



## Keeping Sabbath

### About this Faith Practice

Sabbath is intentional time taken by individuals and faith communities to integrate the Divine with humanity and creation. Jesus models how to keep Sabbath both inwardly (through prayer, solitude, silence, and meditation) and outwardly (through communal ritual and acts of justice). Our inward movement toward a life centered in the Spirit indicates the reign of God within us. Jesus embodies the depth of sabbath-keeping experiences through outward action to followers and to those he encounters who have specific needs. Our practice of Sabbath is informed by God resting on the seventh day after laboring for six days to create the world, establishing a day of Sabbath. Building on this biblical tradition, some faith communities dedicate a specific day of the week to rest, worship, and work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

### Let's Begin...

Now that you've downloaded the files for your faith practice and age group or setting, you can get started planning one or multiple sessions:

**1 Open the .pdf file for your age group or setting. Choose an Exploration, the approach you think will help your group to best experience the faith practice. Choose any one of the following Explorations to use for one session:**



**Discovery**



**Scripture**



**Discipleship**



**Christian Tradition**



**Context and Mission**



**Future and Vision**

**Note:** If you're planning multiple sessions, you can follow the order suggested above or feel free to use any order that fits the needs of your group. Some groups may choose to start with Scripture and then see where that leads them. Others may be more ready to act in their community and might want to start with Context and Mission.

**2 Locate the Exploration you've chosen**

### 3 Look through all 9 activities and select the ones you would like to do with your group.

- If you're planning a 30–45 minute session, choose 3 activities.
- It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving.
- For 45 minutes to 1 hour, choose 4 or 5 activities.
- For a 1½ to 2-hour session, you can use all 9 activities.

**Tip:** Look for this symbol  to find activities designed for Easy Preparation (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church).

### 4 Make copies of any handouts () related to your activities. Order posters (), if using art (see "Ordering Posters," below).

## Use of Art, Music, and Scripture in Faith Practices

Faith Practices activities include many opportunities to grow in faith through the use of scripture, music, and art.

### Ordering Posters

If you choose activities that use an art image, you or your church will need to purchase posters of the art by clicking on the link provided in the activity. If you wish to use art, you will need to plan ahead, since it takes 1 to 2 weeks for the posters to arrive after you place your order.

### Art

Six posters are used with the faith practice Giving and Receiving Hospitality and may be ordered by clicking on the links provided.

#### From Imaging the Word Poster Sets:

"Out of Work" by Käthe Kollwitz (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"The Public Fountain" by Manuel Alvarez Bravo (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"Guatemala: Procession" by Betty LaDuke (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

#### From AllPosters.com:

"The Dance of Youth" by Pablo Picasso (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7>)

"Going to Church" by William H. Johnson (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters8>)

"Midday Rest" (after Millet), c.1890 by Vincent van Gogh (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters9>)

### Music

Three music selections are used with Giving and Receiving Hospitality. We have selected music which is easily found in many hymnals. A web link is provided to give more information about each music selection.

Let Me Enter God's Own Dwelling, Tune: Unser Herrscher (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong7>)

I Woke Up This Morning, Tune: Woke Up This Morning (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong8>)

I've Got Peace Like a River, Tune: Peace Like A River (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong9>)

### Scripture

Twelve Bible passages are used with Giving and Receiving Hospitality, two with each Exploration.

Discovery	Genesis 2:2–4	Luke 12:22–31
Scripture	Mark 2:23–3:6	Exodus 20:1–17
Discipleship	Luke 6:1–11	Deuteronomy 6:1–9
Christian Tradition	Mark 6:30–34, 53–56	Isaiah 58:9b–14
Context and Mission	Jeremiah 17:19–27	1 Corinthians 11:17–26
Future and Vision	Psalms 119:105–112, 129–136	Matthew 27:51–66 (Matthew 26:14–27:66)

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# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Discovery

### About this Age Group

Older children will have experienced regular scheduling in their lives, particularly during the school year. They have an understanding of time and numbers and can usually identify rhythms. In the Genesis passage, we see God model six days of work followed by a day of rest. This Exploration provides an opportunity for the children to recognize and explore this sacred rhythm. The children will know what it is like to be tired and have a good understanding of what it means to rest, although this word may well have negative connotations for these active learners. Many children in this age group enjoy busy lives with a variety of extracurricular activities scheduled into each week. It may be difficult for them to find time for Sabbath. Some of the activities in this session encourage the children to look at their lives and begin to discern how they might intentionally make time to enjoy the gift of Sabbath rest.

Children in this age group often have high energy levels and enjoy active learning experiences. It is possible that you may find your group becoming distracted after some of the more lively activities. It may be helpful to have a prearranged sound to catch the children's attention and signal that it is time to quiet down and refocus (suggestions: wind chimes, triangle, singing bowl, drum, pot lid).

## About this Exploration

Sabbath is intentional time taken by individuals and faith communities to integrate the Divine with humanity and creation. Jesus models how to keep Sabbath both inwardly (through prayer, solitude, silence, and meditation) and outwardly (through communal ritual and acts of justice). Our inward movement toward a life centered in the Spirit indicates the reign of God within us. Jesus embodies the depth of his Sabbath-keeping experiences through outward action to his followers and to those he encounters who have specific needs. Our practice of Sabbath is informed by God's resting on the seventh day after laboring for six days to create the world, establishing a day of Sabbath. Building on this biblical tradition, some faith communities dedicate a specific day of the week to rest, worship, and work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

### BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Genesis 2:2-4**

**Luke 12:22-31**

## Leader Preparation

Spend time savoring the texts. How do they help you understand what it means to be a Sabbath keeper? Look at the poster "The Public Fountain," <http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>, by Manuel Alvarez Bravo. What would the cool stream of water feel like? What gives you refreshment? Where do you go for refreshment? In what ways could Sabbath time bring refreshment? Has this been your experience? What would you like to change?

Prayer: *Loving God, as an act of love you wove the gift of Sabbath into the very fabric of creation. Be with me in this time of preparation so that I can come to a fuller understanding of your gift. I pray now for each child who will accompany me on this journey of discovery that they may experience the joy that is Sabbath. Amen.*

## Exploring & Engaging Activities



### 1 Game: Rhythmic Exploration (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Experiment using your body as a drum, so you can demonstrate the variety of sounds that can be made (some suggestions: hand clapping, open-mouth cheek patting, snapping fingers, stamping feet, slapping thighs).

#### Supplies:

- Bibles

Have the children find and read Genesis 2:1-4. Divide the group into small groups and have each small group use their bodies as drums to create rhythms that represent the first six days of creation. Assign each group a different day of creation. For example, you might slap thighs, snap fingers, slap thighs, and repeat; then move hands up and apart while whispering the word "rest." Give children time to create their rhythms and provide opportunity for them to share with the whole group. As each small group presents its rhythm, have the whole group repeat that rhythm back. Option: Create handclap sequences with a partner.



### 2 What Does Sabbath Mean to You?

Leader preparation: Print the word "Sabbath" at the top of the newsprint or white board. Hide the title of the poster with a sticky note.

#### Supplies:

- poster: "Going to Church," <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters8>, by William H. Johnson
- large piece of newsprint or white board
- large markers
- sticky note

Invite the children to call out popcorn style what the word "Sabbath" means to them. Record their thoughts and suggestions on newsprint or white board. You might mention that people of a variety of faiths observe Sabbath on a particular day: Muslim (Friday), Jewish (Friday evening or Saturday), and Christian (mostly Sunday; though some Christians worship on Saturday).

## Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

\* To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose 3 activities, using one activity from each category.

\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5, using at least one activity from each category.

Show the poster “Going to Church.” Ask: What catches your attention first? Encourage the children to make up a story about the group of people. Where might they be going? Remove the sticky note and read the title. Ask: What kinds of things might families do to celebrate Sabbath? The children will probably talk about going to church. Affirm this answer, but try to help them broaden their understanding of Sabbath. You might talk about some of the other things that bring God joy, such as families, friendships, or creation. How could you celebrate and enjoy these things and see them as God’s gift of Sabbath? Record their insights.



### 3 Drama: The Heartbeat of Creation

Leader preparation: Make copies of “The Heartbeat of Creation” for each child in the group.

#### Supplies:

- copies of “The Heartbeat of Creation,” Attachment: Activity 3

Distribute copies of “The Heartbeat of Creation” and ask for volunteers to read the roles of Voice 1 and Voice 2. Invite the rest of the group to join the chorus. Read through the skit several times until everyone is familiar with the words and the skit flows smoothly.

Option: If the children seem to enjoy reading and performing this skit, consider talking to your worship leader about the possibility of the children presenting it during a service of worship.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### 4 Game: Work and Rest Scramble (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Review the instructions below for the game “Rest and Work Scramble.”

#### Rest and Work Scramble

This game is a version of the old favorite Fruit Basket Upset. Invite children to name some regular activities they do each week. Use their suggestions to make a list for the game. Set the chairs in a circle so that you have one less chair than children. Choose one child to be “It,” and have the rest of the children sit in the chairs. “It” stands in the middle of the circle and calls out “Everyone who ... [adding an activity from the list].” Everyone who participated in that activity during the past week must leave their chair and find an empty one in the circle. At the same time “It” attempts to sit in one of the empty chairs. The child who is left without a chair becomes the next “It.” Repeat until you have gone through the list, or the children lose interest. If “It” wants everyone in the circle to move, he or she should call out, “Who will rest next week?” Everyone must get up and find a new chair.

