

# Celebrating Biblical Feasts

In Your Home or Church

Martha Zimmerman

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This book was written to honor my parents,  
MARGARET and DICK GADSKE.  
It has been  
taught with love and diligence to our children—  
JOHN, RICHARD, and SARAH.

# About the Author

Martha Zimmerman was taught to love Jewish people and their celebrations as a child. She and her husband passed along this tradition to their three now-adult children. Martha has an honorary doctorate from Carey Theological College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is an adjunct faculty member there. Martha is a frequent speaker at churches and conferences and a guest on radio talk shows throughout North America. She and her husband make their home in Washington. She is the author of *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* and *Celebrating the Christian Year*.

# Foreword

I welcome the republication of *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* by Martha Zimmerman.

We Christians owe a great deal to our Jewish heritage. In the early church a fierce battle was waged against the Gnostics who repudiated the Jews, their faith and worship. But the Fathers of the church were right in insisting that Hebrew faith and Christian truth were continuous.

Using the pictures of Christ in the Old Testament, early interpreters of the faith saw that all the events, offices, and feasts of Hebrew faith found their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Today the study of the feasts of Israel will lead Christians to a greater appreciation and deeper devotion to Jesus who is the fulfillment of them all.

Also, the practice of a rhythm of time that shapes and forms the spiritual life is a great contribution of Israel. Following in their footsteps Christians mark time with the fulfillment of all of Israel's feasts in the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Read *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* and see Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, redeemer of the world.

Robert Webber  
Myers Professor of Ministry  
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Lombard, Illinois

# Preface

“Hey, Mom! You’re right! Habakkuk *is* in the Bible.”

Sure that I was hearing things, I called back to our twelve-year-old son, “What did you say?” His response was a surprise.

“Well, the other day I heard you talking about some book in the Bible called Habakkuk, and I just found it.”

My response still shocks me; the words are burned into my memory! “Richard, haven’t ‘they’ taught you the books of the Bible yet in Sunday school?”

God prepares us in amazing ways for His new lessons. His timing is perfect. I had just finished writing a paper for one of my seminary courses on Deuteronomy 6:1–9 which says, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart, and *you* shall teach them diligently to your children. . . .” I knew it didn’t say “Sunday school teachers” or “fellowship leaders” or “the great staff at our church” (all of those people are glad to help)—but the command is to parents. *You* shall teach them. If God gives us something to do, He will enable us to do it!

At that moment I didn’t know where the next step would take us; but I knew from experience that when His instructions are followed, the end for which they are given will be accomplished. The results are God’s business. He was calling *me* to be faithful.

Many questions followed, such as: How? When? Are you sure?—Me, God? We talked about it as a family. The children’s

suggestions were helpful and encouraging. It was obvious they were eager and ready to begin a new adventure.

When I started looking for materials to teach “Christian Education in the Home,” my search led to the best possible source! Since God said “do it” in the Bible, I reasoned the Bible would tell us what to do. And it did!

This book has been growing ever since. We have learned a lot, known God’s blessing, and had many fun and funny times together! We want to share our adventures, not as a model to copy but as guidelines to encourage you in creatively teaching the marvelous truths of the Old Testament with New Testament understanding.

I want to thank Homer Goddard, whose vision brought Fuller Seminary Extension to Richland, Washington; David Stoop, adjunct professor of the seminary class on Creative Teaching, who encouraged me to write this book; Judy Moy, Christian Education Director, who met with me once a week to pray and share; the William Markillie family and the Roger Johnson family, who spent three years celebrating these festivals with us, giving their support; many friends who joined us and shared in prayer; Sharynn Freiheit, who found helpful ways to care for our family; Terry Sullivan for technical support; Joanne Fankhauser, Betty Phillips, and Sally Rossello, who did all of the typing; John, John Jr., Richard, and Sarah for suggestions and constant encouragement. I want to thank the many churches who have taken up the challenge to prepare parents for their God appointed task.

Habakkuk *is* in the Bible. So is Leviticus. Chapter 23 is where we started. It was our outline for the family times presented on the following pages.

Martha Zimmerman  
Blaine, Washington

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And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets,  
He [Jesus] explained to them the things concerning  
Himself in all the Scriptures.  
(Luke 24:27)

# Introduction

## *Beginning an Adventure*

Puzzles are a challenge. They are also lots of fun. It always feels good to find a piece that fits. Having found one, you want to find “one more.” When my dad began to work a jigsaw puzzle, he located all the border pieces first. Jesus is like the frame or border around the entire Bible. His life draws all the pieces together. One of the miracles of God’s Word is that all the pieces fit! Every person, place, event, and story adds to the completed picture. The Old and New Testaments belong *together!* Once you understand and believe that Jesus is central to *all* truth (“I am . . . the truth”—John 14:6), even some odd shapes fit.

