

# Jewish Resources for Children's Shabbat



**T**he annual multifaith National Observance of Children's Sabbaths unites congregations of all faiths across our country as a prophetic voice and presence, actively leading our nation to live out of the ideals of compassion and justice for children. From the beginning, synagogues have been a vital part of the weekend, bringing a powerful Jewish voice and tradition of social justice to this multifaith weekend. This inspiring weekend focuses attention on the urgent plight of children in our nation and calls us to put our faith into action throughout the year to meet children's needs through direct service and work for justice. Through the services, educational programs, and activities, you can affirm what your synagogue already does with and for children while challenging members to take new actions and commit to new efforts to meet the needs of children in your community, state, and our nation.

The Children's Shabbat, like a Tot Shabbat, aims to be engaging for children and especially welcoming to families. However, the Children's Shabbat is different from a Tot Shabbat in that the Children's Shabbat is intended for all ages in the congregation, focuses on a serious justice concern (such as ending child poverty), and aims to generate new, long-term action to respond to that concern. The Children's Shabbat is also different in that it is part of a multifaith weekend celebrated across the nation, lifting a united and amplified voice for children and justice.



## JEWISH RESOURCES FOR THE CHILDREN'S SHABBAT

The Children's Defense Fund provides two kinds of resources to help synagogues and other places of worship plan for and participate in the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths: "evergreen" resources that can be used year after year to introduce congregations of the Children's Sabbath, and annual resources focused on the particular year's theme and issue.

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

- Suggestions for incorporating the Children's Shabbat focus on seeking justice for children into your services
- Suggested readings and prayers for a Kabbalat Shabbat/Erev Shabbat Service
- Suggested readings and prayers for the Shacharit/Shabbat Morning Service
- Ideas for religious school groups and youth groups

**Annual Supplement for the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths:** In addition to this section of resources which you can refer back to each year, CDF will prepare and post annual resources focused on the particular year's theme and children's concern (such as gun violence, poverty, or health care.) These annual resources, posted at [www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration](http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration) will include:

- A letter from CDF Founder and President Emerita Marian Wright Edelman on the year's theme and focus.
- Resources for Synagogues including passages from modern and traditional Jewish sources related to the year's theme and sermon notes with traditional and modern insights on the parashat for Children's Shabbat.
- Timely and specific actions congregations can take to raise awareness, reach out directly, and seek justice to address the particular concern that is the focus of the year's Children's Sabbath.
- Educational resources and bulletin inserts to inform and activate members on the Children's Sabbath focus.

**Additional Children's Sabbath Resources:** Other "evergreen" resources for the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, like this one, you can refer to year after year include:

- Welcome to the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths
- Planning Ideas for All Faiths
- Promoting Your Children's Sabbath
- Action Ideas for the Children's Sabbath and Throughout the Year.

Be sure to draw on the annual resources and the other "evergreen" sections at [www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration](http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration) to broaden your Children's Shabbat beyond the services to include education, outreach, and actions for justice on the weekend of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths and throughout the year to come.

Children's Shabbat is about far more than one weekend. After the services and education programs and activities of the weekend, our hope is that the *gemilut hasidim* and the justice-seeking advocacy of your congregation in the year ahead will continue to help improve the lives of children in our communities and throughout our nation in deep and lasting ways. Working together, we can make a difference.

## 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. Children's Shabbat services also are 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 a Kabbalat Shabbat/ 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 the particular focus designated for this year's Children's Shabbat.** In addition to the sermon notes provided in the annual Children's Shabbat supplement, draw on resources provided in other sections of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths materials (available for download at [www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration](http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration)) and from the Children's Defense Fund's website ([www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)), social action websites, and resources of your movement such as the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism ([www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)).
- **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, or someone whose work or personal experience is related to the year's particular Children's Shabbat focus.



## JEWISH RESOURCES FOR THE CHILDREN'S SHABBAT

- **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 students becoming B'nai Mitzvah.
- **Honor congregation members who are working to nurture and protect children.** Invite those who are engaged in work for justice or in service or advocacy related to the year's theme. 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 an after-school program.
- **Distribute or insert the bulletin inserts** which can be found in the annual supplement for the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths at [www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration](http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration).
- **With the help of your Cantor or Cantorial Soloist, 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 an educational session for adults or youth group members,** drawing on the session outline provided in the annual supplement for the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbath](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbath).
- **Organize a book group to read *Recharging Judaism: How Civic Engagement is Good for Synagogues, Jews, and America*** by Rabbi Judith Schindler and Judy Seldin-Cohen, and other books related to children and child advocacy, and discuss ways that its insights could guide your congregation's justice work for children and families.
- **Be sure to read the Actions Section of the Children's Sabbath manual, available for download from [www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration](http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/childrens-sabbath-celebration),** 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 Evelyn 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).

