



TOGETHER AT THE TABLE GUIDE



Shabbat dinner is an opportunity to be in community, learn from and with one another, and begin to heal from the ills of antisemitism. We invite you to continue to join us by gathering people in your communities and networks for a Together at the Table dinner to engage in constructive dialogue with a plurality of perspectives, to address deep, painful divides in our communities, and to consider the role we can play in strengthening civil discourse and society.

“The Sabbath creates both time and space for us to stand apart from what is behind us and ahead of us and allows us a moment to just 'be' in both a spiritual and intellectual sense. Shabbat, in its most simplistic form, is a sanctuary in time that allows us to breathe more deeply, think more clearly and talk more truthfully – to one another and ourselves.”

— Sandy Cardin
President of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies,
1994-2019

This guide builds on previous versions of the Together at the Table guides, including guides written in partnership with the ADL, Be'chol Lashon, Keshet, and Repair the World.

In Jewish tradition, God creates the world in six days, and rests on the seventh day. The day of rest is not a postscript, it is as important a part of creation as any of the days of active work. Work requires *Shabbat* — a time to restore and replenish, a time to gather with joy. The essence of Shabbat isn't what we can't do on this one day, it's what we *can* do on the other six if we take the time to end our week with intention on Friday night.

This guide contains the Shabbat blessings as well as education, readings, and discussion prompts to help you come Together at the Table with the people and issues you care about.



PAGE 2 | LIGHT

Officially end the workweek and welcome the weekend by lighting two or more candles



PAGE 5 | BLESS ONE ANOTHER

Shabbat holds space for us to feel blessed, and empowers us to bless ourselves and others.



PAGE 7 | SANCTIFY

Wine serves as a conduit to sanctify the seventh day of the week, the time of Shabbat, as “other,” set apart from the daily grind of the other six days



PAGE 11 | CLEANSE

A formal practice of washing hands that recalls an ancient practice during Temple times when Shabbat was accompanied by special offerings



PAGE 17 | NOURISH

Breaking bread makes a meal, and Shabbat is a time to enjoy a special braided bread called challah

“EVERYWHERE & NOWHERE”

In 1944, Ludwig Pfeuffer was a 20-year-old soldier stationed in Egypt with the British Army. Born in Wurzburg, Germany, the young Ludwig had fled the Third Reich with his parents in 1935 and made a new life in British-controlled Palestine. The British were not exactly popular with the Jews of Palestine — the government had limited Jewish immigration at a crucial moment and continually put off the creation of a Jewish state. But during World War II, many young Jews enlisted in the British forces as a matter of self-defense. One of the amenities provided for soldiers was mobile lending libraries. Decades later, in an interview with the *Paris Review*, Pfeuffer — now known around the world as the poet Yehuda Amichai — recalled a day when he came across a library truck in the desert:

There had been some kind of storm, and one of the mobile libraries had overturned into the sand, ruining or half-ruining most of the books. I started digging and came upon a Faber anthology of modern British poetry. Hopkins was the first poet, Dylan Thomas the last. It was my first encounter with modern British poetry — the first time I read Eliot and Auden, for example, who became very important to me. I discovered them in the Egyptian desert in a half-ruined book.

Here is a young man who speaks German at home, Hebrew among friends, and English in the army, who is turned into a writer by discovering the latest London poetry in an Egyptian desert. Such cosmopolitanism, and such polyglot fluency, were time-honored Jewish legacies and they gave many a feeling of spiritual extraterritoriality, a belief that they belonged everywhere and nowhere.

If you were to ask who was the national poet of the State of Israel since 1948, the inevitable answer would be Amichai. Where writers like Kafka and Celan spent their lives mourning their inner alienation from German, their mother tongue, Amichai gave himself a new mother tongue, and inhabited it with utter ease. He even changed his name in the most symbolic possible way, choosing to call himself Yehuda — the name from which the word “Jew” derives — Amichai — in Hebrew, “my nation lives.” He was, in a sense, exactly as old as his country.