An essential border piece, Matthew 1:1, reminds us that Jesus was Jewish: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Some other border pieces are bits of evidence found throughout the Gospels: He obeyed God’s commandments, celebrated each biblical feast, and regarded all of the festivals as ordained by God to be remembered, observed, and celebrated. He said, “Don’t misunderstand why I have come—it isn’t to cancel the laws of Moses and the warnings of the prophets.” (Don’t throw away half of the puzzle pieces and expect a finished picture when you are through.) “I came to fulfill them, and to make them all come true” (fit together). “*Those who teach God’s laws and obey them shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven*” (Matt. 5:17, 19, TLB).

This book contains suggestions for celebrating the biblical festivals. I believe that they are key puzzle pieces. Paul had something to say to us about them: “Some think that Christians should observe the Jewish holidays as special days to worship God, but others say it is wrong and foolish to go to all that trouble, for every day alike belongs to God. On questions of this kind everyone must decide for himself. If you have special days for worshipping the Lord, you are trying to honor him; you are doing a good thing” (Rom. 14:5–6, TLB). The suggestions presented here for celebrating the feasts are not to be a legalistic set of rules to earn God’s favor but are to be used as teaching tools to help our families honor God.

Let’s go back in time. A very large puzzle piece tucked in Deuteronomy is called the Great Shema. Just as the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, Moses encouraged Israel to love God with all their hearts. To impress them with a deep sense of their need for God and to prepare them for the inheritance which He had planned for them, this commandment is presented in a positive form: “And you shall love the Lord your God. . . .” The following is the text of Deuteronomy 6:1–9 (TLB):

The Lord your God told me to give you all these commandments which you are to obey in the land you will soon be entering, where you will live. The purpose of these laws is to cause you, your sons, and your grandsons to reverence the Lord your God by obeying all of his instructions as long as you live; if you do, you will have long, prosperous years ahead of you. Therefore, O Israel, listen closely to each command and be careful to obey it, so that all will go well with you, and so that you will have many children. If you obey these commands you will become a great nation in a glorious land “flowing with milk and honey,” even as the God of your fathers promised you.

O Israel, listen: Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. You

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must love him with *all* your heart, soul and might. And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the door-posts of your house!

God's Word is life. It is His gift. We are challenged to affirm life, know the blessing of God, and live long in the abundance of His love. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, KJV).

The message is urgent: Hear, therefore, O Israel, nation that sprang from Jacob, and be careful to do this. People, you really should listen. . . . God is to be heard! Give this your careful attention. *If it is performed, the purpose for which it was given will be accomplished.*

The Lord God is a personal God. He is to be *loved*. The word for "love" in this passage is from the vocabulary of family life. Love of God is what life is all about. Love draws us to obedience. Obedience to His Word is the demonstration of your love toward Him, and this loving response to the Lord's great goodness requires giving of yourself to Him. Open your heart to the living voice of the Divine Teacher.

In Hebrew, the name for the first five books of the Bible is Torah. It means guidance, direction, instruction, and information. Job 36:22 asks, "Who is a teacher like Him?" With the Psalmist we should say, "Teach me your way" (Ps. 27:11, NIV).

Both the Old and New Testaments present the same principle: "Teach them to your children. Talk about them . . ." (Deut. 11:19, TLB); "And, fathers, . . . bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). We as parents need to hear this. The utmost care must be given to help our children understand. The more they *understand*, the more they will *believe*.

I call this the principle of familiar things. Remember how you feel when the picture of a place you have visited flashes on your TV screen? Familiar things feel good! The word “teach” in the Deuteronomy passage means repeat and re-repeat the instructions. Excite their attention! Stimulate their interest. The Word of God is to be kept before their eyes.

But how? The following verbs could be found on a current list of good teaching techniques: experience, talk, write, and use visual aids. The adverbs in the scripture passage suggest constantly and diligently. Later, Paul said “gently.” The Living Bible puts it this way, “Talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning.” There is no better method than this. You should begin and end the day with the Lord. Include Him in your everyday living and, therefore, with *awareness* talk, walk, lie down, get up, always knowing God’s presence wherever you are. The atmosphere of your home should be saturated with the Lord’s presence.

God’s words are to be more than just heard or read; they are to be an affair of the heart. Jeremiah 31:33 says, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it.” If God’s Word “dwells in your heart,” you will be anxious to teach it to your children. It is your faith and duty. The word “remember” is repeated in the Old and New Testaments over 300 times. Phrases such as “remember the deeds of the Lord,” “remember His marvelous works,” “do this in remembrance,” are familiar. First Samuel 12:24 says, “Consider what great things He has done for you.”

The challenge is: How do we relate the past to the present? How do we actively “consider” and “remember”? Our children love to look at their baby books. Pictures from birthday parties and special events in their lives help us to remember these special times. An old proverb says, “Put something where you can see it so your eye will remind your heart.”