#### Supplies:

- chairs

In order to make time for rest, we may have to review the way we use our time. Play the game “Rest and Work Scramble.” Afterward, talk about all the different activities that occupy our time. Do you ever feel as if you are too busy to rest? Sometimes we may have to put aside some of our activities for awhile in order to rest.

Invite the children to think about what they could give up in order to provide time for Sabbath rest. Could they give up playing video games for a while and go play a game with the rest of their family instead? Could they do creative things with families or friends, or enjoy God’s creation, and see that as Sabbath time? What other ideas do they have for keeping Sabbath time? Make a covenant with one another to try one or two of these ideas this week as a way of keeping Sabbath.

## 5 Discussion and Snack

Leader preparation: Bring a simple snack to share (check for allergies).

### Supplies:

- snack
- Bibles

Sharing a snack builds community and keeps the hands of these active learners busy so they can engage their minds! Distribute Bibles and show the children how to find the book of Genesis. Invite a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 2:2–4 as the other children follow along in their Bibles. Share a snack together and use the following discussion guide to engage the children in discussion. Brainstorm creative things they could do to celebrate the gift of Sabbath in the coming week.

## The Seventh Day

Why do you think God rested on the seventh day? Affirm all answers and comment that God built the gift of rest right into creation. It is a part of who we are. How could we follow God’s example of work and rest? Why should we rest at all? What might stop people from taking the time to rest?

Read verse 3 again and explain that in the Hebrew language the word “hallowed” or “holy” is a special word that means “Set aside and made special for God.”

What does this verse tell us about this seventh day? How do you think God views this day? How might we set aside this day and make it special for God?

Note: It is possible that the children will talk about going to church, participating in services, or spending time alone with God. Affirm these answers, but try to help them broaden their understanding of Sabbath. You might talk about some of the other things that bring God joy, such as families, friendships, or creation. How could you spend Sabbath rest time celebrating and enjoying these things?

Did you know? In the Hebrew language the word “Sabbath” means “to desist,” “cease,” “rest.” Eventually God’s people began referring to the seventh day of the week as “The Sabbath.”

## 6 Juggling Act

Leader preparation: Preview the short video introduction to scarf juggling. The best scarves for this kind of activity seem to be the thin, gauzy kind as they move slowly and give the novice juggler time to catch them. Search for these in thrift stores and flea markets.

### Supplies:

- a variety of scarves (enough for each child to have at least two)
- computer with internet access
- video: “How to juggle scarves”  
<http://www.tinyurl.com/35hngj9>

Sometimes making room to celebrate Sabbath requires us to juggle our priorities. Show the video “How to Do 1 & 2 Scarf Juggling.” Invite the children to practice juggling with two scarves, showing the video again if needed. Spend some time juggling. Afterward, invite the children to talk about their experiences. What was the hardest thing about juggling? Comment that in order to juggle successfully, you have to be willing to let go of one thing in order to receive another. Encourage the children to think about how finding time to celebrate Sabbath can be a little like juggling—we might have to let go of certain activities for a little while so that we can receive the gift of Sabbath rest.

## Sending & Serving Activities

## 7 Midweek Reminders (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Cut 8½” x 11” paper into four equal-size pieces. Cut enough for each child to have at least one small sheet of paper.

### Supplies:

- white paper
- envelopes
- drawing and writing materials

Sometimes we need a gentle reminder to help us remember to walk in God’s way of Sabbath. If you have not already done so, invite the children to brainstorm different ways they could celebrate Sabbath in the coming week. Invite children to choose one idea and print it in the middle of a piece of paper. Decorate the edges of the paper with crayons or colored pencils. Have the children place these reminders in envelopes, seal, and write their mailing address on the front. Make arrangements to mail these reminders early in the week. If mailing costs are prohibitive, encourage the children to take home their sealed envelopes and open them during the week.

## 8 Origami Holders

Leader preparation: Download instructions for making origami business card holders at [card holders at http://www.tinyurl.com/237y636](http://www.tinyurl.com/237y636).

## Supplies:

- letter-size paper in a variety of colors
- blank business cards (or cut up 3" x 5" or 4" x 6" index cards)
- small stickers (if possible choose stickers that reflect aspects of God's creation such as animals, plants, stars).
- newsprint or white board and large markers (optional)

We can share our ideas for celebrating Sabbath with others. Invite the children to print Genesis 2:3 on a business card, and decorate the card, if desired. If you have not already done so, invite the children to brainstorm different ways they could celebrate Sabbath in the coming week. You may wish to record these ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard. Have the children choose two or three ideas and print each one on a separate card. Follow the instructions to make origami business card holders. Decorate them with stickers. Place the business cards into cardholders. Encourage the children to take home the cardholders and share the ideas on the cards with their families.

## 9 Twisted Wristbands

Leader preparation: Cut embroidery floss into 24" lengths.

## Supplies:

- embroidery floss in a variety of colors

God wove the gift of rest right into the fabric of creation. Encourage the children to make twisted wristbands as a reminder that they are invited to enjoy God's gift regularly. Have each child choose seven strands of floss, one for each day of the week. Six strands will be the same color (or different shades of one color) and one will be a contrasting color. Follow the instructions (there are several kinds of wristbands along the right side of the page) at <http://tinyurl.com/2co4hlc> to make wristbands, using seven strands instead of six.

## Reflect

As you think back over the session, what were the highlights? What new understandings and experiences of Sabbath time did the children have today? How has your understanding of Sabbath grown as a result of their comments and insights? What might you do this week to help you find Sabbath in your life

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Attachment: Activity 3

### The Heartbeat of Creation

**Voice 1:** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, everything was hidden under a roaring ocean.

**Voice 2:** And the Spirit of God moved over the water.

**Chorus:** (*rub hands together*) Moved, moved over the water.

**Voice 1:** God was working.

**Chorus:** (*snap fingers*) Working, working, working.

**Voice 2:** For six long days God worked

**Chorus:** To bring life.

**Voice 1:** These first six days were all the same. God commanded, God created, and God smiled for it was good.

**Chorus:** And every day evening came and then the morning.

**Voice 2:** For six long days God worked to make everything in the heavens and the earth.

**Voice 1:** And it was good.

**Chorus:** (*clapping in time to the words*) Good, good, very good.

**Voice 2:** But the seventh day was different

**Voice 1:** On the seventh day God rested

**Chorus:** (*sigh loudly*)

**Voice 2:** Six days God worked.

**Voice 1:** And then God rested.

**Chorus:** (*sigh loudly*)

**Voice 1:** (*normal voice*) It's a rhythm

**Chorus:** (*normal voice*) Six days God worked

**Voice 2:** (*whisper*) Then God rested.

**Voice 1:** (*slightly louder*) It's the beat of creation

**Chorus:** (*slightly louder*) Six days God worked

**Voice 2:** (*whisper*) Then God rested.

**Voice 1:** (*shouting*) Do you hear it now?

**Chorus:** (*shouting*) Six days God worked

**Voice 2:** (*whisper*) Then God rested.

**Voice 1:** So God blessed the seventh day

**Voice 2:** And made it special

**Voice 1:** Because

**Chorus:** Six days God worked

**Voice 2:** Then God rested.

**All:** (*whisper*) God rested.

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Scripture

### About this Age Group

Children this age are acquainted with rules. They will have encountered all kinds of rules at home, at school, and in their social groups. They will probably be able to tell you the rules that govern the sports and games they enjoy. Most children in this age group are content to follow the rules, although some of the older ones may be starting to chafe at the restrictions imposed by home and school.

In the passage from Mark, Jesus and the Pharisees disagree about rules regarding the Sabbath. The children in your group will probably remember times when the rules were stretched to be more inclusive, such as extending bedtime on special occasions. There may also have been times when they helped adapt the rules of a game to make it easier to play. All these life experiences will be helpful as they explore the ways in which Jesus expanded the understanding of Sabbath in order to show compassion and love.

Children in this age group often have high energy levels and enjoy learning experiences that are very active. It is possible that you may find your group becoming distracted after some of the more lively activities. It may be helpful to have pre-arranged sound to catch the children's attention and signal that it is time to quiet down and refocus (suggestions: wind chimes, triangle, singing bowl, drum, pot lid).

## About this Exploration

Scripture defines Sabbath in several ways. Our journey will help us explore how Sabbath was given as commandment and blessing, and how Jesus expanded Sabbath to be more inclusive. Jesus reinforced the concept that the Sabbath was about God, but for people (Mark 2:23–3:6). Sabbath is a time of blessing, a time to rest from daily work and to restore energy and “godness.” Sabbath is not a time to worry about rules, but to work for God’s reign, letting God take care of the rest. What helps us focus on Sabbath? Consider how we can recharge, refresh, and renew our spirits, minds, and bodies.

### BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Mark 2:23–3:6**  
**Exodus 20:1–17**

## Leader Preparation

Spend some time with the texts. How do they help deepen your understanding of what it means to be a Sabbath keeper? Study the poster “Midday Rest,” <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters9>, (after Millet), c.1890 by Vincent van Gogh. What feelings does this picture evoke in you? What might it feel like to be resting in this way? In what ways does this image embody Sabbath rest for you?

Now think about your experiences of Sabbath. Has it been a gift to be embraced and savored, or a burdensome rule you have to follow? How might you create Sabbath observances that bring joy, wholeness, and refreshment?

