



## Jewish Resources for Children's Shabbat

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

- Suggestions for the services
- Passages related to children, education, and social justice from traditional Jewish sources
- Readings, reflections, and prayers for the services
- Suggested music for the services
- Sermon notes on the torah portion for October 16, 2011, will be available for download after August 1, 2011, at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths).
- Educational materials for use in religious school classes and youth groups will be available for download after August 1, 2011, at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths).

## 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. One vital way we can pursue justice and protect children is to work for equitable and excellent education for every child. 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;
- 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 the day school. 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 a family event and should not be "given over" to children as "performers."
- **Introduce the special Children's Shabbat focus at the beginning of the service.** The Union of Reform Judaism's on-line 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 education.** Emphasize how we can pursue justice and protect children by working to close the education achievement gap and assure an equitable and excellent education for every child.
- **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 teacher, a Head Start teacher, a tutor or mentor from an after-school program, a community organizer or child advocacy staff working for systemic change to help families whose children are at risk of falling into the education achievement gap, or a staff person from an agency or organization serving low-income families.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

- **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 educators and other congregation members who are working to nurture and protect children.** This year, invite teachers and other people who are working to close the education achievement gap and assure every child an excellent, equitable 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, shelter for homeless families, or after-school program.
- **Distribute or insert the bulletin inserts** which can be found in Promoting Your Children's Sabbath at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths).
- **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 a M'laveh Malkah during the Saturday evening or the Sunday morning minyan/religious school sessions.**

## Passages from the Torah, Prophets, and Talmud

### On the Importance of Children

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

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

The accursed Emperor Hadrian was once walking along the road to Tiberias when he saw an old man standing and cutting down shrubs in order to plant saplings. He said to him, "Old man! Old man! What is your age?" He answered, "One hundred." "You are 100 years old and you stand here cutting down trees in order to plant saplings? Do you think you will eat of their fruits?" He replied, "If I am worthy, I shall eat; if not, just as my parents toiled for me, so shall I toil for my children."

*Kohellet Rabba*

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*

### On the Importance of Education

"At the age of five, (one is ripe) for Bible; at 10 for Mishnah, at 13, for mitzvot, at 15, for Talmud; at 18 for the marriage canopy; at 20 for pursuit; at 30, for vigor; at 40, for understanding; at 50 for counsel; at 60, to be an elder; at 70, for grey hair; at 80, for strength, at 90, to bend over; at 100, as if he had died and passed away and disappeared from the world."

*BT Shabbat* 19b

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

*Pesikta Rabbati* 29b

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

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

*Numbers Rabba* 3:1

“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

Raba said: The number of students for one teacher should be 25. If there are 50 students, they appoint two; if there are 40, they appoint an assistant, who is supported by the funds of the town.

*BT Ta'anit* 24a

Rav once came to a certain town and ordered the people to fast and pray in order to bring down rain. But no rain fell.

The Reader of the congregation then went before the Ark and recited the words from the prayer book, “God who causes the wind to blow,” and immediately the wind began to blow. He then recited, “God who causes the rain to fall,” and rain began to fall.

Rav asked him, “What special deed have you done to merit such reward?”

The Reader answered, “I teach young children, those of the poor as well as those of the rich. I take no fees from anyone who cannot afford to pay. Also, I have a fish pond, and if a child does not want to study, I give him some fishes to keep and win him over in that way so that soon he becomes eager to learn. 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.”

*Baba Batra* 21a

### **On Social Justice**

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

And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the result of righteousness shall be quietness and confidence forever.

Isaiah 32:17

## Suggested Music for the Erev Shabbat Service

**“And the Youth Shall See Visions” by Debbie Friedman. Contact Sounds Write Productions, Inc., San Diego, Calif., or call (619) 697-6120.**

The following suggestions appear in *Shireinu: Our Songs*, available from Transcontinental Music Publications by calling (800) 455-5223.