*Reading* the great stories in the Bible, the accounts of God’s

## INTRODUCTION

amazing love, provision and protection, is a good, steady first step. But *celebrating* Hebrew traditions recorded in the Bible provides visual reminders and encourages awareness of the Lord's presence and His blessings. Biblical festivals are living experiences.

This should help you "feel" the difference. Imagine a typical Sunday school class. The teacher sits in a circle with her children. She points to a visual aid as she tells the story of Abraham and his descendants. Now contrast this scene with a living experience. Lately we have been having grey, overcast days. Last night the weather changed and the fog lifted. The stars seemed especially bright and Sarah noticed them with delight. It was the right time to pick up the flashlight and Bible and go outside under the stars. There we *read* the story of Abraham in Genesis 15:5, *looked* up at the heavens, tried to *count* the stars, and *talked* about God's unique family of people who have multiplied and survived down through the generations.

Too often we try to relegate God to a "time" period. One hour a week in Sunday school is not enough. My goal is to help you create a learning situation in your home that is constant, natural, and meaningful. If your child sees, hears, smells, tastes, and feels the Word of God, profound impressions will be made on that young life!

Celebrate and remember the deeds of the Lord as a family. Children learn what they live!

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

*Therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath  
day and made it holy.  
(Exodus 20:11)*



Chapter 1

# Sabbath

*A Weekend Celebration for the Family*

## What Is Sabbath?

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘The Lord’s appointed times . . . are these.’” Following this text of Leviticus, chapter twenty-three, God’s first appointment with us is for Sabbath. It’s “Number One” on His list of holy days, both in its listing and frequency.

Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word *Shabbat*, meaning “rest.” It was born in the very beginning: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished . . . and He rested. . . . God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1–3, KJV). The Sabbath was instituted as a memorial to His creation.

This memorial is so important that it was included in the

Ten Commandments given by God to His people on Mount Sinai: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter . . . or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy” (Ex. 20:8–11). And in Deuteronomy 5:12, “Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy. . . .”

These two words, remember and observe, help us understand how we are to approach and live out this day. “Remember” suggests inward thoughts of love and devotion. But that isn’t enough. “Observe” becomes the expression of our feelings. Sabbath combines love and law, devotion and obedience, feelings and observances.

Hebrew tradition tells us that as God presented the commandments, He spoke to Moses and said, “I have a precious gift stored away in my treasures and its name is Sabbath. I desire to give this gift to Israel. Go and inform them of it.”

We so often miss what God intends for our good. It wasn’t long before the day that God had planned for our good became filled with “thou shalt nots,” almost to the exclusion of recreation. An early prophet reminded Israel to observe the Sabbath as a delight, not a burden. Jesus taught, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). “I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice . . .” (Matt. 12:7). “It is right to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:12, TLB).

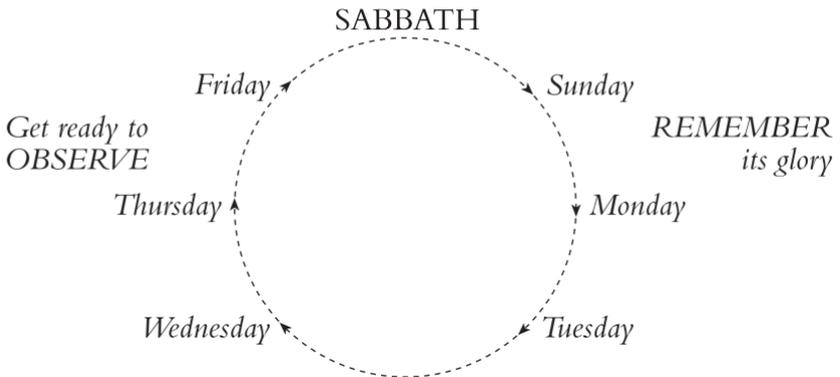
The actions of Jesus were misunderstood on various occasions. He was distressed with the misguided teachings of the religious leaders in reference to Sabbath—*not* with the Sabbath itself. He loved and observed Sabbath. In fact, He declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath. His life demonstrated compassion, mercy, and loving respect for God and His creation, not mere rules and regulations.

## SABBATH

The Pharisees took the commandment “to rest” and carried it to a ridiculous end which distorted God’s original purpose. In our day, some overreact against Sabbath restrictions, tending to neglect or forget the importance of the day and giving it only a token place in their lives.

So much of life as we know it has become hectic and exhausting. Important meetings, exciting activities, sports events and very good causes are pulling families in a thousand different ways. People everywhere are busy being busy—never stopping to *really* rest.

When balanced, our activities during the week become preparation time for the Sabbath, somewhat like a path leading us to the gate of a garden. Sabbath was a gift of time in which to put things in order and allow God to be God in our lives. It can become a time for us to rediscover places inside ourselves that are forgotten during the rest of the busy week. No wonder the week pivots around this special day. A simple diagram lets us see the progression.