*Prayer: God of compassion, you call us to follow your loving ways. May the time I spend with these children reflect my love of God and care and concern for all of God’s children. Help them to grow in their understanding of the gift that is Sabbath. Amen.*

## Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring

## Exploring & Engaging Activities



### 1 Frozen Pictures (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read Mark 2:23–3:6 and choose four action verses for the children to dramatize. You may wish to download and print the NRSV version of the Bible passage from <http://bible.oremus.org> so you can clearly mark the verses. If you have a large group, you may wish to divide the children into smaller groups of six or seven.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles

The story from Mark is full of intrigue and drama. Encourage the children to engage their imaginations and enter into the story through drama. Read aloud Mark 2:23–3:6, pausing at the end of the first action verse. At the command “Begin,” the group works together to create a frozen picture depicting the scene. After one minute, call “Freeze” and have the children hold their positions. Continue reading the passage, repeating the process for each action verse.

Option: Extend this activity by having the group make frozen pictures, let them hold for 5 seconds; then say “Go.” At that point the children come to life and say the words they think the characters in the story might say. After 10 seconds say “Freeze,” and everyone holds their position again.



### 2 God’s Sweet Commandments

Leader preparation: Make copies (one copy for each group when you divide into small groups) of the “Positive Version of the Ten Commandments.” Cut apart the commandments and put one set of commandments in each envelope.

#### Supplies:

- honey and crackers
- Bibles
- copies of “Positive Version of the Ten Commandments,” Attachment: Activity 2
- envelopes (one for each small group)

God gave the Ten Commandments as a sweet gift of love to all people. Have a volunteer read Psalm 119:103 while you share the honey snack and savor the sweetness. Ask: Why do you think the psalmist described God’s words or instruction as sweet?

Ask the children what they know about the Ten Commandments. Which commandments do they remember? Invite them to divide into groups of three or four and distribute a prepared envelope to each small group. Show the children how

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and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

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\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5 using at least one activity from each category.

to find Exodus 20:1–17 in their Bibles, and invite them to match the positive version of the commandments with the ones in the Bible and then put them in order. Ask for a volunteer to read Exodus 20:8–11. Ask: Why do you think instructions for keeping the Sabbath were included in the Ten Commandments? Who is included in God’s gift of rest? How is the Sabbath rule like a sweet gift?

**3 No Hands**

Leader preparation: Create a short list of tasks that would require the use of fine motor skills, such as picking up a pencil, picking a small piece of candy out of a bowl, turning on a light, drawing a picture, threading a needle, cutting out a paper circle, tying your shoes, buttoning a button. If you have a computer projector, locate the video “Jesus Heals on the Sabbath” at

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2fg94ex>.

**Supplies:**

- bulky mittens (socks also work for this)
- materials for the children to complete the tasks in the list
- computer connected to the Internet and a computer projector (optional).

Use this activity to help the children experience how difficult life might be for people who do not have the full use of their hands. Have the group divide into groups of two. Invite one child in each pair to wear the mittens. Read through the list of tasks one at a time, asking the children to complete the task. Enjoy the laughter! When you have finished, have the children swap places and repeat the exercise.

Afterward talk about their experiences. How was it different trying to do the tasks while wearing mittens? How might life be challenging for someone who did not have the full use of his or her hand? You may wish to point out that while we might laugh at our attempts to do the tasks while wearing mittens, it would not be appropriate to laugh at persons with disabilities. Read the story from Mark 2:23–3:6, or watch the video “Jesus Heals on the Sabbath.” How do you think life changed for the person who was healed?

**Discerning & Deciding Activities**

 **4 Changing Rules (Easy Preparation)**

Leader preparation: Review the rules for the competitive and cooperative versions of the game “Home Base.”

**Home Base**

*Competitive version*

Tape one home base (piece of newsprint) for each child to the floor. Have everyone choose a base on which to rest. Instruct the children to move around the room while you remove one of the bases. When you clap your hands loudly and shout, “Home base,” everyone must find a base on which to rest. The child who doesn’t make it to a base is out. Continue the process until only one base remains. The winner is the last child left with a base.

*Cooperative version*

Place one home base (piece of newsprint) for each child on the floor. Have everyone choose a base on which to rest. Instruct the children to move around the room while you remove one of the bases. When you clap your hands loudly and shout, "Home base," everyone must find a base to touch. In this version of the game, players can share a base. At least one foot or one hand must be on the base. Continue this process removing one base each time until everyone is together on the same base. You may need to help one another, so no one falls off.

**Supplies:**

- sheets of newsprint
- tape
- Bibles

Sit in a circle and invite the children to name some games or sports that use rules. What are some of the rules? Comment that most games need rules to help things run smoothly. Play a competitive game of "Home Base." Afterward, explain that the rules of the game are going to change slightly. Play the cooperative version of the game. Invite the children to talk about their experience. What did they like about each game? How did the game change?

Read Exodus 20:8. If you haven't already explored the story from Mark 2:23–3:6, have the children find the passage in their Bibles and read it together. How did Jesus adapt the Sabbath rules? What was the result?



**5 Art Activity**

Leader preparation: Gather art supplies and locate the poster "Midday Rest," <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters9>.

**Supplies:**

- art supplies
- poster: "Midday Rest," <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters9> (after Millet), c.1890 by Vincent van Gogh

God gave us the gift of Sabbath so that the whole of creation would have the opportunity to rest on the seventh day. Invite the children to look at the poster "Midday Rest" and describe what they see. Encourage them to make up a story about the people in the poster. What were they doing before they rested? What might they do after they rest? How might the people feel after their rest? What colors in the picture are restful? Observe that the poster shows people and animals resting in God's creation. Encourage the children to share stories about times they have rested in God's creation.

Invite the children to use the art supplies provided to create an art image of people and animals resting in God's creation. Display the artwork with a title chosen by the group.

**6 Song**

Leader preparation: Become familiar with the song "I've Got Peace Like a River" (tune: PEACE LIKE A RIVER).

**Supplies:**

- copies of the words and music for "I've Got Peace Like a River," <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong9>

God created the Sabbath as a day of love, joy, and peace. Jesus expanded the understanding of Sabbath so the person with the withered hand could also experience God's love, joy, and peace. Sing the song through together one time. Examine the words of each stanza. What does it mean to have peace like a river or joy like a fountain, etc.? What other images come to mind for the group? Sing the song again. Once the group is comfortable with the words and tune, they may enjoy creating actions to accompany the song.

## Sending & Serving Activities

### 7 Expanding Paper

Leader preparation: Preview the video "How to climb through a hole in a piece of paper," <http://www.tinyurl.com/yam9n5f>. Practice cutting the paper so that you would feel comfortable demonstrating the technique step by step.

**Supplies:**

- letter-size paper
- large pieces of newsprint
- scissors
- Bibles

Jesus was careful to honor the Sabbath, but he expanded the understanding of the Sabbath rule so that everyone would be included. Distribute paper and show children step by step how to cut a hole that will expand to allow them to climb through. If you have time, try using newsprint in the same way to create a hole that will expand to fit around several children at once.

Read Exodus 20:8. If you haven't already explored the story from Mark 2:23–3:6, have the children find the passage in their Bibles and read it together. How did Jesus expand the people's understanding of the Sabbath?

### 8 Lend a Helping Hand

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Review information about Church World Service and Church World Service kits at <http://www.churchworldservice.org>. Optional: Locate the video "Children of the World" at <http://www.tinyurl.com/32627w8>.

**Supplies:**

- paper and pencils to write letters
- computer connected to the Internet and a computer projector (optional)

In the text from Mark, Jesus reached out to heal and restore. Encourage the children to show you a variety of ways of using their hands. If you haven't already explored the story from Mark 2:23–3:6, have the children find the passage in their Bibles and read it together. Observe that in this story hands were used on the Sabbath to feed the hungry and help someone. How might we use our hands to help others?

Talk about Church World Service and encourage children to share what they know about this organization. If you are able, watch the video "Children of the World" at <http://www.tinyurl.com/32627w8>. Invite the children to name the kinds of things the children on the video might need. Note that Church World Service provides a way for us to share those things with those who don't have them. Re-

view the different kits on the Church World Service Webpage:  
<http://www.churchworldservice.org>.

Encourage the group to choose one kit to help assemble. Have them write a letter similar to this example:

Dear Friend: Our group at church will be supporting the work of Church World Service by creating (identify the kind of kit).

Please help us care for others by bringing the following items to the church for these kits: (list the items you are requesting).

Please bring all items by (date).

Sincerely, (children's signatures)

Invite children to write the letters and take home copies to give to families and friends.

## 9 Sweet as Honey

Leader preparation: Choose a honey-based snack from the recipes at <http://www.tinyurl.com/3yxtq5s>. Assemble ingredients and supplies.

### Supplies:

- plastic freezer bag
- paper plates
- stickers
- ingredients to make a simple honey-based snack; (optional) bring honey-based treats such as honey candies.

Sabbath was designed by God to be a sweet gift of blessing. Encourage the children to make a sweet snack for their family to enjoy while they share some Sabbath time together. Have the children wash their hands. Around the edge of a paper plate print the words "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103 (NRSV). Decorate a plastic freezer bag with stickers. If you are baking together, assist the group in following the recipe you selected. Arrange the snacks, or bought treats, on the plate, slip inside the bag, and seal.

## Reflect

Where did you see fresh insights about the Sabbath emerging from the creative activities today? What did you observe about the children during the session? How might these insights help you relate to the children in future sessions? How can you continue to grow in your own understanding of Sabbath?