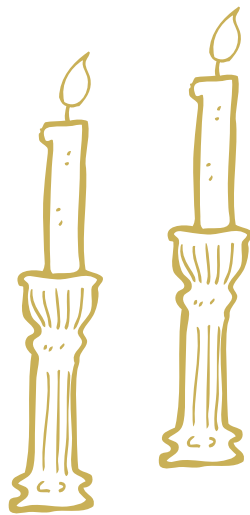
Opening Reflection Questions:

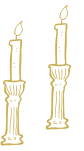
In what way(s) do you relate to or feel distant from the idea of being everywhere and nowhere?

Is there a particular book or author (or text poem or song or work of art) that has profoundly shaped your sense of self and/or relationship to Judaism?

Adapted from "Amichai: The Tolerant Irony of Israel's National Poet" by Adam Kirsh published in Tablet magazine's December 20, 2015 issue.

LIGHT





READ & DISCUSS

"Attention White Supremacists" by Rabbi Ari Hart

Rabbi Hart serves as the spiritual leader of Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob, an inclusive Modern Orthodox congregation in Skokie, Illinois.

Attention White Supremacists

Your fears are justified:

We will replace you. We will absolutely, without a doubt, replace you.

We will replace every act of hate you commit with ten thousand acts of love.

We will flood every dark corner of bigotry and lies where you lurk with truth and reason that burns like the light of ten thousand suns.

We will drown your hatred with love.

A mixed, rainbow multitude of good, kind, decent people, Black and White, Jewish and Christian, Muslim and Hindu, Buddhist and Atheist, Gay and Straight, Left and Right, will stand up to you, again and again, and again and again, and we shall overcome you.

Love,

All of Us

Many Jewish celebrations begin with the lighting of candles to separate the holy from the mundane. By lighting candles, one is reminded of God's first act of creation. Just as creation began with "let there be light" so does Shabbat. This is the moment when Shabbat begins. By lighting the candles, we begin the transition from the week to Shabbat, from the mundane to the holy.

Thinking of those "ten thousand acts of love," how can this Shabbat be a holy place for this conversation?

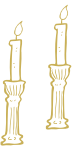
THE SUPPLIES

CANDLES AND CANDLESTICKS – try for at least two, but this is a place to experiment; some folks like to light two candles per home, others light two per person.

MATCHES – a lighter also works, but we prefer matches for the olfactory effect.

SAFE PLACE TO LET THEM BURN – ideally your Shabbat candles will burn out on their own over the course of the evening, but do blow them out if you're heading out after dinner.

Find out more: onetable.org/together



BLESS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

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

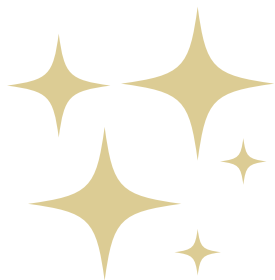
Blessed is the Oneness that connects us through our actions
and sanctifies us with the light of Shabbat.

or

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who commands us to kindle the light of Shabbat.



BLESSING ONE ANOTHER





THE RITUAL

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

— Marcia Falk

Jewish custom offers us the opportunity to bless our loved ones and express our immeasurable gratitude for their presence and safety in our lives. Tradition provides a ritual for blessing children and for blessing beloved partners, but we need not be limited to those relationships. We can use this moment, and these words, or the words in our heart, to offer blessing to anyone in our home, around our table, or in our community for whom we are particularly grateful, especially during uncertain and frightening times.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְךָ
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

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

May you be blessed and guarded
May light and grace shine upon you
May you always lift up your eyes and find peace

SANCTIFY





THE RITUAL

Pour a glass of wine or grape juice and sanctify Shabbat before drinking.

That's the power 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 sacred.

Through the blessing of the wine (*kiddush*), one acknowledges two of God's greatest gifts: creation of the world and the exodus from Egypt. Kiddush also creates a moment to express gratitude for Shabbat. It is composed of two blessings: to bless the wine and to sanctify the day.

