



TEMPLE CHAI

# Shabbat

Questions and Answers to  
help you more fully experience  
and enjoy Shabbat



# Shabbat

## What does Shabbat mean?

Shabbat is the Hebrew word for Sabbath.

## What does Kabbalat Shabbat mean?

Kabbalat Shabbat means the *greeting of the Sabbath*.

## When does Shabbat Start?

Shabbat, according to Jewish tradition, starts Friday at sundown and ends Saturday at sundown. In the Jewish calendar, days begin at sundown because in the creation story each day is described with “*there was evening, there was morning*” (evening comes first). Shabbat is considered the 7th day according to the Jewish calendar. It is reserved for prayer, Torah study, and rest.

## How do we prepare for Shabbat?

We try to create a separation from the work week, for example, clearing off our desks before Shabbat. Many people prepare a special Shabbat dinner to eat on Friday night. The day before Shabbat begins is often filled with preparation (cooking, cleaning, making sure that no work will need to be done, etc.).

## Why is Shabbat so special and important?

Shabbat is the day God rested after finishing the creation. It is also a very special time for family and friends to spend together. It is a weekly opportunity to sanctify time and to rest and rejuvenate.

## What do the greetings Good Shabbos and Shabbat Shalom mean?

Both greetings are appropriate and interchangeable. Good Shabbos means Good Shabbat and Shabbat Shalom means Peaceful Shabbat.

## Shabbat Candles

### Do I have to light candles at home if we do it at temple?

Candle lighting is a home-centered ritual, although the candles can be lit anywhere since they are a source of light, hope, and joy. Many homes have a *tzedakah* (charity) box. It is customary to put money in the *tzedakah* box before lighting the candles.

## When and where do I light candles?

You may light them early, before Shabbat starts (Shabbat starts at sundown on Friday). We light the candles 18 minutes before sunset as not to desecrate the Sabbath by miscalculating the time that night actually falls since the actual lighting is considered work.

## Why do we wave our hands three times and cover our eyes?

Symbolically we move from darkness to light by circling or drawing our hands and then covering our eyes in a welcoming gesture that brings in the light to accomplish that transition.

## Are there special candles to use for Shabbat?

There are no specific requirements about the type of candles that are used. However, Judaica shops and some supermarkets sell boxes of candles that are made for Shabbat.

## Why are there two candles?

There are two Biblical commandments regarding Shabbat and we light one candle for each commandment. One candle is *Remember the Sabbath day* (Exodus 20:8) and the other is *Observe the Sabbath* (Deut. 5:12). Midrash also talks about the Shabbat of the past and the Shabbat of the future.

## Can you light more than two?

The Sephardic tradition is to light seven candles corresponding to the seven days of the week. Others choose to light a candle for each child. The Talmud (Shabbat 23b) encourages this custom when it says, “*The multiplication of candles (light) is a Sabbath blessing.*”

## What is the blessing for lighting the Shabbat Candles?

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Melech ha-olom asher kideshanu bemitzvosov vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of the Shabbat.*

## Can you blow out the Shabbat Candles?

No, you are not supposed to blow them out. The candles should burn all the way down without interference. If you light them and leave the house when the candles are still burning, be sure to place the candles where they will be safe.

# Shabbat Service

## What is a Tallit (prayer shawl)?

The biblical source of the tallit is Numbers 15:37-41, where Moses is told, “*Speak to the Children of Israel and bid them to affix tzitzit (fringes) to the corners of their garments...*” so that whenever these fringes are seen, they will be reminded of God’s commandments. However, the fringes are not ordinary fringes. They are tied in a very specific way, with a certain number of twists and knots. In the world of the rabbis, these twists and knots have numerical values that add up to a total of 613 which is the same number of *mitzvot (obligations)* that are recorded in the Torah. The tallit was created as a garment to hold the *tzitzit*. A tallit comes in many sizes and styles but all have the *tzitzit*.

## Why do we wear a Tallit?

We wear a *tallit* to honor the Torah. In the Bible, in the book of Numbers, the children of Israel are instructed by Moses to look upon the *tzitzit* and be reminded of all of God’s commandments and to observe them. These *tzitzit* are also a reminder for our eyes not to be led astray and worship other gods.

## How do the Tzitzit help us to remember to do what is right?

They work in much the same way that a thread tied around a finger helps us to remember to do something. By looking at it, a certain memory or thought is triggered in our minds!