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## **Positive Version of the Ten Commandments**

**There is only one God.**

**Remember I am your God. Worship only me.**

**When you say God's name, speak it with love and respect.**

**Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.**

**Honor your father and your mother**

**Respect all living things.**

**Be faithful and loyal to your life partner.**

**Respect the things that belong to other people.**

**Always tell the truth about others.**

**Be content and happy with the things that you already have.**

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Discipleship

### About this Age Group

Perhaps you have seen a child totally absorbed by a new interest or hobby. Most children in this age group can be quite passionate about things that matter to them. They will willingly lavish time and energy to pursue whatever has caught their interest, whether it is a sport, a video game, or a new friend.

In these activities we will explore the text from Deuteronomy that challenges us to love God with everything that we have. What might that look like for the children in your group? Most older children understand that there may be costs to doing the right thing and may have started to experience the powerful influence of peer pressure. How can you encourage them to love God with all their might when their friends might scoff at the idea? It might be helpful to emphasize the strength of community. Standing alone for what is right would be difficult for a child this age, but standing together with a family of faith is a very different experience.

### About this Exploration

Practicing Sabbath leads us to a fuller understanding of who we are as children of God. God calls the people of Israel to keep God's words on their hearts, to teach them to their children, to fix them as an emblem on their foreheads. Jesus reminds the Pharisees that the law is given to free people from oppression, not to further oppress an already downtrodden people. As we explore what it means to keep Sabbath, we will experience that Sabbath becomes a way of being, as well as a way of doing.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Luke 6:1-11**  
**Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

**Leader Preparation**

God’s abundant love for us calls us to respond with all our heart, soul, and might. What does this mean for you in your day-to-day living? Look at the poster “The Dance of Youth,” <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7> by Pablo Picasso. How does this image embody the words of the text? Where can you see God in the picture? Close your eyes and imagine yourself and the children joining in the dance of celebration with God.

As the text from Deuteronomy suggests, it is critical for the children to see significant adults demonstrating a love for God that holds nothing back. How might you model what it means to love God with all your might?

Children in this age group often have high energy levels and enjoy learning experiences that are very active. It is possible that you may find your group becoming distracted after some of the more lively activities. It may be helpful to have prearranged sound to catch the children’s attention and signal that it is time to quiet down and refocus (suggestions: wind chimes, triangle, singing bowl, drum, pot lid).

Prayer: *O God, you call us to love you completely. Open my heart, mind, and soul to your love, so that I may respond with all that I am. May the children be inspired to love you with all their might. Amen.*

**Session Development**

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring

**Exploring & Engaging Activities**



**1 Wise Teachings (Easy Preparation)**

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Copy the proverbs below. Cut the proverbs apart, fold each one in half, and place in the basket. Search Google Images or Bible reference books for pictures and drawings of phylacteries and people wearing them. Copy and enlarge the pictures to show to the children.

**Proverbs**

A stitch in time	saves nine.
A watched pot	never boils.
Pride goes	before a fall.
A penny saved	is a penny earned.
Where there’s smoke	there’s fire.
The love of money	is the root of all evil.
A change is as good	as a rest.
A fool and his money	are soon parted.
A place for everything and	everything in its place.
Actions speak louder	than words.
If life deals you lemons	make lemonade.

**Supplies:**

- small basket
- copy of proverbs
- Bibles
- images of phylacteries and people wearing them

We are called to keep God’s commandments in our hearts. Let children take turns drawing slips of paper out of the basket, reading the first part of the proverb and having the rest of the group complete the saying. Invite the children to recall some of the wise teachings they hear at home. How did they learn these teachings? Why might a parent repeat them over and over?

Distribute Bibles and read aloud Deuteronomy 6:1-9. Ask the children to identify the words that God wanted the people to remember. Show the pictures of phylacteries and people wearing them. Explain that this is one way Jewish people keep this commandment.

and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

\* To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose 3 activities using one activity from each category.

\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5 using at least one activity from each category.

Invite the children to feel their own heartbeat or pulse. Why do you think God told the people to keep these commandments in their hearts? Explain that to the Israelite people the heart represented the whole body. Everything, including a person’s thoughts, feelings, and actions came from the heart. If all thoughts, feelings, and actions come from a person’s heart, what would it mean to have God’s commandments kept in your heart? How might this commandment be part of our Sabbath keeping?.



### ② Lectio Divina: Feasting on Scripture

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Look up *Lectio Divina* on Wikipedia, <http://www.tinyurl.com/4xufso>, to learn about this traditional Christian practice of reading scripture. Study “Feasting on Scripture.” Make a copy for each child. Find a hospitable space for your group to gather that lends itself to quiet reflection.

#### **Supplies:**

- copies of “Feasting on Scripture,” Attachment: Activity 2
- printed copies of Deuteronomy 6:1–9
- art and writing supplies
- paper
- CD player and CD of reflective or nature music
- candle and candle lighter
- cushions or pillows

Deuteronomy encourages us to let the words of God’s commandments sink into our hearts so that they become a part of our very identity. Invite the children to read about the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina on the resource sheet. Ask them to find a quiet place where they can be alone with their thoughts and God as they work through the sheet. Light a candle to welcome God’s presence. Distribute the printed copies of the passage. Be available to help those who are still developing reading and writing skills. Dim the lights and play reflective music during this exercise. Afterward, invite those who are willing to share his or her thoughts about the passage. Discuss how you might use lectio divina as part of Sabbath keeping.

### ③ Dance



Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Select some lively worship music that will encourage movement. Display the poster “The Dance of Youth.”

#### **Supplies:**

- poster: “The Dance of Youth,” <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7>, by Pablo Picasso
- CD player
- lively worship music
- scarves or streamers

We are called to love God with all that we are. One way of doing this is by worshiping God through song and dance. If you have not already done so, read Deuteronomy 6:1–9 together. How could we love God with all our might? Play the

music you have selected. Invite the children to explore how many different ways their bodies can move to the rhythm. Invite them to use the scarves or streamers while they dance. Encourage them to sing along if the music includes singing.

Optional: The children may prefer to choreograph a series of actions and movements to accompany the music so that they can move in unison.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### 4 Graffiti Wall (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and reflect on the following question: How might we show love to God? Print the words “You shall love the Sovereign your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5) in the middle of the mural paper.

#### Supplies:

- mural paper (or tape several sheets of newsprint together)
- drawing and writing materials
- Bibles
- sticky notes

The people were told to write the words of God’s commandment on their doorposts so that everyone would see them and remember God’s words. Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9 together. Gather around the mural paper. Mention that graffiti are words, symbols, or pictures painted, scratched, or sprayed on a surface. Read the words in the middle of the wall. How might we show love to God? Encourage the children to use the graffiti wall to depict ways they might love God with all their hearts, souls, and might. They might use words, symbols, pictures, or a combination of all three. After the wall is completed, hang it in a visible place in your church for others to enjoy. Provide sticky notes for people in the congregation to add their comments to the wall.



### 5 “The Dance of Youth”

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and spend some time reflecting on the poster “The Dance of Youth.”

#### Supplies:

- poster: “The Dance of Youth, <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPostersZ>, by Pablo Picasso
- small pieces of white paper slightly larger than the figures in the poster
- pencils
- erasers
- fine-tipped markers
- reusable adhesive

The Sabbath experience encourages us to love God with the whole of our being. If you have not already done so, read Deuteronomy 6:4–9 together. How might we love God with all our might? Invite the children to look at the poster “The Dance of Youth.” Ask: How do you feel when you look at this picture? If the figures could talk, what might they say? Invite the children to choose a figure and mimic its position. What might the figures be doing? Affirm all answers; if no one else says it, suggest that they might be worshipping God with all of their might. Distribute paper and ask the children to draw a dancing figure to represent themselves. Affix the pictures to the poster with reusable adhesive.

## 6 Heart Cookies

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Make a heart-shaped stencil that will fit on the sugar cookies. Review Luke 6:1–11 so that you can tell the story in your own words.

### Supplies:

- Bibles
- round sugar cookies
- knives, spoons
- plate
- heart stencils
- a variety of edible decorations such as frosting, icing sugar, cocoa powder, colored sugar, small candies

Jesus showed his love for God in many ways. Distribute Bibles and read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4–9. Have the children wash their hands and then decorate cookies with heart motifs. Suggestions: Place a stencil over the cookie and dust with icing sugar or cocoa powder. The carefully remove the stencil. Spread frosting on the cookie; place a stencil over the top and sprinkle with colored sugar; carefully remove stencil. Spread frosting on cookie and arrange small candies to make a heart shape.

Clean up the kitchen and enjoy a sweet snack. As the children eat, talk about how we might love God with all our might. Remember that Jesus showed his love to God in many ways. Retell the story from Luke 6:1–11. How did Jesus show his love to God on that Sabbath day?

## Sending & Serving Activities



## 7 Memory Work (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Memorize Deuteronomy 6:5 using the procedure outlined below so that you can say the verse along with the children.

### Supplies:

- index cards or 4" x 6" pieces of paper
- Bible
- pens

We are invited to keep God's commandments in our hearts so that they become a way of life. One way of doing this is to memorize the words. Divide the children into small groups. Invite each group to print the words of Deuteronomy 6:5 on index cards, having one or two words per card. Encourage children to use large print, so they will be easy to read. Shuffle the cards and work together as a group to put them in order, using a Bible if necessary. Then read the verse in unison. Turn over every fourth card and reread the verse inserting hidden words. Continue turning over cards until all the words are hidden and you can say the whole verse by memory. Celebrate your achievement with a group high five!

