

# From Generation to Generation

A O N E T A B L E G U I D E



May this intergenerational experience  
be an opportunity to welcome the  
wisdom of our elders, inspire the energy  
of our youth, and learn from one  
another with joy and openness as we  
celebrate Shabbat.

# Welcome.

Some of us share memories of past Friday night gatherings. For others, this Shabbat might be a first. Whatever our experience, this is an evening to create new memories across life stages, *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation.

A recent study from the University of Michigan teaches four keys to intergenerational thriving: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and resilience.

*Respect* comes from inherited knowledge;

*Responsibility* from providing care;

*Reciprocity* from caring for those that have cared for us;

*Resilience* from enduring life's challenges.

## BLESS

We say *Shehecheyanu* upon doing something for the first time or the first time in a long time.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעְנוּ לְזִמְנוּ הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam shehecheyanu v'kiyamanu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed is the Oneness that inspires the universe, sustains us, raises us up, and enables us to reach this season.

## REFLECT

Looking around the table and consider the intergenerational relationships represented — what memories of the past or hopes for the future do the words respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and resilience bring up for you?



# Light

In Jewish tradition, lighting candles at sundown on Friday is the last act of the workweek, the literal spark that carries us into the weekend. While we will find no verse in the Torah instructing us to light two candles at dusk, the sages over the centuries linked the practice to the concepts of *shamor* Shabbat and *zachor* Shabbat, the commandments to keep and remember Shabbat.

## BLESS

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

Blessed is the Oneness that makes us holy through commandments and commands us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

## REFLECT

The beauty of Jewish tradition is not its certitude but its ambiguity; even the rabbis disagree on what exactly it means to keep and remember Shabbat. Whether we claim this ritual by passing candlelight from one generation to the next, by sharing light with friends of a different life stage, or acknowledging the youngest among you who add a spark of joy to our lives, the act of kindling light together (even if we are physically apart and sharing this experience virtually) brings us closer together.

# Blessing

*one another*

In Jewish tradition, Shabbat dinner includes an opportunity for parents to bless children. As inheritors of this tradition we are invited to bless one another in an intergenerational spirit that welcomes all kinds of family dynamics, from gender-neutral blessings to chosen family, by turning to another guest and offering one of the blessings below, or whatever good wishes are in your heart.

— Inspired by [Keshet](#)

## BLESS

Be who you are – and may you be blessed in all that you are.

— Marcia Falk

יְבָרַכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ  
יְאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי וְיִתְנֶה  
יִשְׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי וְיִשֶׁם לָךְ שְׁלוֹמִים

*Yivarechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha  
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem lecha shalom  
Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka*

May you be blessed and guarded  
May you know favor and grace  
May you receive kindness and peace

## MORE BLESSING OPTIONS

Intergenerational Blessing  
Chosen Family  
Queer Chosen Family & Gender Neutral Blessings  
Blessing for an Expectant Mother  
Blessing for a New Parents  
Children Blessing Parents





# Wine

Many Jewish ceremonies and celebrations involve wine, and Shabbat dinner is no exception. But ritual doesn't exist for the sake of itself, it exists to accomplish something, almost like an ancient form of technology.

That's the magic of *kiddush*, from the Hebrew word for *holy* — our ability to demarcate time, to say that this Friday night, this Shabbat dinner, this exact moment, which has never occurred before and never will again, is special.

The milestones of our intergenerational relationships mark the passage of time; our family has spanned generations and we represent that time and story around this Shabbat table.

## BLESS

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַתְּנַפֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'gafen.  
Baruch Atah Adonai m'kadesh ha'Shabbat.*

Blessed is the Oneness that creates the fruit of the vine. Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies Shabbat.

# When Giving Is All We Have

by Alberto Rios

*One river gives  
Its journey to the next.*

We give because someone gave to us.  
We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.  
We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,  
We have been wounded by it—

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,  
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,  
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,  
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.  
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you  
What I had to give—together, we made

Something greater from the difference.

# Bread



In Jewish tradition, bread is a metaphor for life. Its ingredients are folded together just like our relationships – if one is missing the experience is incomplete.

Depending on the occasion, we add either salt or honey to our bread. Salt to remind us that no matter how elevated our joy this evening, there will undoubtedly be harsher times ahead and we will need each other to get through them. Honey during the holiday season, or to celebrate weddings, births, or other milestones – a taste of life's sweetness.

## BLESS

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.*

Blessed is the Oneness that brings forth bread from the earth.

## REFLECT

Our journeys are circuitous; we followed bread crumbs to get here. Imagine all the people who had to come before us to drop those crumbs, to get us to where we are today. Some of them might be here around the table, others are no longer with us.

Take a moment to share the name and story of someone whose trail you have followed, someone who helped you become who you are.

# Gratitude

At the end of the meal it is tempting to move on, to clear the table quickly. Tonight, let's linger over gratitude and the new perspectives we have gained by sharing this intergenerational experience. May we feel connected to the past, the present, and the fullness of the future.

## BLESS

ברוך רחמנא מלכא דעלמא מריה דהאי פיתא.

*Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.*

We are blessed with compassion by the Oneness that sustains us with bread.

## Cheers! L'chaim!

May this night be the first of many opportunities to elevate voices from all generations.

**ONETABLE**  
SHABBAT TOGETHER

