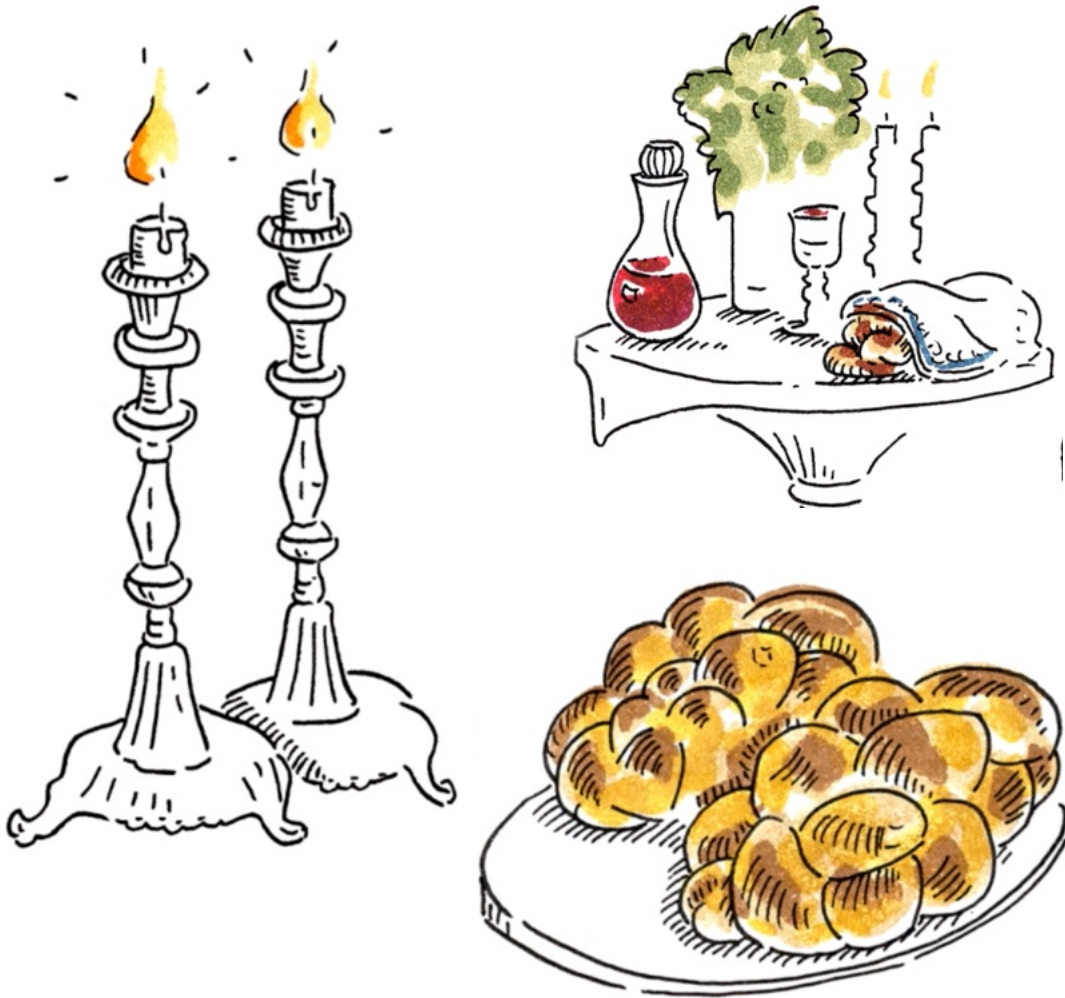


Lesson Guide: Class Five

Shabbat: A Cathedral in Time



Miller Introduction to
Judaism Program

OF AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY



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Lesson Guide for Class #5: Shabbat: A Cathedral in Time

Class Summary:

Exploration of the practice of Shabbat, from its origins in the Ten Commandments to its contemporary observance. Overview of the principles of *shmirat* Shabbat, emphasizing helping students determine how to begin incorporating elements of Shabbat observance into their lives. Examination of the meaning and practice of Shabbat rituals in the home.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Understand the basic concepts, vocabulary, traditions, and practices that characterize Shabbat observance.
- Gain an appreciation for the spiritual and personal meaning and value of Shabbat and think about how they will incorporate Shabbat into their own lives.
- Practice some Friday night Shabbat rituals and gain the skills to be able to observe Shabbat in their own homes.