Option: Once the children have memorized the verse, they may enjoy adding actions or rhythm to the words.

### 8 Braided Bookmarks

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Cut three ¼" x 8" craft foam strips for each child. Cut yarn into 1' lengths.

**Supplies:**

- craft foam
- fine-tipped markers
- stapler
- yarn

The people were encouraged to write out the words of God's commandments so that they would always remember them. If you have not already done so, invite children to read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 together. Give each child three strips of foam. Have them print the word "heart" repeatedly across one of the foam strips, separating each word with a small heart. Do the same with the other two strips, writing "soul" and "might" on them. Stack the strips on top of each other, word side up, and staple them together at one end. Braid the three strips together, keeping the word sides up, and secure with another staple at the other end. Wind yarn around each end of the bookmarks and tie off tightly to cover the staples. Encourage the children to use the bookmark as a reminder to love God with their whole selves.



### 9 Singing the Words

Leader preparation: Make a copy of the song "Love God with All Your Strength," and practice the song until you are comfortable with the words and the tune.

**Supplies:**

- words and music to "Love God with All Your Strength"  
<http://tinyurl.com/2a5wpmc>
- white board or newsprint and marker

The words of Deuteronomy 6:5 call all people to love God completely. Jesus' actions on the Sabbath remind us to extend that love to others. Invite the children to listen to the words of the song "Love God with All Your Strength." Sing the song to the children phrase by phrase, and encourage them to echo back. Ask the children to think about the words of the last phrase of the song: "Love your neighbor as yourself, be faithful, just, and kind." Invite them to name ways of showing kindness to others. List their ideas on the whiteboard or newsprint. Invite the children to choose one or two actions to follow through on this week. Close by singing the song.

Option: This song would work well as a round.

## Reflect

How did today's session encourage you and the children to love God with all your might? What new insights did you receive as a result of the children's comments and questions? What challenges emerged for you in this session? What might you do differently next time?

## Feasting on Scripture

Lots of Christians do it. Grownups and kids, people who have been studying the Bible for years and years, and those who are reading the Bible for the very first time. You are never too old or too young to start.

Lectio Divina is a way of reading the Bible that dates back to the 12th century. That is 900 years ago! Wow!

### How to do Lectio Divina

Find a quiet spot where you will not be disturbed. Then go through the four steps.

1. Take a bite. (*Lectio*)
2. Chew on it. (*Meditatio*)
3. Savor the essence. (*Oratio*)
4. Focus on our love for God and God's love for us. (*Contemplatio*)

Are you ready to begin?

Read the passage slowly and carefully. Underline or highlight any words or phrases that catch your attention.

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Christian Tradition

### About this Age Group

Most of the children in your group will be familiar with the words “It’s time to take a break.” They will understand the need for regular times of rest and will be able to remember occasions when they were really tired. Children in this age group are very energetic. They love to play, and they need to move in order to release that energy. Many of them seem to thrive in the middle of organized chaos, so the concept of taking time out for rest may not be very appealing. We can help by identifying ways they might take time out from everyday pressures by doing something active and fun with friends or families. At this time in the children’s lives, peer pressure is starting to become a reality, and they will probably have experienced times when they were caught between conflicting desires (e.g., what I want to do versus what my friends/parents want me do).

This life experience will help them identify with the story in Mark’s Gospel where the disciples and Jesus are caught between the need to rest and the demands of those in need. Throughout this session we will explore ways of balancing the need for rest and offering rest to others.

## About this Exploration

Throughout the history of the church the practice of Sabbath has run from narrow to broad. Certain faith traditions establish restrictions concerning a Sabbath day, limiting everything from household tasks to social activities. Other traditions focus on the intent of the practice: worship, study, and rest. All these traditions highlight rest and recreation. Current understandings have broadened Sabbath to embrace the practices of justice and of devotion in and around the moments of our daily life. These various interpretations provide the foundation for our practices of Sabbath today.

### BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

**Isaiah 58:9b-14**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities



### 1 Interviewing Elders (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Recruit some older volunteers who would be willing to talk to the children about the way they celebrated the Sabbath when they were young.

#### Supplies:

- some willing volunteers
- a simple snack to share (optional)

Our Christian tradition gives us ancestors in faith whose stories and life experiences inform our own. Explain that you have invited some guests who will share stories about the ways they celebrated the Sabbath when they were young. Work with the children to create a list of questions they might ask their guests. These might include the following: On which day did you celebrate Sabbath? What did you do on that day that you didn't do on other days? What did you do to get ready for the Sabbath? Were there things you weren't allowed to do? What did you like most about the Sabbath? Was there anything you disliked? What do you miss? Welcome your guests and make introductions. Enjoy a snack together, if available, and invite the children to ask their questions. Allow plenty of time for interaction between the age groups. If there is time, the children might also share their Sabbath stories with their guests.

### 2 "This Is the Day"

Leader preparation: Find a copy of the song "This Is the Day" and review the words and music if needed. Hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/24utwn4>. Note that the first half of the song may be sung and then echoed by the group.

#### Supplies:

- words and music to "This Is the Day" (tune: This Is the Day)  
<http://www.tinyurl.com/24utwn4>

Every day is a day that God has made, and we remember that the seventh day has been set apart as a special gift by God. Invite the children to listen to the words and music of the song. Sing the song and have children echo back each phrase. Once the group is comfortable with the words and tune, invite the children to add clapping. Recall that God blesses the seventh day and wants us to rest from daily work. In the Christian church, this has traditionally been on a Sunday. Invite the children to sing the song using the words "This is the day that we rest from work." Encourage the children to complete the phrase "This is the day that we . . ." with ways to celebrate the gift of Sabbath time. Sing the song with those words as well.

## Leader Preparation

Take time this week to "go away" to a quiet place. In that quiet place, spend a few moments becoming centered. You might spend time reflecting on the poster "The Dance of Youth,"

<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7>,

by Pablo Picasso. How does this poster reflect the lively energy of your group? Celebrate the opportunity to share God's gift of Sabbath with these young disciples. Notice the dove in the middle of the circle. Ask for the Spirit's wisdom as you prepare to choose the activities for these energetic learners. Use this time apart to reconnect with God. When you are ready, return to the task of planning and preparation, as you get ready to meet with the group.

Children in this age group often have high energy levels and enjoy learning experiences that are very active. It is possible that you may find your group becoming distracted after some of the more lively activities. It may be helpful to have prearranged sound to catch the children's attention and signal that it is time to be quiet down and refocus (suggestions: wind chimes, triangle, singing bowl, drum, pot lid).

Prayer: *Loving God, you offer the gifts of Sabbath rest to all. May this time together be a time of renewal and refreshment in your loving presence. Amen.*

### Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

\* To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose 3 activities using one activity from each category.

\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5 using at least one activity from each category.

### 3 Caught between Rest and Duty

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Use masking tape to mark a line on the floor in the middle of the room and two lines about a foot on either side. Print REST on one line and DUTY on the other. Tie a piece of cloth around the middle of the rope.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- a long rope
- cloth
- large marker
- masking tape

Read together the Gospel lesson from Mark. Have a brief conversation about how the disciples and Jesus may have felt when they were trying to get away to rest and yet were constantly followed by the crowd. Divide the children into two groups and have each “team” grab a side of the rope with the cloth over the middle line on the floor. At the count of three, have each side pull the rope until the cloth moves past the line of tape closest to them. Mix up the children, form two more teams, and try again.

Afterward, talk about the game. When might the children feel like they are the rope being tugged by competing teams? Describe a time when they want to do one thing, but someone is asking them to do something else. Maybe they want to read a book, and a parent wants them to clean their room. Perhaps their friends want to do one thing, and they want to do another. How do they handle these situations? When have they ever nagged their parents to do something for them when all their parent(s) wants to do is rest for a few moments?

## Discerning & Deciding Activities

### 4 Sabbath Time (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Be prepared to do this activity with the children so that you can model the evaluation process for them.

#### Supplies:

- large sheets of newsprint
- red, blue, and green markers or self-adhesive dots or crayons for each child

Have the children call out all the things they do in a given week. Write their suggestions on sheets of newsprint. Spread the sheets of newsprint on tables around the learning area. Have the children go around the area and put a red mark beside the activities that they consider restful, a blue mark beside the activities they consider work, and a green mark by those things that are necessary. Some things might be marked in more than one way. Look at the sheets together and tally the results.

Recall that the Bible shows us a pattern for our week that includes time for work and time for rest. Sabbath rest also includes time with God and time with loved ones. You may like to review briefly some of the Bible passages you have explored up to this point. Invite the children to look at the lists of activities and consider

how they are doing in terms of following God’s pattern. What changes might they need to make? Brainstorm creative and fun things they could do to include more Sabbath time in their lives.



### 5 Life-giving Water

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Review Isaiah 58:9b-14, focusing particularly on verse 11, and recall times you have been thirsty and then refreshed by life-giving water.

#### Supplies:

- poster: “The Public Fountain,” <http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>, by Manuel Alvarez Bravo
- small pots
- potting soil
- seeds
- watering can
- water in a bowl
- towel
- glass of water for each child

Isaiah reminds us that following in God’s loving ways helps us become a source of refreshment to those around us. Fill pots with soil and plant seeds. Pass around a watering can and water the seeds. Next, pass around a bowl of water and towel and wash and dry hands. Invite the children to call out ways they use water.