In Judaism, wine represents joy. Joy can be a complicated thing when faced with the reality of a world in conflict. By taking a moment to bless the wine, we acknowledge joy as a value unto itself, not as it serves something else.

To Discuss:

How do you find joy when times are hard? What can you learn from each other about remembering to find the joy?

THE SUPPLIES

BEVERAGE - the traditional go-to is the fruit of the vine, wine or grape juice. If you don't have wine or grape juice, or just feel like experimenting, use a beverage you don't normally drink throughout the week.

KIDDUSH CUP - your favorite cup, a cup reserved for this purpose, not your everyday cup. At some point, people got the idea that a kiddush cup has to be a chalice or a goblet or something. Nope. As long as it holds about four ounces of liquid or more, what matters about the cup is that it's different, special, other.



BLESS

Traditional kiddush in its entirety includes an introductory passage taken directly from the book of Genesis, a one-line blessing (*borei pri ha'gafen*) that acknowledges the wine itself, and a closing passage that evokes both the creation narrative and the exodus from Egypt. It's the final line of that closing passage (*mikadesh ha'Shabbat*) that makes the wine a symbolic conduit for marking this time as sacred.

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי.
וַיְכַל הָאֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכֹל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ
כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מְכֹל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְנִרְצָה בְּנוֹ
וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן הַנְּחִילָנוּ זְכוֹר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרִשִׁית.
כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמַקְרָאֵי קִדְּשׁ זְכוֹר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.
כִּי בְנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מְכֹל הַעַמִּים וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשָׁהּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן הַנְּחִילָתָנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מְקַדְּשׁ הַשְּׁבֶת.

*Va'yihl erev va'yihl voker yom ha'shishi
Va'yichulu ha'shamayim va'ha'aretz v'chol tziva'am.
Va'yichol Elohim ba'yom ha'shivi'i milachto asher asah
va'yishbot ba'yom ha'shivi'i mi'kol milachto asher asah.
Va'yivarech Elohim et yom ha'shivi'i va'yikadesh oto
ki vo shavat mi'kol melachto asher bara Elohim la'asot.*

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'gafen.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'ratzah vanu
v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu zikaron l'ma'aseh v'reishit.
Ki hu yom tehilah l'mikra'ei kodesh zeicher litziat Mitzrayim.
Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu k'dashta mi'kol ha'amim
v'Shabbat kodshicha b'ahavah uv'ratzon chinchaltanu.
Baruch Atah Adonai mikadesh ha'Shabbat.*



There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. And the heavens and earth and all their components were completed. The Creator completed by the seventh day the work of creation, and rested on the seventh day from all of the work of creation. That Source, the Oneness and Interconnectedness of creation, blessed the seventh day and made it holy, for on it creation rested as did the Creator.

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

Blessed is the Source of the universe
Whose love allows us to become holy through our actions.
With that same love, the sanctity of Shabbat is our heritage
and a reminder of the work of creation.
As first among our sacred days, it recalls liberation from Egypt.
We seek to be holy, to embrace this sacred potential among all people,
and it is with love that we receive Shabbat.
Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies Shabbat.



CLEANSE





THE RITUAL

Wash your hands before the meal.

The practice of handwashing dates back to the Temple period when the Israelites made special offerings on Shabbat. In order to make these offerings, they needed to cleanse their hands with fresh water then raise up their hands and recite a blessing.

THE SUPPLIES

FRESH TAP WATER - head to the kitchen

A CUP FOR WASHING - ideally one with two handles, although any cup with a handle works



LEARNING FROM OUR NEIGHBOR

Handwashing is an important ritual for many on Shabbat, and Passover, before eating.

Through the ritual of handwashing, let's take a moment to check in with ourselves. Feel free to literally wash your hands or to do it metaphorically by focusing on them.

As you wash your hands, take a few deep breaths and reflect on the following questions. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes.

- How are you feeling in your body in this moment? Any aches, pains, or tensions? Slowly scan yourself starting with your hands, and then move from your head to your toes.
- What emotions have been coming up for you this week?
- How have you been taking care or not taking care of yourself?