Key Vocabulary:

- Shabbat
- Shamor
- Zakhor
- Melacha
- Kiddush
- Challah
- Kabbalat Shabbat
- Seudat Shlishit
- Havdalah
- Shabbat Shalom

In-Person Teaching Materials:

- Room and door signs
- Name tags and pens
- Chalkboard, white-board, or large flip chart
- Colored markers or chalk
- On One Foot course books or printed PDFs
- Projector, computer & screen if using Class Slide Decks, On One Foot videos
- Friday night Shabbat table ritual items: candles/candlesticks, matches, kiddush cup, wine/grape juice, and challah and challah cloth.
- Havdalah ritual items — braided candle, kiddush cup, wine/juice, spice box.

Online Teaching Materials:

- Zoom Pro Account
- PDF of On One Foot chapter
- PowerPoint Class Slide Deck
- Appropriate background, lighting, and sound setup.
- Friday night Shabbat table ritual items: candles/candlesticks, matches, kiddush cup, wine/grape juice, and challah and challah cloth.
- Havdalah ritual items — braided candle, kiddush cup, wine/juice, spice box.

Teaching Notes:

It's crucial in this session, and in others that pertain to halakhic topics, like kashrut, not to overwhelm the students or, much worse, shame them about their current Jewish practice. Instead, the goal here ought to be to invite them to consider how traditional observances may be meaningful in creating sacred space in their lives. A gradual approach to adopting observance is a value of the Miller Program curriculum — we believe it is both legitimate and pedagogically sound to take on a big mitzvah like Shabbat piece-by-piece rather than needing to do it all at once.

Additionally, there are elements of Shabbat practice that need to be experienced to be understood. If possible, arrange for a Shabbat experience for your students – ideally in-person at either a home or synagogue space, or virtually if necessary. If you would like to run a learner's service for your students, we have an abbreviated siddur available for your use. These experiences immeasurably enrich the learning experience and help to build community among students.

Set Induction: “Two Versions of the Ten Commandments”

Explain that the 10 Commandments are given twice in the Torah – when they are initially revealed in Exodus and during Moses’ recap of the last 40 years in Deuteronomy. Shabbat is the only ritual mitzvah mentioned in the 10 Commandments, already hinting at its exceptional place in Jewish life. Also, the commandment to keep Shabbat is the only one that is significantly different between the two versions.

Students should divide into chavruta pairs/small groups (if teaching online, use breakout rooms) and read both versions of the Fourth Commandment, from Exodus and Deuteronomy, identifying similarities and differences and putting them into a Venn Diagram in their coursebook.

The instructor will then lead the class in creating a group Venn Diagram, highlighting both the similarities (i.e., the value of rest, sanctification, everyone is required to participate, etc.) and differences (Guard vs. Remember, the rationale of Exodus vs. the rationale of Creation, etc.).

If teaching in person, write the words “Shamor” and “Zakhor” on the board and explain that the Rabbis organized their discussions of Shabbat around these two pillars. Shamor refers to Shabbat’s prohibitions, while Zakhor refers to all of Shabbat’s rituals and practices. Explain that the class will be divided between exploring both aspects of Shabbat. If teaching online, use the slides that define these key vocabulary terms.

Lecture: “Shamor”

Both versions of the Ten Commandments specify that Shabbat is a day of refraining from work. However, "work" is an ambiguous term. What one person considers work may not be work for someone else. Lead a brief brainstorm of the various possible meanings of the word "work."

- Tasks that you are paid for (work vs. volunteer)
- Tasks that you don't enjoy (work vs. play)
- Tasks that are physically or mentally tiring (work vs. relaxation)

The Jewish Tradition's definition of work ("melacha") in this context is quite specific:

Work is something that creates, destroys, or permanently changes the world around us. Here's a framework for thinking about Shabbat that comes from the On One Foot video that may be helpful for students in understanding this concept:

"Imagine it's five minutes before Shabbat. You've finished all your preparation. Your table is set, your guests will soon arrive. You step into the yard and notice a stunning rose. The most natural thing would be to clip it and use it to complete your table.

Now imagine it's five minutes after Shabbat has begun, and the same scenario plays out: You're in your garden, waiting for your guests to arrive. You again notice a gorgeous rose ...

But, this time, it's different – Shabbat is already here. So, you lean down and inhale the flower's perfume, and then go back inside. Your table is beautiful enough already, and the rose gets to go on being a rose, not created to be of use for you, but just to be beautiful as it is."