- “Ani V’Atah” by Arik Einstein
- “Kaddish D’Rabbanan” by Debbie Friedman
- “Hineh Mah Tov,” a traditional folk song
- “The Dreamer” by Lorre Wyatt

### An Erev Shabbat Service

**Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue: Answering God’s Call to Protect Children**

**Friday, October 15, 2011**

*The 2011 National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths takes place this year on Chol HaMo’ed Sukkot. You may choose, however, to hold your Children’s Shabbat the following week to coincide with Simchat Torah, October 21, since both focus on learning. Add music wherever you deem appropriate.*

#### Opening

Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: The students of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says, “And all your children (*banayich*) will be taught of the Eternal and great shall be the peace of your children (*banayich*). Do not read *banayich* (your children) but *bonayich* (your builders).”

*Berachot 64a*

Our children may be the builders of the world but we are entrusted to be the builders of our children. We are not alone. There are friends and family; child care providers and coaches; teachers and mentors, all of whom join us in raising our children. Children reflect the lessons they learn from each of us.

Tonight we give thanks to all those who dedicate themselves to serving our children. They are the *bonim* (builders) of our *banim* (children). As we are grateful for the work they do, so too, we promise to work toward a day when all children shall have access to the provisions they need to grow and become healthy, happy children of God.

#### Candle Lighting

*Hadlakat Neiroi Shabbat*

*Some Shabbat Blessings*<sup>1</sup>

As the great doors of night are opening  
we enter the clean quiet room of Shabbat.

Let us be thankful, as we light these candles  
like eyes of holiness, for this moment of peace.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

Let us savor the fruit of the vine,  
grape that has changed to sweet fire.

Let us be thankful for grain, fruit of grasses  
that feed the cow, the horse and us.

Let us be glad we have found and kept each other  
and glad of the work and duty that is our fruitfulness.

Let the door of our minds open wide  
to welcome the peace of Shabbat.

(By Marge Piercy)

Or:

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: A Reform Siddur*)<sup>2</sup>

Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynu melech ha'olam  
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu  
lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe:  
You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to kindle the lights of Shabbat.

### **Lecha Dodi**

Traditionally, during the last verse of "Lecha Dodi," the congregation turns around and faces the door to welcome the Shabbat spirit into the room. Tonight, as we join with congregations throughout the nation celebrating the 2011 *National Observance of Children's Sabbaths*, let us also turn and symbolically welcome all of those who dedicate themselves to teaching our nation's children.

L'cha do-di lik-rat ka-la, p'nei Shabbat n'ka-b'la.  
L'cha do-di lik-rat ka-la, p'nei Shabbat n'ka-b'la.

Beloved, come to meet the bride; beloved, come to greet Shabbat.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright Marge Piercy, PEASCH FOR THE REST OF US: How to Make the Passover Seder Your Own, Schocken, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur* © 2007; and is under the copyright protection of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and reprinted for use by permission of the CCAR. All rights reserved.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

Beloved, come to meet the bride; beloved, come to greet Shabbat.

Sha-mor v'za-chor b'dibur eh-chad, hish mi-anu  
Eil ha-m'yuchad;

Adonai eh-chad, u'sh-mo eh-chad, l'sheim u-l'tif-eh'ret v'li-t'hi-la.

L'cha do-di . . .

Keep and Remember: a single command, the Only God caused us to hear; the Eternal is One, God's name is One, for honor and glory and praise.

Beloved . . .

Lik-rat Shabbat l'chu v'nei-l'cha, ki hi m'kor ha'b'ra-cha.  
Mei-rosh mi-keh-dem n'su-cha, sof ma-a-seh b'ma-cha-sha-va t'chi-la.

L'cha do-di . . .

Come with me to meet Shabbat, forever a fountain of blessing.  
Still it flows, as from the start: the last of days, for which the first was made.

Beloved . . .

Hit-o-r'ri, hit-o-r'ri, ki va o-reich! Ku-mi o-ri,  
u-ri u-ri, shir da-bei-ri; k'vod Adonai a-la-yich nig-la.

L'cha do-di . . .

Awake, awake, your light has come! Arise, shine, awake, and sing, the Eternal's glory dawns upon you.  
Beloved . . .

Bo-i v'sha-lom, a teh-ret ba-a-lah; gam b'sim-chah  
u-v'tsa-ho-la.  
Toch eh-mu-nei am s'gu-la, bo-i cha-la! Bo-i cha-la!

L'cha do-di . . .

Enter in peace, O crown of your husband; enter in gladness, enter in joy. Come to the people that keeps its faith. Enter, O bride! Enter, O bride!