This is to be a day filled with special joy that draws the family together. Phrases like “hurry up” or “I’m too busy” have no place, as we give the gift of time to each other. Our attitude, whatever it is, toward the Sabbath will be contagious. In the recovery of this biblical tradition, we have the privilege of ush-

ering peace into our home. It is our responsibility to celebrate and preserve it.

## Sabbath Friday

“And it was the Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin” (Luke 23:54).

### *What you will need:*

1. pair of candle holders
2. two white candles (with matches close by)
3. cup of wine or grape juice
4. bowl of water and a towel
5. two loaves of braided bread (or two rolls)
6. napkin
7. Bible
8. special dinner

### *How to celebrate!*

There is a lot to do, but with care and planning these activities, too, will be part of the celebration. A checklist on page 47 will help you to organize. The house should be cleaned, special foods prepared, the table set (with your best), candles and matches in place. This probably sounds like normal preparations for “company.” Think of what these actions will say to your family since they are the ones who are being honored with this attention. I know it made an impression on my family. Questions like “Who’s coming over tonight?” “You’re doing this for *us*?” made me know it was worth the effort. Let everyone help! Part of the purpose is for the family to be together. If everyone joins in, all of the work will get done and everyone can enjoy the rest.

At our house, it is customary to pick a flower for the Sabbath table, or bring in some beautiful fall leaves, depending on the season. This is a time to put away artificial centerpieces and bring in something special from God’s creation.

The mood of the evening is gentle and quiet. Peace has come at last to the home. Never confuse this with long faces and formality. Approach the table at which this meal is served as if it is an altar, knowing that we can always meet God and receive His blessing with joy and personal friendship. This table should be a place where we can enjoy God's presence while having a good time together. "There you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household" (Deut. 14:26b).

Just before the sun goes down the family gathers. A parent (traditionally the mother) begins the evening with prayer. (See pages 36–41 for the details of this special supper pageant.) As the sun slips away she recites a special blessing and lights the Sabbath candles. She may pray silently for her children, that they will grow up with hearts open to understand and appreciate God's Word. Each child receives a blessing from a parent (traditionally the father). Couples will enjoy this place in the service where the husband honors his wife by reading from Proverbs 31. Softly the family sings a blessing to each other. These blessings produced all kinds of emotions in us, a little embarrassed at first, but very special. After everyone is seated, a parent (traditionally the father) recites the Kiddush, a Sabbath prayer over the wine, and passes the cup for all to sip and enjoy. (If you are uncomfortable with the use of actual wine, small individual glasses of grape juice may be set at each place.) A bowl of water is provided for washing hands. Hamotzi, the blessing of the bread, is next. Now the meal is served, LEISURELY. The grace after the meal should never be forgotten.

"And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). Enjoy this evening. All that is left to do is rest. A delightful little children's book, *The Jewish Sabbath*, puts it this way: "Some people rest by closing their eyes and thinking. Some people rest by walking or visiting, or reading, or playing. Rest means being free to just be. A person is a per-

son on the Sabbath.”\* Be assured, “The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace” (Ps. 29:11).

## Sabbath Symbols and Their Meaning

*Candles:* In ancient times, before clocks and modern-day communication systems, a blast from the shofar, a ram’s horn, signaled the people of Israel to stop working and begin to observe the Sabbath. Just before the sun went down, lamps were lit in homes to shine through the dusk and evening hours. The tradition of lighting candles has continued. The mother of the family lights the Sabbath candles. She does this because Eve, the first mother, extinguished the light of eternal life by disobeying God’s command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17).

The candles should be placed on the table in the room where the meal will be served, to spread light over the night. At least two candles (white) should be lit. One represents “creation” and the other one “redemption.” They may also be symbolic of “remember” and “observe.” Some say the candles glow for the harmony of the home. Others believe they encourage Sabbath joy. In some families a small pair of candles is lighted by the daughter as she begins to learn this practice from her mother. In fact, the more candles the better. This idea is taken from Genesis 1:3–4: “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.”

As the mother lights the candles, it is meaningful to remember that God chose another woman, Mary, to bring forth Jesus, “The light of the world” (John 8:12). Next, she rests her hands over her eyes as a covering while saying the blessing. When she opens them, her eyes are blessed by the lighted candles, fulfilling the blessing and reminiscent of the darkness and light of crea-

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\*Molly Cone, *The Jewish Sabbath* (New York: Thomas Y. Crownwell Co., 1966).

tion. The candles are to burn throughout the evening until they go out by themselves and should be enjoyed in order that the blessing not be wasted. They were blessed to shine, a reminder of the Old Testament principle, “I will bless you . . . and you will be a blessing to many others” (Gen. 12:2, TLB). What a beautiful picture rests on the table each week! Sabbath celebrates creation and redemption. The candles remind us of Jesus, the Light of the world (John 1:1, 12).