Show the poster “The Public Fountain” and invite the children to tell you what they notice about the child and the fountain. Think about why this child might be drinking from the fountain and how it feels. What words might the child use to tell you about the water? Read Isaiah 58:9–14.

Offer glasses of water to one another saying, “[Child’s name], you are like a spring of water that never runs dry.”

### 6 Finger Labyrinths

Leader preparation: Download and make copies of a finger labyrinth pattern available at Lessons For Living. For additional information on labyrinths, see books from The Pilgrim Press including: *Christian Prayer and Labyrinths*, *Praying the Labyrinth*, and *Living the Labyrinth*.

#### Supplies:

- copies of a finger labyrinth, <http://www.tinyurl.com/dd4yuv>
- reflective music (optional)

In the middle of our busy lives, taking time apart to be with God is a gift of Sabbath to all ages. Pass out copies of the finger labyrinths and share basic information about labyrinths as a way to be quiet, to talk and listen to God. Give the following suggestions: As they trace the path to the center, think about the different kinds of activities they do in the course of a week. In the center of the labyrinth, thank God for those activities. Ask God to be with you as you discover new ways to rest on the Sabbath. Follow the path out into new ways of keeping Sabbath. Play some reflective music, and invite the children to find a quiet place to trace their finger labyrinth.

Invite the children back to the group and provide an opportunity for those who are willing to talk about their experience. Encourage the children to take home the finger labyrinths to share with their families.

## Sending & Serving Activities

### 7 Obstacle Course (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on the things in your life that prevent you from taking time for Sabbath. Be prepared to share these with the children. (If in your setting children usually wear their best clothes, this is probably not a good activity.)

#### Supplies:

- masking tape
- sturdy table/chairs and any other items you have in your learning area that could be used to make obstacles.

In our busy lives we can encounter obstacles that make it hard for us to enjoy the gift of Sabbath. Invite the children to use supplies and furniture you have on hand to create an obstacle course. Suggestions: Make a tunnel of chairs for the children to wriggle through; climb over/under chairs/tables; slither under string stretched between two chair legs; stretch out a jump rope on the floor to walk along; jump between a series of pieces of paper taped to the floor. Encourage creativity! Have each child go through the obstacle course at least once. You may want to try it once and then add or change some of the obstacles.

Afterward, gather in a circle and explain that sometimes we encounter obstacles in our lives that prevent us from doing certain things. What might get in the way of us enjoying Sabbath time? What kinds of things could we do to get around those obstacles? If you have time, invite everyone to go through the obstacle course again.

### 8 Bread Cloth

Leader preparation: Gather supplies, and cut the cloth into squares.

#### Supplies:

- 3' squares of white cotton cloth, one for each child
- masking tape
- small garbage bags
- fine-tipped permanent markers
- pencils
- erasers

Mention to the children that down through the ages many people of faith have celebrated the Sabbath day by sharing a meal. Some Jewish families use special tablecloths and linens to decorate their tables on the Sabbath. Invite the children to make special bread cloths that can be used at family meals. Tape garbage bags to the table; stretch cloths over garbage bags and secure with tape. Invite the children to use permanent markers to draw pictures relating to Sabbath on the cloth. Designs might include a family spending time together, or someone resting. If they wish, they may draw the designs with pencil first. Remove tape and show children how to fray edges to make a small fringe.

Once they have completed their works, invite the children to tell the whole group about the pictures on their cloth.

### 9 Love Gift

Leader preparation: Ahead of time choose a project that will benefit children in your community. Contact the local hospital, refugee committee, or women's shelter to see if they would appreciate bags/boxes of small toys and coloring books that could be given to the children using their services.

Dear Friend:

Our group at church will be caring for the children in our community by creating [name the project].

Please help us make love gifts for these children by bringing the following items to the church. [list the items]

Please bring all items by [date].

Sincerely,  
[children's signatures]

#### Supplies:

- supplies for the project of your choice
- paper and pencils for letters

Jesus and his followers went away to rest and still found time to show compassion for the people. Mention to the group that caring for people in need has been a part of the work of the Christian community throughout history. Invite children to recall stories of Jesus' care for people in need. Talk about how your church shows care for others in your community and around the world. How can we care? Explain that you will make "love gifts" for children who have had to leave their homes for one reason or another. Invite the children to write letters (see the example above) and take home copies to give to families and friends. When all the items have been collected, spend time as a group assembling the gifts.

### Reflect

In what ways did you and the children experience rest and refreshment through the chosen activities? What new connections to Sabbath traditions did you and the children discover today? How can you continue to affirm the children as they explore what it means to be a Sabbath keeper.

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Context and Mission

### About this Age Group

Life in today's society is very busy, probably far too busy for many of us. Juggling work, family life, children's schedules, and looking after home responsibilities can lead to an exhausting lifestyle. Into this frenetic and often overscheduled pace of life we are encouraged to bring the message about God's gift of Sabbath rest. Most children brought up in the church want to live faithfully, but it can be hard for them to make decisions that mean going against the norm. It is important at this age not to be an outsider or to seem strange. They need to be part of a group. Choosing activities and patterns of living that honor the Sabbath can be difficult enough, but talking about this with their peers may seem well nigh impossible. We can encourage these young disciples by providing opportunities for them to celebrate Sabbath time together first as a group, and then to share their discoveries with their faith communities, before going to the wider world.

The children in your group will have experienced conflict with siblings or peers. They are familiar with group dynamics and can probably identify when a group is or is not working together well. As they engage with the Corinthians passage, the children can think about ways they can work together as Sabbath keepers.

## About this Exploration

The prophet Jeremiah goes to the busiest places in the city to call the people to observe Sabbath as a day intentionally set apart by God. In the same way, we are called to take the gift that is Sabbath to our communities and then to the wider world. As communities of faith, we are encouraged to model Sabbath living that is joyful, inclusive, and not burdensome. The Corinthian church was challenged to rethink the way they lived out the Sabbath together in community. Maybe we will have to do the same! What do you mean—change?

### BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Jeremiah 17:19–27**  
**1 Corinthians 11:17–26**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities



### 1 “The Silly City” (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Practice telling the story “The Silly City.”

## Leader Preparation

Read the 1 Corinthians passage, keeping in mind that faith communities as well as individuals continue to be challenged to honor the Sabbath. If possible, take time to share a meal with family or friends this week. What role do shared meals play in your pattern of keeping Sabbath?

As you prepare for this session, think of ways you can support and encourage the children as they learn about Sabbath keeping together. Remind yourself to affirm and celebrate the ways they are able to share the message of Sabbath rest with others.

Note: In several activities you will invite the children to brainstorm ways of celebrating Sabbath time. It is possible that the children will talk about going to church, or spending time alone with God. Affirm these answers, but try to broaden their understanding by talking about some of the other things that bring God joy, such as families, friendships, and creation. How could you spend Sabbath rest time celebrating and enjoying these things?

## The Silly City

One day, in a land far, far away from here, there was a city. And in that city there was a group of people who would get together every week to have a party and celebrate how much God loved them. The problem was that they didn’t know how to be nice to one another!

When they got to the meeting place, the people would break into smaller groups and say nasty things about the other people who weren’t in their little group. *(Have the children break into small groups and look meanly at the other groups.)*

Some people would come early and eat all the food and drink all the juice. *(Get the children to act out eating and drinking with gusto)*

They ate so much that they got a tummy ache! *(Get the children to act out having a tummy ache.)*

When the other people arrived later, there was nothing left to eat so they went hungry! *(Get the children to act out being hungry.)*

Now the people of this city had a friend named Paul. He heard about all the terrible things that the people were doing to one another. He was very disappointed, so he quickly sent them a letter: *(Have the children act out writing a letter.)*

Dear friends,

I have heard that you get together every week to celebrate God’s love together but what you do there is not good at all! You break into smaller groups and treat each other poorly. *(Have the children break into small groups and look meanly at the other groups.)*

Some of you eat all the food *(Get the children to act out eating and drinking with gusto.)* and end up getting tummy aches *(Get the children to act out having a tummy ache.)*, so that the rest of you go hungry! *(Get the children to act out being hungry.)*

That’s not how brothers and sisters in God’s family are supposed to treat one another! When Jesus had his last meal with his friends and followers, he told them to remember him whenever they ate together. And Jesus wants us to love one another! So from now on, when you come together to celebrate that God loves you, eat and drink together as friends!

Your friend,  
Paul

**Supplies:** None

Read aloud the story “The Silly City.” Read the story a second time, inviting the children to do the actions where indicated. Ask: What were the followers of Christ doing at the beginning of the story? Why might this have caused difficulties in the church? Do you think the people enjoyed meeting together to worship

## Keeping Sabbath

*Prayer: Loving God, even as I learn to delight in the gift that is Sabbath, help me to be open to any opportunity that would allow me to share your gift with others. Guide the time this group is gathered as a community, and help us to find encouragement in learning and working together. Amen.*

God? What did Paul say about how to act with one another so that they would enjoy meeting as a community? What kinds of things might we do in our church to show care and love to others? How is meeting together as church part of Sabbath keeping?

If the children seem to enjoy reading and performing this skit, consider talking to your worship leader about the possibility of presenting the story during a service of worship.

### Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

\* To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose 3 activities using one activity from each category.

\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5 using at least one activity from each category.

### 2 Holy God

Leader preparation: Review the words and music to “Santo, Santo, Santo” if they are unfamiliar. Hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/3adargd>. You may want to arrange to share the song with another group as a Sabbath gift, or arrange to share the song at another time as part of a service of worship.