Beloved . . .

### Shalom Aleichem

#### *Illuminations*<sup>3</sup>

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 and no services.  
But I need them.

<sup>3</sup> "Illuminations" by Ruth F. Brin is reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Harvest: Collected Poems & Prayers* (Holy Cow! Press, 1999, www.holycowpress.org) Copyright © 1999 by Ruth F. Brin.

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.

To love God is to love dreams of peace and joy  
that illumine all of us,  
and to bring that vision to life.

(By Ruth F. Brin)

### Chatzi Kaddish

Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash sh-mei ra-ba b'al-ma di-v'ra  
chi-r'u'tei, v'yam-lich mal-chu-tei b'cha-yei-chon u'v-yo-mei-chon u'v'cha-yei d'chol beit Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-  
la u-vi-z'man ka-riv, v'i-m'ru: A-mein.

Y'hei sh'mei ra-ba m'va-rach l'a-lam u-l'al-mei al-ma-ya.

Yit-ba-rach v'yish-ta-bach v'yit-pa-ar, v'yit-ro-mam, v'yit-na-sei, v'yit-ha-dar, v'hit-a-leh, v'yit-ha-lal sh'mei  
d'kud-sha, b'rich hu, l'ei-la min kol bir-cha-ta v'shi-ra'ta, tush-b'cha-ta v'neh-cheh-ma-ta da-a-mi-ran b'al-  
ma, v'i-m ru: A-mein.

Let the glory of God be extolled, and God's great name  
be hallowed in the world whose creation God willed. May God rule in our own day, in our own lives, and  
in the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let God's great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter is the Holy One, the Blessed One, who yet  
we glorify, honor and exalt. And let us say: Amen.

### Barechu

Barechu et Adonai hamvorach.  
Praise the Eternal, to whom all praise is due.

Baruch Adonai hamvorach le'olam va'ed.  
Praise the Eternal, to whom all praise is due now and forever.

## Maariv Aravim

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam asher  
bi-d'varo ma-ariv aravim, b'chochma potey-ach sh'arim  
u-vitvuna m'shaneh itim, u-macha-lif et ha-z'manim  
u-m'sadeyr et ha-kochavim b'mish-m'ro-teyhem ba-rakia kir-tzono. Borey yom va-laila, goleyl or mipney  
cho-shech v'cho-shech mipney or.

U-ma-avir yom u-meyvi laila, u'mavdil beyn yom  
u-veyn laila, Adonai tz'vaot sh'mo.  
Eyl chai v'kayam tamid yimloch aleynu l'olam va-ed.  
Baruch ata Adonai, ha-ma-ariv aravim.

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Sovereign  
of all worlds,  
by whose word the evenings fall.  
In wisdom You open heaven's gates.  
With divine discernment You make seasons change,  
causing the times to come and go, and ordering the stars on their appointed paths  
through heaven's dome, all according to Your will.

Creator of the day and night, Who rolls back light before the dark, and dark before the light, Who makes  
day pass away and brings on night, dividing between day and night:

The Leader of the Throngs of Heaven is Your name!  
Living and enduring God, rule over us, now and always.  
Blessed are You, Almighty One, who makes the  
evenings fall.

## Reflection

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 *Rabbi's Manual* by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association)<sup>4</sup>

## Ahavat Olam

Ahavat olam beyt yisra'el amecha ahavta.  
Torah u'mitzvot chukim u'mishpatim otanu limad'ta.  
Al ken Adonai Eloheynu besochbenu  
u'v'kumenu nasiach be'chukecha  
v'nishmach b'divrey toratecha  
u'v'mitzvotcha le'olam va'ed ki hem chayeynu v'orech yameynu u'vahem nehgeh yomam valaylah.  
V'ahavatecha al tasir mimenu l'olamim.  
Baruch ata Adonai ohev amo Yisra'el.

<sup>4</sup> From the *Rabbi's Manual*. Reprinted with permission of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

Your everlasting love for the house of Israel,  
Torah and mitzvot, laws and justice You have taught us.  
And so, Dear One our God, when we lie down and when we rise up, we reflect upon Your laws.  
We take pleasure in Your Torah's words and Your mitzvot, now and always.  
Truly, they are our life, our length of days.  
On them we meditate by day and night.  
Your love will never depart from us as long as  
worlds endure.  
Blessed are You, Beloved One, who loves Your people Israel.