## When do we wear a Tallit?

A *tallit* is worn only when the Torah is read on Shabbat, Monday, and Thursday mornings. At Temple Chai, the Torah is currently read on Shabbat morning. The exception to this is Kol Nidre (the evening service that starts the Day of Atonement called Yom Kippur) when we wear a *tallit*. On Kol Nidre, the Torah is taken out and carried around the synagogue in a solemn procession. The *tallit* is put on at the beginning of each of these services. The ritual for putting on the *tallit* includes reading the prayer that can be found on the top edge of the *tallit*, bringing the two ends of the prayer together and kissing it, and then putting it on over your shoulders. The *shaliach tzibur* (person leading the service) often also wears a *tallit* in the evening.

The blessing for putting on the *tallit* is:

*Baruch atah adonai ehloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kideshannu bemitzvosov vetzivannu l’hetateif batzitzit.*

*Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in fringes.*

## Who can wear a Tallit?

Usually, the first time that a person wears a *tallit* is that person's bar or bat mitzvah. In Reform Judaism, a Jewish person 13 years of age or older can wear a *tallit*.

## What is a nigun?

A *nigun* is a song without words. Singing joyous songs and *nigunim* (plural) is an uplifting way to celebrate Shabbat.

## Why during the Kabbalat Shabbat services do we recite seven Psalms and have silences?

The seven songs and silences are an opportunity to review and think about the seven days that have passed since last Shabbat.

## When do we bow and bend?

The specific times we bow are when *Baruch* is said during the *Barechu* and the *Amidah*, prayers that are said during services. We bow as we would before a revered leader such as a king. The word *Baruch* is related to *berech*, which means *knee*. Thus we bend our knees as part of the bow. We also bow during *Alienu Leshabach*, a prayer in which we look forward to the day when the world will be united and worship one God.

## When we stand do we face in any specific direction?

We face east so we can face towards Jerusalem.

## What is the Shema?

The Shema is the central doctrine of our faith. This is the central and most important prayer in the service. For thousands of years, it has been the Jew's statement of faith and trust in God.

*Shema Yisrael Adonai El-hei-nu, Adonai echad. Baruch sham k'vod mal-chu-to l'olam va-ed.*

*Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, The Lord is one. Blessed is Your glorious dominion forever and ever!*

## Why do some people cover their eyes when the Shema is said?

We cover our eyes to block out distractions and deepen concentration. Also the Shema is about listening and closing our eyes helps focus on the sensation of hearing.

## Why do we turn around and face the back of the sanctuary when we sing the last verse of *Lecha Dodi*?

*Lecha Dodi* is a poem written in the 3rd century by Solomon Alkabetz, a Kabbalist. *Lecha Dodi* means *come, my friend, to meet the bride*. We turn toward the back doors to welcome Shabbat, which is symbolically considered as a bride.

## What is the symbolism of Shabbat as a bride?

A bride brings to mind a wedding, with associated feelings of love, closeness, and intimacy. This imagery helps us feel the closeness, love, and intimacy with Shabbat and God.

## What is the Torah?

The Torah is a document handwritten on parchment. It is on a scroll and contains the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

## When is the Torah read?

The Torah can be read on Shabbat, Monday, and Thursday. Mondays and Thursdays were picked to accommodate the people who would come to market in ancient times.

## When the Torah is walked around, why do we kiss it and what is the correct way to do so?

We kiss the Torah out of respect. Many people touch their prayer books to the Torah and then kiss their book. Others use the fringes of their *tallit* to touch the Torah and then kiss the fringes. Others just touch the Torah with their fingers and then kiss their fingers.

## What is the Haftarah?

The Haftarah is a compilation of special writings that relate to the Torah portion (*parashah*) that is being read.

# Rituals

## Why do we invite guests or go to someone's home for Friday night Shabbat dinner?

Shabbat is the celebration of what the world will be like when there are no more wars, famine, and sickness. Therefore, we celebrate this with community.

## What are the rituals before you eat the Shabbat meal?

We say the blessing over the candles, the blessing of the wine (called the *kiddush*), hand washing, the blessing over the challah (called the *motzi*), and the blessing of the children.

## Do any of the blessings have to be sung?

No, the blessings do not have to be sung.