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, especially those in poverty. 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 a Kabbalat Shabbat/Erev Shabbat Service on Children's Shabbat

### 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 need,  
all who bring the offerings of their hearts.  
May our worship lead us to acts of kindness, peace, and love.

(From *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*)

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.

(from *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*)

## 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.

(from *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*)

This weekend marks the annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths celebrated by congregations of many faiths all across our nation. This year's observance is titled [*include year's title and focus.*] On the Children's Shabbat, we celebrate together with congregations spanning the country and across all lines of religion, race, income and geography, united in common concern for children and families who experience injustice and in common commitment to reach out with compassion and speak up for justice. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel famously observed after marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma, "I felt my legs were praying." On the Children's Shabbat and in the year to follow, we will be praying with our voices and legs, our words and our work. Shabbat shalom.

## Kabbalat Shabbat – Welcoming Shabbat

### Introduction to L'chah Dodi

As we prepare to sing *L'chah 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

### 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)

#### Maariv Aravim

This is an hour of change.  
Within it we stand uncertain on the border of light.  
Shall we draw back or cross over?  
Where shall our hearts turn?  
Shall we draw back, my brother, my sister,  
or cross over?

This is the hour of change, and within it,  
we stand quietly  
on the border of light.  
What lies before us?  
Shall we draw back, my brother, my sister,  
or cross over?

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Hamaariv aravim.*

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 149)

#### Reading after Ahavat Olam

In each age we receive and transmit Torah.  
At each moment we are addressed by the World.  
    In each age we are challenged by our ancient teaching.  
    At each moment we stand face to face with Truth.

In each age we add our wisdom to that which has gone before.  
At each moment the knowing heart is filled with wonder.  
    In each age the children of Torah become its builders  
    and seek to set the world firm on a foundation of Truth.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 266)

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.)

“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.” (Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 30a)

## Reflection after the Sh'ma and V'ahavta

### Sh'ma: A Re-Creation

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.

(Marcia Falk, in *Siddur Lev Shalem* The Rabbinical Assembly, p. 41)

### 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)

### **Readings 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)

Sing the song of men and women  
joined in understanding and respect.  
The song of God's miracles,  
an earth protected and cherished;  
a gift for our children  
and the generations to come.

The song of a land once ravaged by war,  
now quiet and content;  
her soldiers home, to leave no more.  
The song of a world redeemed:  
the song of peace.

(*Mishkan T'filah*, p. 159)

### **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.*

O God, by faith, like Abraham, let us obey Your call to leave our comfortable homes and set out for strange places although we do not know for certain where we are going.

By faith, like Noah, let us heed Your signs and warnings and build sturdy arks to rescue our children from the coming floods.

By faith, like Isaac and Jacob, let us seek Your blessings on our children's futures.

By faith, like Moses, let us leave Pharaoh's house and head across the wilderness to lead our oppressed children to freedom.

By faith, like Joseph, let us turn evil into good and welcome our erring brothers and kin with a spirit of reconciliation and love.

By faith, like the child David, let us go out without fear to face the Goliaths of our day with slingshots of righteousness and justice confident of Your divine guidance and protection.

(Marian Wright Edelman in *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children*, p. 56)

### 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'dushah 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.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadeish HaShabbat.*

(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)

### **Reading after Shalom**

Spread Your peace over us  
like a vast quilt crafted by  
strong and patient hands.  
Plant it deep within us like  
a million seeds claiming  
life in the heart's most soil  
Grant it now.

To those born Your people,  
to those who have  
walked winding paths to become so;  
to those still burdened by  
history, to those with no  
memory of want or fear;  
grant a generous peace.  
To those who reach for it through  
the steady breath of the body;  
to those who grasp for it in a child  
home from the reserves;  
to those on the streets for the  
rights of others; to those on  
guard for the safety of their own;  
with abundant gentle blessing,  
Master of Peace,  
kiss all of us goodnight.

(Tamara Cohen in *Siddur Sim Shalom*, p. 51)

### **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 Mi shebeirach**

[You may wish to introduce the Mi shebeirach with a specific focus on the children's concern addressed by the year's Children's Shabbat, e.g., "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 Mi shebeirach, may we pray for their blessing and healing.]"