### Sh'ma

Sh'ma Yis-ra-eil, Adonai Eh-lo-hei-nu, Adonai Eh-chad!  
Hear, O Israel, the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God alone!

Ba-ruch shem k'vod mal-chu-to l'o-lam va-ed!  
Blessed is God's glorious majesty for ever and ever!

### V'A-Havta

V'ahavta et Adonai Ehlohehcha b'chol l'vav'cha  
u'v'chol nafsh'cha u'v'chol m'odehcha.

V'hayu ha-d'varim ha-eileh asher anochi  
m'tzav'cha ha-yom al l'avvehcha.

V'shinantam l'vanehcha v'dibarta bam  
b'shiv'cha b'veitehcha u'v'lecht'cha  
vadehrech u'v'shochb'cha u'v'kumehcha.

U'kshartam l'ot al yadehcha v'hayu l'totafot bein einhcha, u'ch'tavtam al m'zuzot beitehcha u'vish'arehcha.

L'ma-an tizk'ru va-asitem et kol mitzvotai,  
vi-h'yitem k'doshim leiloheichem. Ani Adonai Ehloheichem asher hotzeiti etchem m'eretz mitzrayim lih'yot  
lachem leilohim. Ani Adonai Ehloheichem.

You shall love your Eternal God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your being. Set these  
words, which I command you this day, upon your heart.

Teach them faithfully to your children.

Speak of them in your home and on your way,  
when you lie down and when you rise up.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand.

Let them be symbols before your eyes.

Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

Be mindful of all My mitzvot, and do them,  
so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God.  
I am your Eternal God who led you out of Egypt  
to be your God.  
I am your Eternal God.

### After the V'a-havta

Loving life and its mysterious source  
With all our heart and all our spirit,  
All our sense and strength,  
We take upon ourselves and into ourselves  
these promises:  
to care for the earth  
and those who live upon it,  
to pursue justice and peace,  
to love kindness and compassion.  
We will teach this to our children  
Throughout the passage of the day—  
As we dwell in our homes  
And as we go on our journeys,  
From the time we rise until we fall asleep.  
And may our actions be faithful to our words  
That our children's children  
May live to know:  
Truth and kindness have embraced,  
Peace and justice have kissed  
And are one.

(From *Mishnah T'filah: A Reform Siddur*)<sup>5</sup>

### Reflection on the Sh'ma God Is with Us

- Reader:** You shall love the Eternal your God with all your mind, with all your strength, with all your being.
- Response:** The path to the love of God is through the love of others; I do not love God until I love my neighbor as myself.
- Reader:** Set these words which I command you this day, upon your heart. Jewish faith unites mind and heart.
- Response:** Even as my mind seeks to understand life's meaning, so may my life show love for all created things.

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur* © 2007; and is under the copyright protection of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and reprinted for use by permission of the CCAR. All rights reserved.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

- Reader:** Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up.
- Response:** We do not teach our children by words alone. May I make my life and actions into good teachings, for in my conduct I must exemplify Torah.
- Reader:** Bind them as a sign upon your hand; let them be a symbol before your eyes; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.
- Response:** Let my home glow with the beauty of our heritage. Let my doors be opened wide to wisdom and to righteousness.
- Reader:** Be mindful of all My Mitzvot and do them: so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God.
- Response:** Each Mitzvah is a way to holiness. The Mitzvot elevate our humanity. Let me learn to use them to magnify the divine in myself and in the world.

(From *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*)<sup>6</sup>

### G'ulah Redemption

- Leader:** Those who raise children in their home are considered by scripture as the ones who gave birth to them.
- Congregation:** In loving and protecting them, those who raise them, bless them with the shelter of their deeds and their name. Call their name beloved, for they are our inheritors.
- Leader:** The ones who teach children Torah are considered as the ones who gave birth to them.
- Congregation:** Call their name beloved, for they are our inheritors. By them we have been blessed and upon their lives we have laid our blessing.