## Is it alright to say the blessing in English?

Yes, you can say the blessings in English.

## What is a Kiddush?

The *kiddush* (sanctification) is a blessing for wine and is recited before we drink the wine.

## What is the Kiddush blessing?

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.*

*Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.*

## What is the ritual for hand washing?

Washing hands by using a special pitcher, many of which have two handles, was started by the priests (in ancient days, before there were rabbis, priests were leaders of the Jewish community) who removed ritual impurities before eating their meal in the temple. Once this ritual is started, it is customary to refrain from talking; many chant a *nigun* until the *motzi* is said.

## What does the challah symbolize?

A *challah* is special bread, usually a braided egg bread, that was first mentioned in the Bible (Leviticus 24:5). It was placed on the altar in the Tabernacle. According to most authorities, this is the origin of the use of challah on the Sabbath and holidays.

## Why are there two Challot (plural of Challah)?

When the Israelites left Egypt, God provided them with a double portion of manna (the name of the food miraculously produced for the Israelites in the desert in the book of Exodus) so that they would not have to collect food, which would be work on Shabbat.

## Why do we cover the Challah?

Midrash says that since the Kiddush is said first, the challah is covered so it should not be slighted. You uncover the challah right before you say the blessing over it.

## Why do you sprinkle salt on the Challah before you eat it?

In Jewish tradition, the table is like an altar. The Talmud says: “*A man’s table is like the Altar that brings atonement*” (Brachot 55A). Salt was used with all sacrifices brought on the altar in Temple times (first Temple built in 825 BCE, second Temple destroyed in 70 CE), and the custom of dipping bread in salt evolved as a memorial to the sacrificial system.

## Challah Recipe

Ingredients:	3 eggs
2 1/2 cups warm water (110 degrees F)	1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon active dry yeast	8 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 cup honey	1 tablespoon poppy seeds (optional)
4 tablespoons vegetable oil	

### Directions:

In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over barely warm water. Beat in honey, oil, 2 eggs, and salt. Add the flour one cup at a time, beating after each addition, graduating to kneading with hands as dough thickens. Knead until smooth and elastic and no longer sticky, adding flour as needed. Cover with a damp clean cloth and let rise for 1 1/2 hours or until dough has doubled in bulk.

Punch down the risen dough and turn out onto floured board. Divide in half and knead each half for five minutes or so, adding flour as needed to keep from getting sticky. Divide each half into thirds and roll into long snake about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Pinch the ends of the three snakes together firmly and braid from middle. Either leave as braid or form into a round braided loaf by bringing ends together, curving braid into a circle, pinch ends together. Grease two baking trays and place finished braid or round on each. Cover with towel and let rise about one hour.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Beat the remaining egg and brush a generous amount over each braid. Sprinkle with poppy seeds if desired.

Bake at 375 degrees F for about 40 minutes. Bread should have a nice hollow sound when thumped on the bottom. Cool on a rack for at least one hour before slicing.

Yield: 2 braided loaves.

Prep Time: 30 Minutes; Cook Time: 40 Minutes; Ready In: 3 Hours 40 Minutes.

Recipe from [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com).



## What is the blessing before you eat the Challah?

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melech ha-olam ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

*Blessed are you, Lord, our God, king of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth.*

The blessing thanks God for bringing bread from the earth. We co-partner with God. The earth provides the wheat and needs us to make it into bread.

## Why do we bless our Children?

The blessing was ordained in the Torah when Jacob gave a personal blessing to his grandsons Menasha and Ephraim. On that day, Jacob blessed them, he said, “*In time to come, Israel (the Jewish people) will use you as a blessing. They will say, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.’*” (Genesis 48:20).

Jacob’s intention was that his children should be a blessing, an example to the Jewish people for all time. From that day forward, they would become role models for Jewish children everywhere, as they represented qualities to emulate eternally.

## How do I do the blessings for Children?

A hand is placed on the son or daughter’s head and the following blessings are recited.

