us to work for peace,
we are grateful.

For the gift of Shabbat
which renews us for life,
we offer blessing.

(Chaim Stern and Abraham Rothberg in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 353)

Responsive Reading after Avodah

We Cannot Merely Pray

We cannot merely pray to God to end war;
For the world was made in such a way
That we must find our own path of peace
Within ourselves and with our neighbor.

*We cannot merely pray to God to root out prejudice;
For we already have eyes
With which to see the good in all people
If we would only use them rightly.*

We cannot merely pray to God to end starvation;
For we already have the resources
With which to feed the entire world
If we would only use them wisely.

*We cannot merely pray to God to end despair;
For we already have the power
To clear away slums and give hope
If we would only use our power justly.*

We cannot merely pray to God to end disease;
For we already have great minds
With which to search out cures and healings
If we would only use them constructively.

*Therefore we pray instead
For strength, determination, and will power.
To do instead of merely pray
To become instead of merely to wish;
That our world may be safe,
And that our lives may be blessed.*

(Jack Riemer, adapted)

Responsive Reading after Hodaah

For the expanding grandeur of Creation,
Worlds known and unknown, galaxies beyond galaxies,
Filling us with awe and challenging our imaginations,
Modim anachnu lach.

For this fragile planet earth, its time and tides,
Its sunsets and seasons,
Modim anachnu lach.

For the joy of human life, its wonders and surprises,
Its hopes and achievements,
Modim anachnu lach.

For human community, our common past and future hope,
Our oneness transcending all separation,
Our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression
Modim anachnu lach.

For high hopes and noble causes, for faith without fanaticism,
For understanding of views not shared.
Modim anachnu lach.

For all who have labored and suffered for a fairer world,
Who have lived so that others might live in dignity and freedom,
Modim anachnu lach.

For human liberties and sacred rites:
for opportunities to change and grow, to affirm and choose,
Modim anachnu lach.

We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes,
Not by our words but by our deeds.
Modim anachnu lach.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Your Name is Goodness and You are worthy of thanksgiving.

(Eugene Pickett, adapted, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 257)

Readings after Sim Shalom

O God, may we never become complacent,
faltering in our effort to build a world of peace.
Let the nations know and understand that
justice and right are better than dominion and conquest;
may all come to see that it is not by might nor by power
but by Your spirit that life prevails.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 334)

Readings for the T'filat HaLev

A Talmudic sage once taught, "If a man prays only according to the precise text of the prayer book and adds nothing from his own heart, his prayer is not complete."

Pray as if everything depended on God;
Act as if everything depended on you.
Who rise from prayer better persons,
their prayer is answered.

(From the Religious Action Center's Shabbat Tzedek Morning Service)

My God, help me to persist although I want to give up.
Help me to keep trying although I can't see what good it does.
Help me to keep praying although I'm not sure You hear me.
Help me to keep living in ways that seek to please You.
My God, help me to know when to lead and when to follow.
Help me to know when to speak and when to remain silent.
Help me to know when to act and when to wait.

(Marian Wright Edelman, adapted from *Guide My Feet*)

Help me perfect my ways of loving and care.
Inspire me to make myself whole
so that I may honor your name and
create a world of justice and peace.

(Martin Buber, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p 121)

God, please stop injustice,
the killing of innocent children
by violence at home and in faraway lands.

God, please stop injustice,
The killing of innocent children
By poverty at home and abroad.

God, please stop injustice,
The killing of innocent child spirits
By vanity and greed in our land and others.

God, please stop injustice,
The assault on precious child dreams
By neglect and apathy near and far.

God, please stop injustice,
So our children may live
And love and laugh and play again.

(Marian Wright Edelman, in *Guide My Feet*)

Seder K'riat Hatorah L'Shabbat — Reading the Torah on Shabbat

Before the Ki Mitziyon

Assemble the people, men, women and children,
and the strangers in your cities, to hear, to learn, to revere Adonai your God.,
to observe faithfully the words of this Torah.
And let their children, who do not yet know it, hear,
that they, too, may learn to revere Adonai your God.