*Wine:* A goblet of wine is placed near the candles on the table. A sanctification prayer called the Kiddush is recited by the father (or parent) over this symbolic cup. The wine symbolizes life! The wine symbolizes joy! The cup is full! It is held at the base by the fingers, causing them to point upward. They represent the children of God, reaching up and longing for Him. It also symbolizes Christ’s shed blood.

Wine had never been a part of our family’s tradition before we began this celebration. The first time this cup was passed, one child made a face while swallowing it down. Another wanted two swallows. Now none of us would pass it by or skip a turn. As has been explained, if your family is unable to use wine and wishes to substitute grape juice, this can easily be done in order that the prayer may be spoken.

This prayer is an inauguration, a special ceremony of introduction, a time when Sabbath and family meet. Each member gives full attention, listening to the words of the leader. Everyone present takes a sip as the cup is passed, after the Kiddush has been spoken.

*Washing:* The blessing which we recite before washing our hands is intended to show gratitude to God for His sanctification of us. The prayer is a “dedication” of our hands and, through them, of ourselves to God. There is another significance. We also acknowledge that as we wash our hands and lift them up to God, our real needs are on a higher level.

One time, in my preparation for a Sabbath, I forgot to fill a bowl with water and put out a towel. But, let me be quick to

add, our son, whose job it was to pass the bowl, didn't forget. This ceremony had become very important to him.

*Bread:* Sabbath bread is called challah (pronounced "hal-la" with a guttural "ch"), a term used in the Old Testament for new dough, which was a requirement to be presented as a "gift to the Lord" (Num. 15:17–21). May I encourage you to take the time, if at all possible, to bake your own bread for Sabbath. Traditionally, the mother prays for each member of the family as she stirs the mixture, kneading in her love. Imagine how much better it tastes when the children know that their mom was praying for them as she made the bread during the day! Children love to "punch" newly risen dough. Taking turns helping Mom shape and braid the loaf provides a good "together" time in the warm atmosphere of the kitchen. Just the fragrance that permeates the whole house is enough to make it worth your time. The unique shape, your own artistic touch, the aroma—and that's not all! Wait until you taste it! The loaves commonly braided or twisted are called "berches," which stems from the Latin word *bracellus*, meaning "arm." This suggests the type of loaf shaped like folded arms. When your arms are folded, you are at rest. You can't work. Try folding your arms tonight and really rest.

In Leviticus 24:5–9, you will discover the law that loaves of bread be placed on the altar before the Lord. According to verse 8, this was to be done on the Sabbath as a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and His people. Symbolic of that early offering, a small piece of dough, about the size of an olive, could be broken from the loaf before it is baked. Gather your children around you; toss it into the fireplace or oven and watch it burn. As you demonstrate this ancient Hebrew practice, you can use this as an opportunity to discuss Old Testament sacrifice and explain the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, finishing the work which allows us to enter into a permanent Sabbath rest.

Two loaves appear on the Sabbath table, symbolic of the double portion of manna which God provided on Fridays for

the children of Israel during the years they wandered in the wilderness. Fulfilling His requirement for a rest, no manna fell on Sabbath. Read the story in Exodus 16.

The challah waits for its blessing on the table under a special covering. This cloth is symbolic of the dew that was around the camp when the Israelites woke up in the desert and were reminded again that God does provide. When the dew evaporated, behold, there on the ground lay the manna, God's provision of bread. This is even more meaningful when we remember God's provision of His Son, who said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48).

The covering for the bread is up to you. It could be just a paper napkin. If you want to make it special, the following are some suggestions:

- A. textile paints on paper or cloth napkin
- B. woodblock or potato printing on the napkin
- C. a linen napkin
- D. your own embroidered masterpiece—see pages 42–43

Before breaking and eating the bread, the challah are blessed. At this time knives that are on the table for the upcoming meal should be covered, symbolic of Isaiah 2:4, "And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Christians deplore violence and long for peace. Instruments of war are to be put aside. Don't be surprised if, as you cover your knife and explain this tradition, lots of questions and a lively conversation follow. Your family should also be aware of Exodus 20:25, "And if you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of *cut* stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it." Remember, your table tonight is like an altar. On this night the bread is broken not cut, symbolizing Christ's body broken for us.

After blessing the bread, another tradition is to sprinkle a little salt on it, recalling Genesis 3:19 (NEB): "You shall gain your bread by the sweat of your brow." Finding daily bread

never ceases to be a miracle, even to the farmer who works hard to produce the grain. He recognizes its ultimate source to be God's loving care for all His creatures. It is God who brings forth bread from the earth. It is customary for each person to break off his own piece, remembering that God gives us our daily bread. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father, saying, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). Each person expresses a "thank you" to God while receiving this gift. It says in Ecclesiastes 9:7 (NKJV), "Eat your bread with joy."