(From *Rabbi's Manual* by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association)<sup>7</sup>

### Mi Chamocha

Mi chamocha ba'elim Adonai? Mi kamocha  
nedar bakodesh  
nora tehilot osey feleh?  
malchut'cha ra'u vanecha, boke'a yam lifnei  
Moshe zeh Eli anu v'amru:  
Adonai yimloch l'olam va'ed.  
V'ne-emar ki fadah Adonai et Ya'akov u'galo  
miyad chazak mimenu.  
Baruch atah Adonai ga'al Yisra'el.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpt from *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook* © 1975; and is under the copyright protection of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and reprinted for use by permission of the CCAR. All rights reserved.

<sup>7</sup> From the *Rabbi's Manual*. Reprinted with permission of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

Who is like You, Eternal One, among the gods  
that are worshipped?  
Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome  
in splendor, doing wonders?  
In their escape from the sea, Your children saw  
Your sovereign might displayed.  
“This is my God!” they cried. “The Eternal  
will reign for ever and ever!”  
Now let all come to say:  
The Eternal has redeemed Israel and all the oppressed.  
Blessed is the Eternal God.

### Hashkivenu Help Us

Hash-kiveynu Adonai Eloheynu l'shalom,  
v'ha-amideynu malkeynu l'chayyim.  
Ufros aleynu sukat sh'lomecha, v'tak-neynu  
b'eytzah tovah mil-fanecha  
v'hoshi-eynu l'ma-an sh'mecha.  
V'hageyn ba-adeynu, v'ha-seyr mey-aleynu oyeyv,  
dever, v'cherev, v'ra-av, v'yagon, v'ha-seyr satan  
mil-fa-neynu umey-ach-reynu,  
uv-tzeyl k'nafecha tas-tireynu ki Eyl shom-reynu  
u'matzileynu ata, ki  
Eyl melech chanun v'rachum atah.

U'sh-mor tzey-teynu uvo-eynu l'chayyim  
ul'shalom mey-ata v'ad olam.  
Uf-ros aleynu sukat sh'lomecha.  
Baruch ata Adonai, ha-poreys sukat shalom  
aleynu v'al kol amo  
Yisrael v'al Y'ru-shala-yim.

Grant O God that we may lie down in peace,  
And raise us up, O Guardian, to life renewed.  
Spread over us the shelter of Your peace;  
Guide us with Your good counsel;  
And for Your Name's sake, be our help.  
Shield us from hatred and plague;  
Keep us from war and famine and anguish.  
Subdue our inclination to evil.  
O God, our Guardian and Helper,  
Our gracious and merciful Ruler,  
Give us refuge in the shadow of Your wings.  
Guard our coming and going,  
That now and always we have life.

## Reflection

Anyone who teaches a child Torah does not teach that child only, but also the child's descendants and the descendants of the descendants and so on to the end of all generations.

*Kiddushin 30a*

## V'shamru

V'shameru v'ney Yisrael et ha-shabbat, la-asot et  
ha-shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam.  
Beyni uveyn b'ney yisrael ot hi l'olam ki shey-shet  
yamim asa Adonai et ha-shamayim v'et  
ha-aretz u'va-yom ha-sh'vi-i shavat va-yina-fash.

The people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath,  
Observing the Sabbath in every generation for all time.  
It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel,  
For in six days the Eternal God made heaven and earth,  
And on the seventh day, God rested from all labor.

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.

(From *Mishkan T'Filah: A Reform Siddur*)<sup>8</sup>

## Amidah Standing in Prayer

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.  
Who rise from prayer better persons,  
Their prayer is answered.

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*Pray as if everything depended on God.*

*Act as if everything depended on you.*

### **Avot Ve'imot The Ancestors**

Adonai, s'fatai tif-tach, u'fi yaggid t'hilatecha.

Baruch atah Adonai, Elohaynu vaylohei

avoteinu v'imoteinu

Elohay Avraham Elohay Sarah

Elohay Yitzchak Elohay Rivka

Elohay Yaakov Elohay Rachel

Vey-lohay Leah

Ha-eil ha-ga-dol ha-gibor v'ha-nora,

Eil elyon gomeil chasadim tovim,

v'konei ha-kol, v'zo-cheir chas'dei avot ve'imot,

v'mei-vi g'u-la li'v'nei v'nei-hem, l'ma-an sh'mo, b'ahava.

Melech o-zeir u'mo-shi-a u'ma-gein.