### Blessing for a Son

*Ye’simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve’chi-Menashe. Ye’varech’echa Adonai ve’yish’merecha. Ya’eir Adonai panav eilecha, ve’yaseim lecha shalom.*

*May God make you like Ephraim and Mensabe. May God bless you and watch over you. May God shine His face toward you and show you favor. May God be favorably disposed toward you, and may He grant you peace.*

### Blessing for a Daughter

*Ye’simch Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah. Ye’varech’echa Adonai ve’yish’merecha. Ya’eir Adonai panav eilecha, ve’yaseim lecha shalom.*

*May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. May God bless you and watch over you. May God shine His face toward you and show you favor. May God be favorably disposed toward you, and may He grant you peace.*

## What is Havdalah?

Havdalah is a ceremony and service that brings Shabbat to a close, distinguishing between Shabbat and the secular work week.

## What does the word Havdalah mean?

The name Havdalah comes from the Hebrew word *l'havdeel*, which means to distinguish or separate.

## What is needed for Havdalah?

Three things are needed for Havdalah, which can be done at the synagogue or in your home – a glass of kosher wine or grape juice, some fragrant spices (cloves, cinnamon, or bay leaves are usually used), and a special Havdalah candle.

The wine is used to symbolize the joy of the Sabbath.

Blessing over wine:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, bo-rei p're ha-gafen.*

*Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the vine.*

The spices are smelled so that the sweetness of the Sabbath will be carried over into the work week.

Blessing over spice:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, bo-rei mi-nei v'samim.*

*Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who creates the fragrant spices.*

The candle is braided and has two wicks. The braiding symbolizes the unity found at the end of the Sabbath. Since the blessing refers to *lights of the fire* in the plural, two wicks are used in one candle to enable one to extinguish them at the same time. If a Havdalah candle is not available, one can hold two candles together so that their wicks burn together one flame.

Blessing over flames of Havdalah candle:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, bo-rei mi-orei ha-eish.*

*Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who creates the lights of fire.*

After the blessing is recited, hold your hands up to the flame with curved fingers, so you can see the shadow of your fingers on your palms. This is done because it would be improper to recite a blessing for something and then not use it.

The final blessing is the Havdalah blessing itself, the blessing over the separation of different things. The blessing is recited over the wine. After the blessing is complete, the flame from the Havdalah candle is extinguished in the cup of wine.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'chol.*

*Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who distinguishes between the sacred and the secular.*

# Vocabulary

**Aliyah** – means *going up*. Everyone given an *aliyah* will recite the traditional blessing before and after the reading of a Torah section. It is considered an honor to be called for an *aliyah*. This honor is reserved for Jews ages 13 and older.

**Ark** – Where the Torah scrolls are kept on the bimah. It is a sign of respect to stand when the Ark is opened.

**Bar and Bat Mitzvah** – means son (*bar*) and daughter (*bat*) of the commandments (*mitzvah*). This is a ceremony when a Jewish child, usually at the age of 13, reaches the age of religious maturity.

**Bimah** – Raised front portion of the sanctuary where services are conducted.

**Cantor** – Person responsible for leading the congregation in song.

**Challah** – Traditional braided egg bread that is eaten on Shabbat.

**D'var Torah** – Sermon or discussion related to the weekly Torah portion.

**Eternal Light or Ner Tamid** – The lamp above the Ark that burns continually to commemorate the eternal flame that burned in the ancient tabernacle.

**Kippah or Yarmulke** – Head covering worn as a sign of reverence while praying. While not a requirement, all congregants and guests are invited to wear a *kippah*. *Kippot* (plural) are available to use and can be found in the entrance to the sanctuary. You do not have to be Jewish to wear a *kippah*.

**Memorial Board** – The plaques and lights in the sanctuary are memorials to the departed family and friends of our members. On the Shabbat *yahrzeit* (anniversary of a loved one's death), the light next to the plaque is illuminated.

**Rabbi** – Hebrew word for teacher; serves as the leader of the congregation.

**Sephardic** – Jews and Jewish traditions of Spanish/Ladino rather than Eastern European (Ashkenazi) descent.

**Siddur** – The prayer book, which is read from right to left to follow the Hebrew language.

**Torah Processional** – during the service the Torah is carried through the sanctuary reflecting that its wisdom is to be brought to the people. It is customary to kiss the Torah indirectly using your *siddur* or *tallit*.

**Yahrzeit** – Yahrzeit is observed on the Shabbat anniversary of a loved one's death. At services on the Shabbat of *yahrzeit*, a prayer, the Mourner's Kaddish, is recited.

This brochure was created by Temple Chai clergy and congregants  
under the loving guidance of Toni Dusik.

## Temple Chai

- A Caring Community -

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