If you feel comfortable, turn to the person next to you and share one point that came up for you from this reflection. We all process differently and need different things to heal.

Tonight, show an abundance of empathy for everyone engaging in this discussion and for yourself.



BLESS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed is the Oneness that interconnects us through our actions
and honors us as we raise up our hands.

or

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us to raise up our hands.





THE BREAKDOWN

Ritual hand washing isn't for everyone,
and you shouldn't feel any pressure to try it out until you're ready.

Invite your guests to the kitchen sink.
Even if you're familiar with the blessing,
it's a good idea to have a copy of it by the sink as a prompt for your guests.

Fill your cup with fresh water from the tap.
Take the cup in your left hand and cleanse your right hand
with three splashes of water. Pass the cup directly to your right hand
and cleanse your left hand with three splashes of water.

Put the cup down, raise your hands up,
and as the water trickles down recite the blessing.
Dry off, you're good to go.

A LITTLE EXTRA

As an act of hospitality,
many people will place the empty cup back under the tap
and begin to refill it for the person behind them in line.
Similarly, it is common to hold the towel after drying your own hands,
and pass it directly to the person behind you.

You may notice that it gets quiet around the Shabbat dinner table around the time of ritual hand washing. This practice comes from the idea that you shouldn't interrupt yourself between rituals. Because the cleansing of hands is understood as directly connected to the blessing of the bread, many have the custom of not speaking between handwashing and eating the first piece of challah to connect the two rituals as seamlessly as possible.



HAND WASHING MEDITATION

As I take up my hands
to wash them and
reassure my heart,
I pray for healing and wholeness
for the whole world.
I remember every life
is unique and of infinite value:
from those living
on the most remote part of the globe
to those in our cities
to our neighbors and family.
Let me use my hands for good
to help bring love
and compassion to others.
Let us lift up
our hearts and hands
to the Eternal.

— Rabbi Joseph Meszler

NOURISH





THE RITUAL

A blessing for nourishment.

THE SUPPLIES

BREAD - preferably challah, but any bread will do. Two full loaves is ideal.

CHALLAH COVER - any kind of cover to place over your bread

SALT



BLESS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

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

Blessed is the Oneness brings forth bread from the earth.

or

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Reflection

On Shabbat, challah represents a taste of *tikkun olam*,
the possibility of the world restored.

— The Maharal of Prague





REBUILDING SANCTUARY

FRAMING

In Jewish tradition, the synagogue is a sanctuary. It is a place where people gather and connect, to the Divine, to themselves, to Jewish tradition, and to each other. Over the past couple of years, more and more sanctuaries have been violated and destroyed.

As Rabbi Sharon Brous noted on a Facebook post on the night of the 2018 Tree of Life shooting:

“Even as we grieve, even as Tree of Life in Pittsburgh joins the sad and sorry list of sacred spaces that have borne witness to massacre in America, alongside 16th Street Baptist in Birmingham, the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, Emanuel AME in Charleston, First Baptist in Sutherland Springs and others, even as we struggle to hold the enormity of this tragedy, we must be clear-headed about what prompted this deadly event. There is a disease in the culture of this nation—this shooting is only the latest deadly expression of it.”

The traumas and tragedies of today and past generations inform us on how we build sanctuaries that welcome our whole selves and whole communities safely today.

INSTRUCTIONS

Find a *havruta* (a partner) and choose a text to read together. Discuss the guiding questions and share any takeaways with the group.

A NOTE ABOUT HAVRUTA LEARNING:

Havruta literally means "friendship" or "companionship." It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner's reasoning, and sharpening each other's ideas, often arriving at new insights into the meaning of the text.



REBUILDING SANCTUARY

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- How do the different texts understand the idea of sanctuary and what contributes to a sanctuary?
- How do people, time, and place come together to create sanctuary?
- What does sanctuary look like for me? Who are the people who are a part of my communities?
- How do I build or rebuild sanctuary? Who does it include?
- What does safety look like for me? What does safety look like for my community?
- What do I need from my community? What can I offer?
- How might safety look different for people in my community who hold different identities?
- What does safety really look like when we require it to be based in our commitment to racial equity and justice?