Look together at the 39 Melachot spelled out in the Mishnah. Identify which are likely directly applicable to modern life and what some modern, urban analogs are to practices that may be less familiar. Focus on how this list illustrates the concept – leaving the world as one found it -- rather than the particulars of the specific melachot.

Additional Vocabulary & Topics for Discussion:

Sh'vut: An activity that, while technically not melacha, is not in the "spirit of Shabbat." They may brainstorm a few examples (arguing, strenuous workouts, profanity, etc.). Sh'vut can be a beneficial category for those looking for a more interpretative and less traditional observance.

Muktze: An item that is put away entirely for the duration of Shabbat, so it does not disturb the sanctity of the day. They may brainstorm a few examples (cell phone, keys, wallet, etc.). What would it feel like to be without your phone for an hour? How about 25? Why is it so difficult?

Eruv: The concept that traditional Jews must live within a boundary to deal with the prohibition on carrying. What kind of community does this create?

Pikuach Nefesh: This is also an opportunity to talk about the principles of pikuach nefesh, which states that ritual law always comes second to concerns about human health & safety. How does one balance values when they come into tension?

As appropriate to the setting, it may be helpful to discuss different opinions on the use of electricity and driving on Shabbat. Students will likely only be familiar with

an Orthodox definition of shmirat Shabbat and may not know that other opinions exist about Shabbat observance.

Break

In-Person: During the break, set up two stations on either side of the classroom. One station should contain all the ritual items needed to bring in Shabbat – candles, matches, kiddush cup, wine/grape juice, challah with plate, and cover. The other station should include all of the ritual items for ending Shabbat – braided candle, matches, cup with wine/grape juice, spice box with spices.

Online: This is an excellent opportunity to stage ritual items to show. It is more evocative and welcoming to set a model Shabbat table and share that space with students rather than just holding up candlesticks or a challah cloth in front of a camera.

Experience: “Zakhor”

Lead class in group brainstorm: Typically, when we take a total break from our regular work obligations, we refer to that time as "vacation." What are some of the activities that typify vacation for you? (i.e., eating, drinking, spending quality time with family/friends, intimate time with a partner, sleep, nature, reading, R&R, etc.).

Shabbat is a weekly vacation. Since we cannot work in our regular way, we have created an island in time to focus on some of our favorite activities. Shabbat is not only a day of things to refrain from; it is a day full of activities that help our lives to become more refreshed, more connected, and more balanced.

In-Person: Invite the group to gather around the Friday Night Table station and go through each of the elements of the ritual table experience, using the "Shabbat at Home Guide." The Shabbat at Home Guide is available for order from the Miller Program and can be downloaded from the DropBox. Spend time explaining the significance of each ritual and discussing ways that they can do them at home.

Ask the group to take their seats and narrate the flow of the rest of the Shabbat day, including a discussion of the Kabbalat Shabbat and Saturday morning synagogue services, practices at Shabbat lunch and Seudat Shlishit, and other ways to make the Shabbat day special.

Then, invite the group to gather around the Havdalah station and go through each element of that service, using the "Guide to Shabbat at Home." Discuss the meaning

of separating holy and ordinary time and ask them how their understanding of those two terms may have changed during today's class.

Online: As mentioned in the note above, we encourage you not just to do "show and tell" with ritual items but to stage a Shabbat table and Havdalah station in your teaching space. If you are teaching from home, treat it as though you are inviting the students to your table. If you are teaching from a synagogue, give them a sense of what it is like to gather at the synagogue. Invite students who have Shabbat items of significance to them to bring them on camera and share them with the class.

Wrap Up and At Home Work

Use the "Sabbath Manifesto" created by REBOOT (www.rebooters.net) and included in the coursebook as a model. Invite students to start writing their own Shabbat Manifestos — asking themselves what they would like to either incorporate or cut out of their lives to make Shabbat more meaningful. Please encourage students to complete these at home, preferably with any partners and family members, and share them in the following class.

Students should also be told to watch the "Cathedral in Time" video and answer the review questions and journal prompt.

Exodus

(REMEMBER/DO)

Remember

**Remember
In memory of Creation
"because God rested"**

Rest

Sanctification

**Not just you... your extended circle
Six days you shall work**

Guard

**In memory of Exodus
"because God liberated"**

Deuteronomy

(GUARD/DON'T DO)