#### Supplies:

- song “Santo, Santo, Santo” (Tune: SANTO), <http://www.tinyurl.com/3adargd>

Jeremiah reminds God’s people to keep the Sabbath holy and remember God. Invite the children to listen to the words and music of the song. Sing the song and have children echo back each phrase. Once the group is comfortable with the words and tune, invite them to create some actions or group movements to go with the words. Sing the song several times with the movements. Ask: What does the word “holy” mean to you? Observe that the song talks about adoring God. What are some ways we might show love to God? Once the group is comfortable with the song, explain the arrangements for sharing the song as a Sabbath gift to others.

### 3 Shouting Out the Message

Leader preparation: Gather supplies, review Jeremiah 17:19–27, and consider what you might want to tell others about God’s gift of Sabbath.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- a sturdy chair or footstool

Jeremiah called out loudly to remind the people about God’s gift of Sabbath. Distribute Bibles and help the children find the book of Jeremiah. Invite a volunteer to read Jeremiah 17:19–22. Mention that the city gates were the busiest places in the city. People were coming and going, and city leaders met and held court hearings there. Why do you think God wanted Jeremiah to go to the city gates with the message? If Jeremiah was to come to your community, where would he go to deliver his message? What is the busiest place in your community? Invite the children to summarize Jeremiah’s message in one sentence. Why do you think God wanted the people to remember the Sabbath? If you were going to tell others about God’s gift of Sabbath, what would you say? Explain that sometimes when someone has something important to say, they will stand on a box and shout out their message. Use a chair as an impromptu soapbox. Invite the children to take turns standing on it as they shout out their Sabbath messages.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities

### 4 Remembering the Sabbath (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read Jeremiah 17:19–27, and focus on verse 21.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- newsprint or white board and markers.

Have someone read aloud Jeremiah 17:19–22. Wonder together what it means to “observe” or “remember” the Sabbath. It is one thing to remember our friend’s birthday or our homework, but how do we remember the Sabbath? Affirm all answers; then suggest that it might be helpful to ask ourselves, “How do we ‘forget’ the Sabbath?” Brainstorm a list of things we do that cause us to forget the Sabbath. List their ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard. What could we do to overcome those things? Use these ideas to make another list of ways we might remember the Sabbath. What can we do this next week to make sure we remember to take Sabbath time? How might we encourage our families to remember to take Sabbath time?

### 5 The Gift of Sabbath

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. On small slips of paper print the words, “We can celebrate God’s gift of Sabbath by . . .”

**Supplies:**

- gift bags with gift cards
- pens
- prepared slips of paper
- tissue paper
- treats

God created Sabbath time as a special gift of rest for all people, and we can share this gift with others. Ask the group to brainstorm different things they could do to celebrate Sabbath time with their families. Distribute slips of paper and have the children complete the sentence, then place it and some treats inside the bag. Place a few sheets of tissue paper on top. On gift cards print “To [names of family members], Love, God.” Encourage the children to take their bags home and share the contents with their families.

### 6 Community Drumming

Leader preparation: Gather supplies for each child to make a simple drum. A good article on community drumming can be found at <http://www.tinyurl.com/2btp9zu>. If you know someone who drums, invite him or her to lead the drumming circle. You may need to alert other groups that use space near your group that you will be noisy.

**Supplies:**

- supplies to make a simple drum such as small trash cans, empty coffee cans, buckets, cloth or plastic, duct tape, wooden spoons, etc.

The early church communities had to learn how to live out the Sabbath together in community. Drumming builds community, working together and listening to one another. It is also fun! Read the passage from 1 Corinthians. Tell the group

that you will each be building and decorating a drum to play together in a drum circle. Explain that God wants us to use Sabbath as a time of getting along and working together to make the world a better place, and that playing in a drum circle can help remind us of that. Following the instructions and using the supplies you've chosen, invite the learners to create their very own drum. If time allows, gather the learners back together with their drums, and lead them in a simple drum circle (you can learn how to do that at <http://www.tinyurl.com/2btp9zu>).

## Sending & Serving Activities



### 7 User's Manual (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Think about how you will create a simple book. You might staple sheets of paper inside a construction paper cover, glue the children's work into a notebook, or use a three-ring binder with plastic sleeves. Consult with your church leadership about the best way to present the book to the congregation.

#### Supplies:

- bookmaking supplies such as blank sheets of paper, writing and drawing materials, notebook, plastic page protectors, etc.

Just like Jeremiah, we can take the gift that is Sabbath to our communities. Explain to the children that will create a book called "Sabbath Rest: A User's Manual" to share with their congregation. Begin by brainstorming creative ideas of ways of celebrating Sabbath time. Distribute paper and invite the children to write a description of Sabbath activity and illustrate the suggestion. If you have time, the children might work on more than one page. Ask for volunteers to create front and back pages. Gather the finished pages and use them to make the book.

Option: If you have access to a photocopier, consider photocopying each page, so that you can make a book for each child to take home.

### 8 Breaking Bread

Leader preparation: Being sensitive to those with food allergies, choose breads from around the world and cut into bite-sized pieces. Place a toothpick in each piece of bread for easy serving. Select a variety of dips and place into bowls.

#### Supplies:

- CD player
- music CD from the global community
- world map or globe
- napkins
- cups
- water or juice
- toothpicks
- breads and dips from around the world such as: bannock or whole wheat (North America), pita (Middle East), chapati (India), tortilla (Central America), croissant (France), rye bread (Europe), naan (Asia), injera (Ethiopia), English muffins (Britain), guacamole (Mexico), curry (Asia), tango salsa (Mexico), flavored olive oil (Greece)

Paul's letter to the Corinthians reminds us to gather around the table and participate in the sharing of food and drink as we celebrate Sabbath together. Explain to the children that sharing meals together was one of the things the followers of Jesus used to do when they started meeting together as the very first churches. Down through the ages this practice has continued. All around the world today, people of faith enjoy sharing food with one another as part of their Sabbath celebration. Invite the group to share some bread and dips from around the world and enjoy some Sabbath time together. Listen to music from the global community. Locate the different countries represented by the food on the world map.

### 9 Journey to Bolivia

Leader preparation: Take time to explore the Better World Web site at <http://www.tinyurl.com/2c6qynm>. Check to see if your faith community has computer/Internet safety policies in place, so that you can follow them carefully. Print the URL link onto slips of paper for the children to take home.

#### Supplies:

- Bible
- slips of paper
- computers with Internet access

As Sabbath keepers we are called to take the gift of Sabbath out into the world by extending a helping hand to others. Begin by reading 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 to the group. Explain to the children that just as in the Bible passage, people around the world go hungry every day. As Sabbath keepers we can offer the gift of Sabbath to others by sharing what we have with them. Direct learners to the Better World Web site to learn about Bolivia and the stories of three children who live there. Children can use the menu on the left hand side to read the stories (Journey), look at the map of Bolivia (Map), do a word (Puzzle), or look at some ways that they and their families might bring hope and justice to the people of Bolivia (Extend Yourself). Send a copy of the URL link home with the children so they might explore the web site with their parents.

### Reflect

What new understandings and experiences of Sabbath rest did the children have today? How did they respond to the activities that provided opportunity for them to share the message with others? How might you and the group take the Sabbath gift into your community and world as a result of your time together? Pray for the children this week that they would know the joy of Sabbath rest in their lives.

# Giving and Receiving Hospitality



## Exploration: Future and Vision

### About this Age Group

In these activities the children will be invited to look into the future as they consider ways they might continue to practice their faith as Sabbath keepers. Most children in this age group are familiar with the concept of practicing. They will have practiced many different skills as they have learned and developed. We hope they will have experienced the benefits of practicing and understand that it doesn't always lead to perfection, but that is okay. We can use all these life experiences to encourage the children to keep practicing their faith by embracing God's gift of Sabbath rest.

Children in this age group are transitioning from concrete to abstract thinking and as a result are able to go deeper. They are ready to begin the process of owning their faith and are starting to wrestle with faith issues as they look for meaning and relevance. While younger children are content to enjoy the stories, older children will start to ask why. Although this questioning is healthy and beneficial, it can be confusing and even a little frightening for these young disciples. Both biblical texts provide reassurance to persons facing challenges and speak to us of God's presence and support as we journey into the unknown. As the psalmist reminds us, God's word lights our way and guides us into new experiences of Sabbath keeping.

## About this Exploration

Sabbath implies renewal based in reflection. Rooted in the past, Sabbath beckons us toward the future. It calls us to encounter God in the present moment. Sabbath is a way for us to remember that we are God’s beloved children. Awareness of God’s presence can guide us through all of life’s experiences. As God’s people, we often find ourselves facing challenging times, not unlike those faced by the psalmist and by Jesus’ followers after his crucifixion. At such times, a sense of God’s presence can guide our choices toward a future filled with the possibilities of Sabbath transformation.

**BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:**  
**Psalm 119:105–112,**  
**129–136**  
**Matthew 27:51–66**  
**(Matthew 26:14–27:66)**

### Leader Preparation

In Psalm 119 God’s word is described as “a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.” As you prepare for this session, spend time thinking about the different ways God’s Word has provided guidance and support in your faith journey. Who or what else has acted as a light for your path? How has your practice of Sabbath been informed by these holy guides?