Mi Shebeirach

One in five children in our nation is poor. Poverty exacts a terrible toll from children — including hunger, health problems, and even early death. As we say/sing the Misheberach, may we pray for their blessing and healing.

Mi Shebeirach avoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah l'imoteinu.

May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah laavoteinu.

Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah sh'leimah,
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say, Amen.

(Debbie Friedman)

Responsive Readings after the Haftarah

I, the Eternal, have called you to righteousness
and taken you by the hand, and kept you;
I have made you a covenant people, a light of nations.

*We are Israel: witness to the covenant
between God and God's children.*

This is the covenant I make with Israel:
I will place my Torah in your midst, and write it upon your hearts.
I will be your God, and you shall be My people.

*We are Israel: our Torah forbids the worship
of race or nation, possessions or power.*

You who worship gods that cannot save you,
hear the words of the Eternal One:

I am God, there is none else!

*We are Israel: our prophets proclaimed
an exalted vision for the world.*

Hate evil, and love what is good;
let justice well up as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.

We are Israel, schooled in the suffering of the oppressed.

You shall not oppress your neighbors nor rob them.

You shall not stand idle while your neighbor bleeds.

*We are Israel, taught to beat swords into plowshares,
commanded to pursue peace.*

Violence shall no longer be heard in your land,
desolation and destruction within your borders.

All your children will be taught of your God,
and great shall be the peace of your children.

*We are Israel, O God,
when we are witnesses to Your love
and messengers of Your truth.*

(Harvey J. Fields and Chaim Stern in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 373)

A Prayer for Peace

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,
when a great peace will embrace the whole world.

*Then nation will not threaten nation,
And mankind will not again know war.*

For all who live on earth shall realize
we have not come into being to hate or to destroy.
we have come into being to praise, to labor, and to love.

*Compassionate God, bless the leaders of all nations
With the power of compassion.*

Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture:

I will bring peace to the land,
and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you.

*I will rid the land of vicious beasts
And it shall not be ravaged by war.*

Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream.
Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.
And let us say: Amen.

(*Siddur Sim Shalom*, p. 149)

When Torah entered the world, freedom entered it.
The whole Torah exists only to establish peace.

Its highest teaching is love and kindness.
What is hateful to you, do not do to any person.

That is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.
Those who study Torah are the true guardians of civilization.

Honoring one another, doing acts of kindness,
and making peace: these are our highest duties.
But the study of Torah is equal to them all,
because it leads to them all.

Let us learn in order to teach.
Let us learn in order to do!

(John Raynor and Chaim Stern in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 375)

Readings after the Aleinu L'shabeach

May we gain wisdom in our lives,
Overflowing like a river with understanding.
Loved, each of us, for the peace we bring to others.
May our deeds exceed our speech,
And may we never lift up our hand
But to conquer fear and doubt and despair.

Rise up like the sun, O God, over all humanity.
Cause light to go forth over all the lands between the seas.
And light up the universe with the joy
of wholeness, of freedom, and of peace.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 591)

While the sage Choni was walking along a road, he saw a man planting a carob tree. Choni asked him: "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" "Seventy years," replied the man. Choni then asked: "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?" The man answered: "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise, I am planted for my children."

It is not your duty to complete the work. Neither are you free to desist from it.

(*Pirkei Avot 2:16*)

Reflection Before the Mourner's Kaddish

Yiskor...We remember

Remember our people who suffered and died so that we could be free and secure;
May their memory be more than a distant shadow.

For their dreams left unfulfilled and lives taken too soon: we remember.

Remember our brothers and sisters whose sacrifice kept the dream of democracy and justice alive; may
their courage be our inspiration and strength.

For life cut short and vision unrealized: we remember.

Remember the fallen of our armed services, the victims of terror and tragedy;
may the darkness of their loss not obscure the light of peace. They were in love with our land and in love
with life.

For the agony, the tears, the mothers and the fathers,
for the children who were and for the children yet to be: we remember.

(Peter Knobel in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 597)