*Grace:* The grace after the meal is important. Deuteronomy 8:10 says, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you." The chapter warns that when everything is going well there is a tendency for your heart to become proud and you forget the Lord. I'm surprised at how many times we have forgotten to say "thank you," even after some super dessert! Verse 18—"But *you shall remember* the Lord your God."

## Sabbath Saturday

"Joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5, NKJV).

### *What you will need:*

1. pair of white candles twisted together (page 45) and matches
2. small jar or box containing a fragrant spice (page 45)—whole cloves are great
3. small glass placed in a little bowl
4. wine or grape juice
5. Bible

### *How to celebrate!*

Wake up Saturday morning remembering that you are in the very presence of God: "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice . . . shout for joy" (Ps. 32:11). Whatever you do today, do it "all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). In the Hebrew tradition,

God's Word is central to this day. Read it! Study it! Meditate on the teachings of the Lord. Some families combine reading a passage from the Bible and a discussion at mealtimes (#15, page 45). In contrast to the busyness and preparations on Friday, this special Saturday should be free from pressure. Our family's purpose is not to drum up more to do, but to arrange life so that there can be a good rest from the stress and strain of the work week. All of our efforts are based on providing an enjoyable way to live out the principles found in "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

As the sun begins to go down on Sabbath afternoon, the family gathers around the table again. This meal is a simple one, something that can be prepared and served easily. It could even be just salad, dessert, and tea or coffee. After the light refreshments, the children and all grown-ups who still like to have fun go outside and watch, each wanting to see the first three stars in the evening sky, which means Sabbath is coming to a close. Help each other find them! In the twilight, Mother's (or other leader's) prayer is a farewell to the day (page 46).

The ceremony of Havdalah, which means separation, concludes the Sabbath and introduces the new week. The candles are twisted together for the service, linking symbolically the two candles of the Friday night Sabbath table which represented Creation and Redemption. They are lighted and held by one of the children. Another child holds the spice box, called the *bessamen*. Cloves are a nice spice to use in your little box. Pause now and read together from God's Word. Some suggestions: John 1:1–17; Luke 23:54–56; Luke 24:1–8.

Place a small glass in a little bowl. Pour wine (or grape juice) into the glass until it overflows as a visual sign of the fullness and completion of the week. As the wine spills, Sabbath departs. With head bowed, a parent (usually the father) leads the family in prayer, a benediction filled with thanksgiving to God. The twisted candle is then extinguished by dipping its flames in the spilled wine. The spice box is passed from person

to person. It signifies the fragrance of life which has just been experienced in the Sabbath. The intention is that this last fragrance will carry you through the pressures of the week until you are able, once again, to celebrate Sabbath.

The symbolism in this is strikingly beautiful. When Jesus had received the sour wine on the cross and said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), He bowed His head and breathed His last. One of the soldiers pierced His side, and immediately there flowed out blood and water. During the Last Supper He said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20). When you celebrate the weekly holy day Sabbath, when you eat the bread and drink the cup, “do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). Praying in the garden He had said, “Father, if you are willing, take *this cup* from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42, NIV). The light of the world went out for three days, as His blood was spilled for us. Then the women prepared spices to anoint His body (Luke 23:56). Remembering that the spices signify the fragrance of life experienced in Jesus, think of His words, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Repeat together the twenty-third Psalm: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (Ps. 23:5, NIV).

There are many elements in the Sabbath celebration. Each one teaches us and reminds us of Christ:

*The candles*—Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

*The wine*—“And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant’” (Matt. 26:27–28).

*The dedication of hands*—With His hands outstretched, lifted up on the cross, He said, “Father, into your hands I commit

my spirit” (Luke 23:46, NIV).

*The bread*—“This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19).

*The grace after the meal*—“For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (John 1:16–17).

*The twisted candles*—linking Creation and Redemption. “He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him” (John 1:2–3). “The true Light, that illumines every person, was coming into the world . . . to those who did receive Him, He granted ability to become God’s children” (John 1:9, 12, MLB).

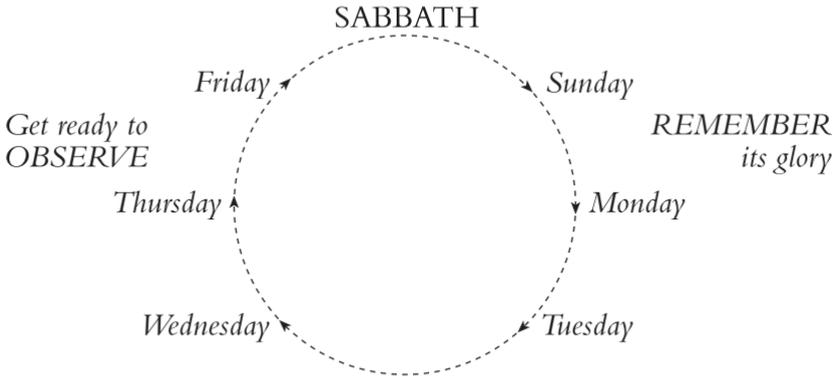
*The overflowing cup*—“This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20).