### **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**

### **Reflections after the Aleinu**

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 others in the congregation who are working to end poverty and assure love and justice for every child, to come to the bima with their children, 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 v'chiMenasheh*

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

### **For a Girl**

*Yismeich 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 veyiswhm'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.

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# Supplementary Readings and Prayers for the Shacharit:

## Children's Shabbat Morning Service

### Welcome

Today marks the annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths weekend celebrated by congregations of many faiths all across our nation. This year's National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is titled *[include annual title and focus.]* On the Children's Shabbat, we celebrate together with congregations spanning the country and across all lines of religion, race, income and geography, united in common concern for children and families who experience injustice and in common commitment to reach out with compassion and speak up for justice. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel famously observed after marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma, "I felt my legs were praying." On the Children's Shabbat and in the year to follow, we will be praying with our voices and legs, our words and our work.

### Modeh/Modah Ai

There is grace that every dawn renews,  
a loveliness making every morning fresh.  
We will endure, we will prevail—  
We, the children of Hope,  
Children of the One  
Who crowds the heavens with stars,

Endows the earth with glory,  
And fills the mind with wonder!

(Chaim Stern, Gates of Prayer, in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 187)

### Mah Tov

May the One whose spirit is with us in every righteous deed,  
be with all who work for the good of humanity  
and bear the burdens of others,  
and who give bread to the hungry,  
who clothe the naked  
and take the friendless into their homes.  
May the work of their hands endure,  
and may the seed they sow bring abundant harvest.

(Chaim Stern, adapted in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 193)

### Elohai N'shamah

My soul came to me pure,  
drawn from the reservoir of the Holy.  
All the time it remains within me,  
I am thankful for its thirst  
for compassion and justice.  
Let my eyes behold the beauty of all creatures;  
let my hands know the privilege of righteous deeds.  
*Baruch atah, Adonai, asher b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol f'sar ish.*

(Elyse Frishman in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 197)

## Nisim B'chol Yom

I can stay the tears of others, if I can see myself  
as diminished of their sorrows.

I can hasten time when everyone will be able  
to rejoice in freedom,

And if I can see myself as the companion  
of those fighting against oppression,

I can honor the struggle of people everywhere  
to gain dignity and deliverance from bondage.

when I look at myself in the mirror  
who will I see?

(Jewish Fund for Justice in *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 199)

Religion embraces both faith and action.  
The primary quality is action,  
for it lays the foundation for faith;  
the more we do good,  
the more readily do we grasp the meaning of duty and life  
and the more readily do we believe in the Divine  
from which stems the good.

(Leo Baeck in *Mishkan T'filah* p. 199)

## Study Texts

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: What is the meaning of the verse, "You shall walk behind the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 13:5)? ... [It means that] a person should imitate the righteous ways of the Holy One, blessed be God. Just as the Lord clothed the naked, ... so too you must supply clothes for the naked [poor]. Just as the Holy One, blessed be God, visited the sick, ... so too you should visit the sick. Just as the Holy One, blessed be God, buried the dead, ... so too you must bury the dead. Just as the Holy One, blessed be God, comforted mourners, ... so too you should comfort mourners.  
(*Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 14a.*)

There are eight degrees in the giving of *tzedakah*, each one higher than the one before:  
to give grudgingly, reluctantly, or with regret;  
to give less than one should, but with grace;  
to give what one should, but only after being asked;  
to give before one is asked;  
to give without knowing who will receive it,  
although the recipient knows the identity of the giver;  
to give without making known one's identity;  
to give so that neither the giver nor receiver knows the identity of the other;  
to help another to become self-supporting, by means of a gift, a loan, or by finding employment for the one in need.

(Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Charity 10:7-14)

## The Call to Justice

Justice, justice shall you pursue,  
That you may live in the land which God gives you.  
    You shall not pervert judgment, nor favor persons,  
    Neither shall you take a bribe,  
For a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise,  
And perverts the words of the righteous.  
    Hear the causes between your brothers [and sisters],  
    Judge righteously your [kin] and the stranger.  
You shall hear the small and great alike,  
You shall not be afraid of the face of any [person];  
For the judgment is God's.  
    Woe unto them that call evil "good" and good "evil",  
    That turn darkness into light, and light into darkness.  
Woe unto them that defend the wicked for a bribe  
And deprive the innocent of [their] rights.  
    Rob not the weak because [they are] weak,  
    Neither crush the poor in thy midst.  
See justice, relieve the oppressed,  
Protect the [orphan], defend the cause of the widow.  
    Seek good and not evil, that you may live;  
    Then I the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you.  
Hate evil and love what is good,  
Yea, establish justice in the land.  
  