An excerpt from Exodus, the second book in the Torah.

The following passage describes the way that people contributed to the construction of the Mishkan, a holy structure used to house the Ten Commandments that were received on Mount Sinai.

Let, then, Bezalel and Oholiab and all the wise-hearted people whom God has given the skills and abilities to complete all the tasks connected with the sacred service of the sanctuary carry out all that God has commanded.

Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab, and every wise-hearted person whom God had given skill, everyone who excelled in ability, to undertake the task and carry it out.

They took over from Moses all the gifts that the Israelites had brought, to carry out the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary...

REBUILDING SANCTUARY



"For The Sin of Prejudice: Growing Up Jewish as a Person of Color" by Rafael Lev

(Rafael Lev is an entrepreneur and active member of the Twin Cities Jewish community, serving as a coach and mentor for Jewish youth. He also creates awareness for issues related to race, religion, and the intersection of the two, through his work as a public speaker and multimedia producer. He is a member of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Mendota Heights, MN.)

Every year on the High Holidays, police officers sit outside our synagogue to protect our community and building from harm.

I understand why the police are there. I know the risk that comes with openly celebrating Judaism. And I appreciate their presence...until all their eyes are on me, a man wearing a kippah (head covering) and a gold Star of David necklace who also happens to be a person of color.

When I arrive, the officers stop, get out of their cars, and follow me into the building. They don't stop pursuing me until the greeter has given the officers a thumbs-up, signaling I am "safe."

I have been attending the same synagogue in Minnesota for more than 20 years, and I have never seen this happen to anyone else. I am left to think that the only possible sign of threat is the color of my skin, as 99% of the people who walked into the shul before me are white.

...whenever I see police, my blood goes cold, my legs start shaking as if everything below my kneecaps has disappeared, and I get a knot in my stomach the size of a cantaloupe.

And when I walk through the synagogue parking lot on the holiest of days and glimpse police cars through the corner of my eye, my mind races with nervous energy and "What ifs." What if an officer stops me before I walk into the building? Will they know that I won't have my wallet on me for immediate identification? What if the police arrest me? What if there was no one waiting at the front door to greet me and give the officer that thumbs up?

The problem does not lie solely with the police.

They have a very difficult and honorable job. I respect what they do. But how can we encourage all officers, and all people, to extend the benefit of the doubt to people of color?

Who is going to lay down the first brick to start building trust?

As Jews, we can begin by challenging our assumptions - by reminding ourselves and our children that not all Jews are white. I have fear in my blood, but hope in my heart.

WHAT COMES NEXT

What comes next is always relationships. We move forward not in isolation, but as intertwined individuals and communities.

During a traditional Shabbat (Sabbath) meal, it is customary to start with a blessing over lit candles, wine, washed hands, and finally bread. One bread traditionally eaten is challah, a braided bread consisting of three or more strands of dough. Salt, flour, water, and yeast are mixed and woven together to become delicious sustenance for our work of rest and renewal. Like challah, our communities are made up of different strands. We hold different identities, lived experiences, and practices.

But we are bound together by both joy and trauma and a shared commitment to creating a more just world.

Think about the people who have ever reached out to you, supported you, and sent you their love. Think about the people you showed up for, texted, messaged, or hugged when a tragic event occurred.

Depending on your Shabbat practice and who you are with tonight, reach out to one (or two or five!) of those people. Or reach out to someone you did not have the chance to connect with. Thank them for being there for you. Check in on how they are holding up. Make plans to take action.

Next Steps: Learn, Act, Reflect. Then Repeat.

In defiance of these horrific acts of hate, keep welcoming people to your community and finding opportunities to create sanctuaries (or dedicate spaces) together. Engage in a continuous cycle of learning, action, and reflection to create social change, building relationships between communities and lead by people directly impacted by the issues.