*Putting out the candle*—“It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land . . . the sun stopped shining. . . . Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’” (Luke 23:44–46, NIV).

*The spice box*—“And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews” (John 19:40).

As the Sabbath departs, its sweet scent lingers. The fragrance of His death and resurrection will carry you through the pressures of life until, “I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

This weekly observance represents the cycle of all history. Christ stands at the center. The Sabbath is symbolic of Christ. The Old Testament teaches “get ready to observe.” Jesus, our Sabbath, enters. . . . The New Testament teaches “remember Me” with joy!



“For I, the Messiah, am Master even of the Sabbath”  
(Matt. 12:8, TLB).

## First Day of the Week, Sunday The Lord’s Day

### *What you will need:*

1. big, colorful candle
2. verse cards (#18, page 46)
3. the church of your choice
4. comfortable shoes

### *This is why!*

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified, and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of

Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” And they remembered His words (Luke 24:1–8).

### *How to celebrate!*

Sunday morning someone should wake up a little before the rest of the family and light a big, bright candle. Place it on the breakfast table. Beside it, prop up a card containing some special verses for the day. It is the custom of the Christian world to celebrate this first day of the week, Christ’s resurrection, by going to church to worship Him and to fellowship with His people. It is helpful to be reminded that, “as was His custom, He [Jesus] entered the synagogue on the Sabbath” (Luke 4:16). Enter God’s house this weekend and worship Him.

Reading on in Luke 24, on the very same day that the angels spoke to the women, the resurrected Jesus joined two men who were on the road going to the town called Emmaus. They didn’t recognize Him at first. Nearing the village, the men invited Jesus to stay over. “And it came about that when He had reclined at table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him” (vv. 30–31). “*He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread*” (v. 35). And, “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45). “And He led them out . . . and He lifted up His hands and blessed them” (v. 50).

Candles burn out, flowers fade away, bread gets moldy, and wine turns sour, but as He dwells in us we become His living sign to the world. He said, “You are witnesses of these things” (v. 48). Take your own Emmaus walk on Sunday afternoon, going out from your home together. “And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them” (vv. 14–15).

In our family, Sunday night marks the end of the weekend rest. School, work, and routine activities start again on Monday morning. Sometimes we gather around the table for Havdalah service on Sunday night instead of Saturday night. Monday morning I wake up early before the rest of the family and place a lighted candle on the breakfast table. It speaks for itself as one by one family members make their way into the kitchen. Hurrying to our various responsibilities, we take with us a visual reminder that He has risen, that He is going with us through the week, and that even as the Father sent Him into the world as a witness, He has sent us to be His witnesses. You may try several plans and see what works best in your family.

Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you" (John 20:21).

## Resources for Celebrating Sabbath

### *1. Preparation prayer*

A prayer spoken by a parent (usually the mother) as the family gathers just before lighting the candles on Friday afternoon:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
King of the Universe,  
you are the Author of peace.  
You made the Sabbath holy,  
You called us to honor this Sabbath,  
enter our home this night.  
Almighty God,  
Grant us and all our loved ones rest  
on this Sabbath day.  
May the light of the candles drive out  
from among us the spirit of anger,  
frustration and fear.  
Send Your blessing that we may walk  
in the ways of Your Word  
and Your light.  
Enter our hearts this night.

Heavenly Father,  
We rejoice in Your creation!  
It is from you we receive every good  
and perfect gift.  
Giver of life and love,  
grant us Your peace,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**2. *Mother (or other leader) says the following blessings before lighting the candles:***

*Creation* (lighting the first candle):

This candle represents creation.  
Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
King of the Universe,  
who brings forth light out of darkness.

*Redemption* (lighting the second candle):

This candle represents redemption.  
Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”  
Our Lord said, “You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14–16). As we light these candles and set them to give light to all who are in this house, light our lives with the great love of Your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray.

**3. *Parent’s (usually the father’s) blessing (placing your hands on their heads, bless each child):***

Bless your children individually according to their gifts and abilities. Include a current need (maybe an upcoming soccer game) and a future goal (the choice of a career).

**4. *As a compliment to his wife, the husband quotes from Proverbs 31:10, 27–30:***

An excellent wife, who can find?  
For her worth is far above jewels.