*Prayer: God of light and love, you call us out of what is familiar into new ways of living. As we face the challenges that come with that invitation, may we be open to new discoveries and exciting possibilities. Help us to be aware of your presence with us as we venture forth on this journey of faith. Amen.*

### Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from 9 activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving. The first

## Exploring & Engaging Activities

### 1 Keep Practicing! (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and consider ways you practice your faith by keeping Sabbath time. Practice flicking the coin. Be ready to share your struggles as well as your accomplishments. Children in this age group love to hear your stories and will be encouraged to learn that everyone experiences times of struggles as they grow.

#### Supplies:

- coins
- access to a table

As followers of Jesus we are encouraged to keep practicing our faith. Distribute coins and invite the children to place them on the edge of a table. With one finger, flick the coin into the air and try to catch it with the same hand. Encourage children to try this trick and see how they do. If they don’t succeed at first, encourage them to keep practicing for a while.

Afterward, talk about the game. How did it feel to keep trying? Describe other experiences of having to practice something in order to master a skill. How does practicing help? Explain that as followers of Jesus we are constantly practicing our faith. Sometimes we make progress; other times we don’t and we may get discouraged. We just have to remember that we are still practicing. Invite the children to tell about ways they have practiced their faith by enjoying Sabbath time this week. Share your stories. Celebrate the children’s progress with a group high five.

### 2 A Light for Our Path

Leader preparation: Make arrangements to use a room that can be darkened. Print the following Bible passages and place them into envelopes: Genesis 2:2–4, Exodus 20:8–11, Mark 3:1–5, Deuteronomy 6:4–9. You can download and print Bible passages from <http://bible.oremus.org>. Hide the envelopes and treats around the room.

#### Supplies:

- Bible with a bookmark at Psalm 119:105
- four envelopes
- printed Bible passages
- flashlights with fresh batteries
- treats
- a dark room

God’s Word guides our way and helps us learn how we should live. Invite the children to gather in a circle. Distribute flashlights and turn off the room lights.

## Keeping Sabbath

activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church). Using all 9 activities could take 90–120 minutes.

\* To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose 3 activities using one activity from each category.

\* To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose 4 or 5 using at least one activity from each category.

Allow the group a brief time of play. Invite a volunteer to read Psalm 119:105. Ask: What do you think this verse means? Explain that hidden around the room are four envelopes; invite the children to use their flashlights to go looking for them. When a child finds one he or she should shout, “Found one.” Gather in the place where the envelope was found and ask for a volunteer to open it and read the Bible passage. Ask: What does this Bible passage teach us about Sabbath keeping? How does it show us how to live? After the discussion, recite Psalm 119:105 together. When all the envelopes have been found, invite the group to use their flashlights to find the treats hidden around the room.



### 3 Guatemala: Procession

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Cut out speech bubbles.

#### Supplies:

- poster: “Guatemala: Procession,” <http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>, by Betty LaDuke
- precut speech bubbles
- pens
- reusable adhesive

God created Sabbath as a gift for all creation. Invite the children to look at the poster “Guatemala: Procession” and describe what they see. Draw attention to the figures and encourage the group to suggest what they might be doing. How might they be celebrating Sabbath? Next, invite the children to look at the faces. If these people were to say something about the Sabbath, what would they say? Would they be enjoying Sabbath, telling others about it, or complaining? Recall that the Sabbath rest was for the whole of creation. What might the animals be saying? How about the objects? Would the candles feel special or overworked? Encourage the children to choose something on the poster and imagine what that person, animal, or object is saying about Sabbath. Print the words on speech bubbles and affix to the poster with reusable adhesive. Display the poster so that everyone can enjoy the hidden conversations.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### 4 Sabbath Scavenger Hunt (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Print copies of “Signs of Sabbath.”

#### Supplies:

- copies of “Signs of Sabbath,” Attachment: Activity 4
- pencils
- sticky notes
- clipboards (optional)

Distribute copies of “Signs of Sabbath.” Read through the signs of Sabbath together. Discuss where you might find these signs and check them off if they can be found in your church. If possible, travel to different parts of the building to allow the children to see where Sabbath is practiced. At each place, leave a sticky note saying “Sabbath keeping is practiced here.” If there is a particular sign of Sabbath

that cannot be found, you might discuss ways of introducing that practice into the church. For example, if there is no quiet place for people to spend time with God, the group might brainstorm ways they might create such a space. Take notes and work with the church leadership to follow up on the children's suggestions.

### 5 Sabbath Banner

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and make arrangements to use a room that can be darkened.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- an assortment of flashlights with fresh batteries
- a variety of light sources that can be lighted, such as candles, oil lamps
- hot glue gun or fabric glue
- assorted fabrics such as burlap, felt, or heavy cotton

Distribute flashlights and turn off the lights. Invite the children to play with the flashlights and compare the brightness levels and type of light produced. Ask: When might you use a flashlight? How is it helpful in a dark situation? Explain that in Bible times people did not have flashlights. Have everyone turn off their flashlights and watch as you light some candles and oil lamps. Read Psalm 119:105 with the children and talk about the ways God's word is like a lamp. How might God's guidance be helpful as we think about ways of celebrating Sabbath?

Invite the children to use the materials available to create a banner that illustrates verse 105 from the psalm.

### 6 Weaving Sabbath into Your Life

Leader preparation: Consider practical ways that you might weave Sabbath time into your life. Be prepared to share these ideas with the children to help start the discussion. Review the instructions for weaving paper on the Web site

<http://www.artprojectsforkids.org>.

#### Supplies:

- construction paper in a variety of colors
- paper cutter or craft knife
- ruler

As we weave Sabbath time into our lives, it becomes part of who we are. Follow the instructions on the Web site Art Projects for Kids to create beautiful woven papers. Use a glue stick to secure the paper strips at the edges. As you work, discuss some ways you might weave Sabbath time into your life. What could you or your families do each day/week that would bring the gift of Sabbath rest into your life?

When the children have finished weaving, have them glue a sheet of white paper on the back. Encourage them to print the words "This week I will weave Sabbath time into my life by . . ." and complete the sentence.

## Sending & Serving Activities



### 7 Sabbath Quilt (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies.

**Supplies:**

- construction paper
- white drawing paper
- large sheet of backing paper or bulletin board
- crayons or colored pencils
- glue

We can help one another practice Sabbath keeping by sharing our ideas. If you have not already done so, brainstorm creative ideas of ways to celebrate Sabbath time. Invite the children to choose one idea and print a brief description on a piece of drawing paper. Use crayons or colored pencils to decorate the edges.

To assemble the quilt, alternate children's decorated papers with sheets of construction paper to create a checkerboard pattern. Once you have created a pleasing arrangement, glue the squares onto backing paper. If you do not have a large backing sheet, create the quilt on a bulletin board. Together think of a title, such as "Celebrating Sabbath Time." Hang the quilt where the congregation can admire it.

### 8 Votive Candle

Leader preparation: Gather supplies, cut or tear tissue paper into small squares, mix a 50/50 solution of white glue and water.

**Supplies:**

- clear 6 oz. plastic cups
- tissue paper
- white glue
- water
- tissue paper in a variety of colors
- paint brushes
- glitter
- tea candles
- copies of Psalm 119:105

The psalmist reminds us that God's Word will guide us along the journey. Demonstrate how to "paint" tissue paper squares onto outside of cups with glue mixture. When the cup is covered, sprinkle on a little bit of glitter while the glue is still wet. Place tea candles inside the cups. Encourage the children to take their candles home and use them when their family gathers together for a meal or other Sabbath activity. Provide a copy of Psalm 119:105 and suggest that the children might say those words as they light the candle. Remind the children to light the candles only when their parents or guardians are present, and to be sure to get their permission first.

## 9 Celebrating the Sabbath

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and place them around the room to make separate creative centers.

### Supplies:

- art supplies
- craft supplies
- worship CDs and CD player
- writing supplies
- Bibles

God has provided many ways for us to celebrate Sabbath. Put the sets of supplies around the room. Invite the children to create something personal to celebrate God's gift of Sabbath. They might create a piece of visual art, write a poem or prayer, craft something, choose a song from a CD to play for the group, select a favorite verse or Bible story to share, choreograph a dance, compose a rap song. Allow time, and encourage the children to share with the group what they've created.

### Reflect

What new discoveries about Sabbath keeping came to light for you and the children today? In what ways were you able to encourage the children to keep practicing their faith? How might you continue to encourage and support them as they continue their journey?

Attachment: Activity 4

## Signs of Sabbath

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments God said, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." Holy means to set something aside for God, so part of Sabbath keeping is setting time apart for God

- Is there a place for people to pray together at your church?
- Is there a place where people gather to worship God?
- Is there a quiet space at your church where people can go to spend time with God?
- Is there a place where younger member of your church can meet to learn about God?
- Is there a place where can you go to find suggestion about ways of keeping Sabbath?

One Sabbath Day Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. Jesus got into trouble for breaking the Sabbath rules, but Jesus knew that it was more important to help. We can remember that part of Sabbath keeping is helping others.

- Is there a place where you can find information about the way your church is reaching out to help others?

The very first followers of Jesus had to learn how to celebrate the Sabbath together. Paul wrote a letter to encourage them to share their food and gather for often for a fellowship meal. We can remember that part of Sabbath keeping is sharing food with others.

- Does your church collect food to share with others?
- Is there a place where food can be prepared for the congregation to share together?
- Is there a place where your church family can gather to share communion?

When God created Sabbath God explained that it was a time of rest for all people. We can remember that part of keeping. Sabbath means taking time to rest.

- Is there a place where babies or toddlers can go to rest?
- Is there a quiet space where people can take a break for a while?

What other signs of Sabbath keeping can you find in your church?