Baruch ata Adonai, ma-gein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.

Open my mouth, Beloved One, and let my  
mouth declare Your praise.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God God of our fathers and mothers,

God of Abraham, God of Isaac and

God of Jacob,

God of Sarah, God of Rebekah, God of Rachel, and God of Leah;

Ha'El: great, mighty awesome, God beyond all that is,

Compassionate One, embracing all.

You take note of our ancestors' deeds,

Redeeming their descendants lovingly, for the sake of Your Name.

Attentive Sovereign, Helper and Shield,

Blessed are You, Eternal One,

Helper of Sarah, Abraham's Shield.

### **G'vurot**

A-ta gi-bor l'o'lam, Adonai, m'cha-yei ha-kol a-ta, rav l'ho-shi-a. M'chal-keil cha-yim b'cheh-sed, m'cha-yei

ha-kol b'ra-cha-mim ra-bim. So-meich no-f'lim v'ro-fei

cho-lim, u-ma tir a-su-rim, u-m'ka-yeim eh-mu-na-to

li-shei-nei a-far. Mi cha-mo-cha ba-al g'vu-rot, u-mi do-meh lach, meh-lech mei-mit u-m'cha-yeh u-matz-mi-ach y'shu-a?

V'neh-eh-man a-ta l'ha-cha-yot ha-kol. Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, m'cha-yei ha-kol.

Eternal is Your might, O God; all life is Your gift; great is Your power to save!

With love You sustain the living, with great compassion give life to all.

You send help to the falling and healing to the sick.

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

You bring freedom to the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.  
Who is like You, Mighty One, Author of life and death, Source of salvation?  
We praise You, O God, the Source of life.

### Reflection

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!

(From *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*)<sup>9</sup>

### Kedushah

A-ta ka-dosh v'shim-chah ka-dosh u-k'do-shim b'chol yom y'halle-lu-chah, selah. Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai ha-el ha-ka-dosh.

You are holy, Your name is holy, and those who strive to be holy declare Your glory day by day.

### A Blessing

*Berachot 17a*  
*Eruvin 54a*

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,  
and your ears hear the music of its words.  
May the space between each letter of the scrolls  
bring warmth and happiness to your soul.  
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,  
and may this holiness be gentle and soothing  
to you and all God's creatures.  
May your study be passionate,  
and meanings bear more meanings  
until Life itself arrays itself before you  
as a dazzling wedding feast.  
And may your conversation,  
even of the commonplace,  
be a blessing to all who listen to your words  
and see the Torah glowing on your face.

(By Danny Siegel, from *Unlocked Doors: The Selected Poems of Danny Siegel*. )<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Danny Siegel from *Unlocked Doors: The Selected Poems of Danny Siegel*. The Town House Press, 1983. Reprinted with permission of the author.

## On Public Education

At first, if a child had a father, the father taught him, but if he had no father, he received no education.

Then it was decreed that teachers of children would be appointed in Jerusalem and fathers would take their sons to Jerusalem to be taught. But, again, fatherless children received no instruction.

Then it was resolved that teachers would be appointed in each district and that boys would receive formal education from the age of sixteen or seventeen.

Finally Joshua ben Gamla organized an educational system in which teachers were appointed in every district and every town, and children entered school at the age of six or seven.

## A Blessing

O God, our Creator and our Teacher, bless these children who have come into Your sanctuary with eager minds and warm hearts. We honor them for their study of Torah and commitment to lives of loyalty and goodness. Thus will they bring joy to all who love them and honor to the household of Israel. Strengthen them and guide them in all their ways. Blessed is the Eternal, the Teacher of Torah to the people of Israel.

(From *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*)<sup>11</sup>

## Shalom Rav A Blessing of Peace

Shalom rav al yisra'el am'cha tasim l'olam.  
Ki atah hu melech adon l'chol ha-shalom.  
V'tov b'eynecha l'varech et am'cha Yisrael  
b'chol eyt u'v'chol sha-ah bishlomecha.  
Baruch atah Adonai ha-m'varech et amo Yisrael  
ba-shalom.

Grant abundant peace eternally for Israel, Your people.  
For You are the sovereign source of all peace.  
So, may it be a good thing in Your eyes to bless  
Your people Israel, and all who dwell on earth, in every time and hour, with Your peace.