She looks well to the ways of her household,  
And does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Her children rise up and bless her;  
Her husband also, and he praises her, saying:  
“Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.”  
A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

**5. *The family sings softly and prayerfully “Bless Our Home” (to the tune of “Edelweiss”) or a similar song meaningful to your family:***

Bless our home, bless our food;  
Come, O Lord, and sit with us;  
May our talk glow with peace,  
May Your love surround us;  
Friendship and love, may they bloom and grow,  
Bloom and grow forever;  
Bless our home, bless our food;  
Come, O Lord, and sit with us.

**6. *The father (or leader) recites the Kiddush, the prayer of sanctification of the Sabbath, over a cup of wine or small individual glasses of grape juice:***

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the vine.

**7. *The blessing before the washing of hands:***

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,  
who has sanctified us through Your commandments  
and instructed us concerning the washing of hands.

**8. *Beginning with the leader, each person in turn repeats the Hamotzi, a blessing over the bread:***

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
King of the Universe,  
who brings forth bread from the earth.

## 9. *Suggested menu and recipes for Friday night's Sabbath dinner:*

NOTE: An asterisk in a menu means a recipe will follow.

Wine or juice • Challah\*  
 Golden Yoich\*  
 Baked Fish • Rice •  
 Carrots  
 Tomatoes & Greens or Candlestick Salad\*  
 Strudel  
 Tea with Lemon

“A cheerful heart has a continual feast” (Prov. 15:15).

### **Challah**

(Sabbath Bread)

2 packages dry yeast	4 tsp. salt
2 cups warm water	3 eggs, slightly beaten
¼ cup sugar	7½ cups flour
¼ cup oil	

Take a large bowl and pour in 2 cups warm water. Take your time testing to make sure it is *warm*, not hot or cool. Soften the yeast in the water. Add sugar, oil, salt. Blend in the eggs (reserve 1 tbsp. of white for brushing). Add 3 cups flour—beat well to avoid lumps. Let it rest about 5 minutes. Gradually add the rest of the flour (4½ cups). Oil the table or board you will use and your hands and knead the dough about 10 minutes.

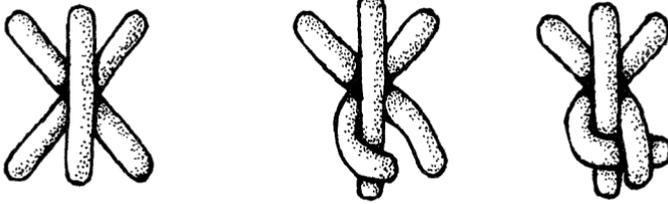
Put the dough back into the bowl, cover with a clean cloth and leave in a warm place. Let rise about 1½ hours. Shape. Braid on cookie sheet. If you sprinkle cornmeal on the bottom of the pan, the bottom of the loaf comes out textured. Brush top with egg. Sprinkle with poppy seeds or sesame seeds. Let rise 1 hour. Bake at 375° for 30–45 minutes. Tap the bottom of each loaf. When there is a hollow sound the bread is done.

This makes two very large loaves or three average size

loaves. I braid two for the Sabbath table and make one loaf in a regular bread pan.

Variations: Take three smaller strands and braid them together. Lay them over the top of the large braided loaves. This makes a very impressive loaf of bread.

If you have sons, make several small loaves and put them at their places. Let the boys help Dad with the blessing of the bread.



### Golden Yoich

(Golden Chicken Soup)

1 large boiling chicken  
10 cups water  
2–3 tsp. salt  
3 carrots, sliced

1 onion, minced  
3 stalks celery, sliced  
1 parsnip, sliced  
dash of dill weed

Place chicken in a large kettle, cover with water, add salt, and bring it to a boil. Lower the temperature, and simmer the chicken until it falls off the bones. Remove, cool, bone it, and return the chicken to the broth. Add the vegetables and any others you think might taste good. Be sure to use parsnips for an especially good flavor. Cover and cook gently. This is the basic soup. You may strain the broth and serve it with noodles. We like it thick—vegetables and all.

### Candlestick Salad

(Something the children can make to help with the Sabbath preparations.)

Directions for making one salad: Put a washed piece of let-

tuce on a plate. Place a slice of pineapple on the lettuce. Cut a banana in half in such a way that it will stand in the hole. Put half of a toothpick in the top of the banana and poke a cherry on it for the flame.

*10. Grace after the meal:*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,

King of the Universe,

who provides the fruit of the earth for our use.

We bless you for fulfilling continually

Your promise that while the earth remains,

seedtime and harvest shall not fail.

Teach us to remember that it is not by bread alone that we live.

Grant us evermore to feed on Him who is the true

bread from heaven, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, our Heavenly Father, look in favor  
upon the homes of Your people.

Defend them against evil and supply all their needs  
according to the riches of Your wonderful grace.

Make them sanctuaries of peace, love, and joy.

Help us to follow You every step of our daily lives.

May we always abide under the safe shadow of Your love,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.