    Let justice well up as the water  
    And righteousness as a mighty stream.  
For righteousness and justice  
Are the foundations of God's throne.  
    For the Lord of Hosts is exalted through righteousness,  
    And God, the Holy One, is sanctified through justice.

(Rabbinical Assembly of America and the United Synagogue of America *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book*, 1957, adapted for inclusive language.)

## 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

Once or twice in a lifetime,  
a man or woman may choose  
a radical leaving, having heard  
Lech l'cha—Go forth.

God disturbs us toward our destiny  
by hard events  
and by freedom's now urgent voice  
which explode and confirm who we are.

We don't like leaving  
but God loves becoming.

Baruch atah, Adonoi, habocheir b'amo Yisrael b'ahavah.

(Mishkan T'filah, p. 231)

### 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*)

When justice burns within us  
like a flaming fire,  
when love evokes willing sacrifice from us,  
when, to the last full measure of selfless devotion,  
we demonstrate our belief in the ultimate triumph  
of truth and righteousness—  
then Your goodness enters our lives  
and we can begin to change the world.  
And then You live in our hearts,  
and we, through righteousness, behold Your Presence.

(Mishkan T'filah, p. 235)

### 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)

### **Blessing of Redemption**

Let us bless the source of life,  
source of faith and daring,  
wellspring of new song  
and the courage to mend.

(Marcia Falk in *Siddur Lev Shalem*, p. 158)

## **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*)

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)

### **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)

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*)

### **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)

### Reading after Sim 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)

### 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)

## 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. Children who were separated from their parents at the border suffered unimaginable trauma. And all across our nation, our young live in fear of the gun violence that kills or injures more than 40 children and teens every day. As we say/sing the Mi shebeirach, 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)

### **Hachzarat HaTorah**

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)

### **For Our Congregation**

Source of all being,

may the children of this community learn these passions from us:

love of Torah, devotion in prayer, and support of the needy.

May we learn from the children of this community:

outrage at injustice, a vision of what can be untarnished by cynicism,

and energetic pursuit of what is right without anxiously counting the cost.

May we guide with integrity, and may our leadership be in Your service.

May those who teach and nourish us be blessed with satisfaction,

and may we appreciate their time and their devotion.

Bless us with the fruits of wisdom and understand,

and may our efforts bring fulfillment and joy.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, she-ot'cha b'yirah naavod.*

(Adapted from *Mishkan T'filah*, p. 376)

## 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

### Yizkor...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)*

## Ideas for Religious School Groups and Youth Groups

- **Discuss the Children's Shabbat with the children two or three weeks in advance.** Talk about the meaning of the weekend, why you want to celebrate children and also talk about the problems facing some children and what your congregation can do to help solve the problems. Tell them what the teachers and congregation are planning and what the students' roles will be. Ask them to think of ways they could take part or would like to celebrate. If parts in a service need to be assigned, decide which children will do what.
- **A week or two in advance, have the children create a large banner to decorate the religious school rooms for the Children's Shabbat.** Create messages for the banner based on the year's Children's Shabbat theme and passages from Jewish sources related to the theme. Guide discussion on the meaning of the passages as they relate to children and justice, before or during the banner-making. Or, use the banner making as an activity for the day of the Children's Shabbat.
- **Use children's artwork to decorate the building.**
- **Focus the religious school curriculum on Jewish attitudes toward children and social justice, as well as brief age-appropriate lessons on the year's Children's Shabbat focus, such as child poverty or preventing gun violence.** Help the children come up with ideas of how to respond to these problems. Help them select and implement a feasible idea.
- **Encourage the Temple Youth Group or United Synagogue Youth to devote one or more of its meetings to learning about the needs of children and what the group can do.** You may want to use or adapt discussion resources or other material provided as part of the annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths supplement on the Children's Defense Fund's website.
- **With the young people, create a list of ways they can act on behalf of children in the congregation, community, and nation.** Draw from Actions for the Children's Sabbath and Throughout the Year, the annual Children's Sabbath supplement, resources from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and local child advocacy organizations and programs for ideas. After the list is created, provide ways for the group to get involved, either together or individually.
- **The children and youths could rehearse a skit, song, or poetry readings on the Children's Shabbat theme for the oneg shabbat.**
- **The children and youths could help prepare the refreshments for the oneg or kiddush.** If low-cost items are planned (such as cupcakes made and decorated by the children), commit the money saved to a program in the community that serves or advocates on behalf of children. Help the children select the program to be the beneficiary. This may provide an opportunity to discuss Jewish perspectives on and the different meanings of *zedakah* as giving donations and as doing justice.