Blessed are You, Compassionate One, who  
blesses Your people, Israel, with peace.

Ashrei adam matza chochma  
V'adam yafik t'vunah.  
Ki tov sach'rah mis'char kasef  
Umecharutz t'vu'ata.  
Yekara himipninim  
V'chol chafatzeicha lo yishvu-va.

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## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

Happy is the one who finds wisdom,  
The one who gains understanding;  
For its fruits are better than silves,  
Its yield more than fine gold.  
It is more precious than rubies,  
No treasure can match it.

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!

(From *Mishkan T'Filah: A Reform Siddur*)<sup>12</sup>

### Aleinu

Aleinu l'sha-beyach la-adon ha-kol  
La-teyt g'dula l'yotzer b'reyshit.  
Shelo asanu k'go-yey ha-aratzot,  
V'lo samanu k'mish-p'chot ha-adama.  
Shelo sam chel-keynu ka-hem,  
V'gora-leynu k'chol hamonam.  
Va'anachnu kor-im u'mishtachavim u'modim  
Lifnei melech malchey ha-m'lachim  
Ha-kadosh baruch hu.

We must praise the God of all,  
The Maker of heaven and earth,  
Who has set us apart  
From the other families of earth,  
Giving us a destiny unique  
Among the nations. Therefore we bow in awe and thanksgiving  
Before the One who is Sovereign over all,  
The Holy and Blessed One.

(From *Mishkan T'Filah: A Reform Siddur*)<sup>13</sup>

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## Reflection Before the Kaddish

Eternal God, the generations come and go before You. Brief is their time. Passing, they leave many of their tasks unfinished, their plans unfulfilled, their dreams unrealized. It would be more than we could bear, but for the faith that our little day finds its permanence in your eternity, and our work its completing in the unfolding of Your purpose for humanity.

At this sacred moment we turn our thoughts to those we love who have gone from life. We recall the joy of their companionship. We feel a pang, the echo of that intense grief when first their death lay before our stricken eyes. Now we know that they will never vanish, so long as heart and thought remain within us. By love are they remembered and in memory they live.

O God, grant that their memory may bring strength and blessing. May the nobility in their lives and the high ideals they cherished endure in our thoughts and live on in our deeds. And may we, carrying on their work, help to redeem Your promise that life shall prevail.

(From *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*)<sup>14</sup>

## Mourner's Kaddish

Yitgadal v'yitkadash shemey raba b'alma divra  
chirutey v'yamlich malchutey, b'chayeychon u'v'yomeychon u'v'chayey d'chol beyt yisrael ba'agala u'vizman  
kariv v'imru, amen.

Yehey shemey raba m'varach l'alam ul'almeiy almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasey v'yit-hadar v'yitaleh v'yit-halal sh'mey d'kudsha  
b'rich hu l'ela min kol birchata v'shirata tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran b'alma v'imru amen.

Yehey sh'lama raba min shemaya v'chayim  
aleynu v'al kol yisrael ve'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom  
aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el ve'al kol yoshvey tevel v'imru Amen.

Let God's name be made great and holy in the  
world that was created as God willed.  
May God complete the holy realm in your own  
lifetime, in your days,  
and in the days of all the house of Israel,  
quickly and soon.  
And let us say: Amen.

May God's great name be blessed, forever and as  
long as worlds endure.

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May it be blessed, and praised, and glorified, and held in honor, viewed with awe, embellished, and revered; and may the Blessed Name of holiness be hailed, though it be higher than all the blessings, songs, praises, and consolations that we utter in this world. And let us say: Amen.

May Heaven grant a universal peace, and life for us, and for all Israel. And let us say: Amen.

May the One who creates harmony above, make peace for us and for all Israel, and for all who dwell on earth. And let us say: Amen.

### **Blessing of the Children**

We call upon the educators in the congregation 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.

(From *On the Doorposts of Your House*)<sup>15</sup>

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## Sample Sermon

**Rabbi Kenneth L. Cohen**

**Executive Director, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism—Seaboard Region  
President, Washington-Baltimore Region of the Rabbinical Assembly**

### Cobblers and Rabbis

To look at me now, sitting in my book-lined study, you would never know that once upon a time, not all that long ago, I hated school. School, I was convinced, was not designed for little boys like me who wrote smudgy papers, didn't pay attention to the teacher, talked in class (and everywhere else), and forgot to do their homework. I was jealous of the little girls (and they were always girls) who always did everything right, were the teacher's pets, and got a star on every paper.

Somehow, I survived first grade. Barely. They passed me on to the second grade. And then the third. Eventually I went on to earn several degrees, write a few books, and marry one of those little girls who got all the "A"s (she went to Harvard, of course). I suppose that these days they say that I had this or that learning disability. My parents told me that I was not trying hard enough (but I was trying so very hard!). I thought I was being bad. (I must have been bad, I thought; after all, I was always getting in trouble.) Now I am a rabbi and make my living reading, writing, teaching, and trying to be good. I eventually became a public speaker and a broadcaster with the BBC (both media ideally suited for those who can't spell.) Joanne balances our checkbook (I don't do well with double digits.)

With this sort of baggage, it is no wonder that I am unimpressed when Jewish schools try to convince me how elitist they are. "We have an excellent reputation," admissions officers will tell me, as if quality is directly proportional to the number of students refused entry. (Perhaps the ideal school is so selective that nobody gets in?) At times I think I am living in a Jewish Lake Wobegon, where all the women are strong, all the men good-looking, and all the children above average. My idea of excellence is different. I don't worry too much about the "gifted and talented" who would make it in any event, but about the messy students who fidget, who have their own rich potential and talent, the precious little souls which need to be cherished, not crushed. My favorite school principal, Mrs. Susan Koss of the Jewish Primary Day School in Washington, D.C., says "We don't teach programs, we teach children." We achieve not excellence, but mediocrity or worse, when we aim for the stars but trod on little spirits in the process. We can do better.

I am a proud Jew and rejoice at our people's devotion to learning. We are, after all, the people of the book. But sometimes that can have its drawbacks. I envy much in the Christian tradition. They have saints who can be role models for all sorts of people. If you are simple and unlearned, there are scores of illiterate peasant girls who became canonized. Are you a scholar? You might aspire to be like an Aquinas or a Saint Jerome or a Thomas Moore. Of course we Jews also have saints, but they always seem to be old men with beards who wrote books (or their somewhat masochistic wives who sacrificed themselves so that their schol-

## Jewish Resources for the Children's Sabbath

ar husbands could write books). But what do we offer the average person (and most of us are, after all, average)? A great deal, I think.

The early Chasidic movement bequeathed to us a treasury of tales of simple, unlettered folk who proved, though their innate goodness, that one need not be a scholar to be beloved by God. “Nine rabbis don’t make a minyan, but 10 cobblers do.”

All of us have a mix of talents. Most of us are good, or even excellent, at something. But even the rare renaissance men and women among us are not uniformly good at everything. We should rejoice at our talents and be humbled by our weaknesses, and always be mindful that we, and everyone else, are unique and precious children of God.

Susan Koss tells a story. Once she left her house for an early morning minyan at the synagogue. Due to the hour, the earth was covered with a beautiful blanket of largely undisturbed snow. As she approached the synagogue, there were more and more footprints. She observed that the footprints differed. “Some were concise and measured, others sort of slid together vertically as if the person wanted to make sure that his prints stood out.” Some were made by children and some by adults. “Some were large and some were small.” She wrote, “I was struck by the thought that there were so many clear and varied prints but yet they were all leading to the same destination. It didn’t matter how the person walked, just that s/he arrived in shul.”

Mrs. Koss concludes, “That is exactly how children learn! So many people were and are brought up to believe that learning is accomplished in one way, sitting at our desks, listening to the teacher talk, following directions—followed by success! What happens when we simply can’t sit? What happens when two seconds after the teacher is finished talking, we can’t remember what s/he said and certainly not what the directions were!”

But, to borrow Susan’s imagery, we all eventually make it to the synagogue door. We follow different routes, and some get there before others. Some shuffle and some plow and some may meander a bit, but whether we are rabbis or cobblers, we all are needed there for the minyan. And all of us count.

(Sample Sermon reprinted from the 1999 Children’s Sabbath Resource Manual, *Wonderfully Made: Preparing All Children to Learn and Succeed.*)