



More Than a Day of Rest

Topic
Shabbat

Grade Level(s)
1st – 3rd

Big Ideas

- Sometimes things are special because they happen occasionally and not all the time.
- Time can be special when it is used differently from the way it is generally used.

Learning Targets

Students will:

1. Understand that Shabbat is different from the rest of the week
2. Think about the difference between what makes something regular and what makes something special.
3. Consider how they (can) make Shabbat special at home

Materials / Technology Needed

- A book about how Shabbat is different from the rest of the week (e.g. *Friday's Are Special*, *Lights out Shabbat*, *Bim and Bom: A Shabbat Tale*, and *The Friday Nights of Nana*)

Background for Teachers

"More than the Jewish people have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people." So said the poet and Zionist Ahad Ha'am.

There are many ways that people keep Shabbat. The idea for Shabbat first appears at the beginning of the Torah with the statement that God rested on the Seventh Day after creating for six days (*Beresheet* 2:1 – 3). These three *pesukim* with their assessment that God declared the seventh day holy are even included in the traditional introduction to *Kiddush* on Friday night.

This statement of rest extends to the observance of Shabbat. While people have found many different ways to observe Shabbat over the years, the idea that Shabbat is "The Day of Rest" is one of the primary markers of the day. Many people mark the day by

Relevant Vocabulary

בְּרֵאשִׁית (<i>Beresheet</i>)	Genesis, the first book of the Torah
פְּסוּקִים (<i>Pesukim</i>)	Verses from the <i>Tanakh</i>
עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדִּבְרוֹת (<i>Aseret Hadibrot</i>)	The Ten Commandments
שְׁמוֹת (<i>Shemot</i>)	Exodus, the second book of the Torah
דְּבָרִים (<i>Devarim</i>)	Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Torah



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making it a point not to work at their professions, to turn off their personal devices, or to spend extra time sharing a special meal with their families.

But Shabbat can be about more than rest. The *mitzvah* of Shabbat is mentioned in *Aseret Hadibrot*, which are related twice in the Torah. In the first version, the action to observe Shabbat is “*zachor* (remember)” (*Shemot* 20:8 – 11). In the second version of *Aseret Hadibrot* the action to observe Shabbat is “*shamor* (guard)” (*Devarim* 5:12 – 15). Traditionally, *zachor* has been understood to be about observing the active rituals of Shabbat while *shamor* is about making sure to avoid the things that go against the spirit of the day. Thus, the markers mentioned above tend to be associated with the *shamor* version of Shabbat observance. Meanwhile, traditional rituals like saying *Kiddush*, eating challah, and saying special Shabbat prayers are part of the *zachor* aspect of Shabbat and act as touchstones for making Shabbat a special day that sets it apart from the rest of the week.

Prepare in Advance

If doing this activity in person, students can collect regular and special items at home to bring into class (see below). Remember that these items can be presented as pictures if students are not able to physically bring them in.

Description of Activities

1. Ask students to collect six items from their regular lives. Examples of items might include their sneakers, school books, pencils, and phones [Note that pairs of items count as a single item.] Students may take pictures of the items if the items are too large to carry.
2. Students show their items to the class and share what makes the items part of their regular lives. Examples of what makes them part of their regular lives might include that students use them every day, students do everyday things with them, and students have easy access to them.
3. Ask students to collect one item that is special to them. Special items might include sugar cereals, a picture of a beloved family member, a stuffed animal. [Note that an item that is special for one student might be regular for another student. What is more important is why the item is regular or special for someone.]
4. Students share the item with the class and explain why the item is special.
5. Discuss:
 - a. How are the special items different from the regular items?
 - b. Is it easier to identify items that are regular or special? Why?



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6. Optional: Read to the class a book about how Shabbat is different from the rest of the week. Possible books include: *Friday's Are Special*, *Lights out Shabbat*, *Bim and Bom: A Shabbat Tale*, and *The Friday Nights of Nana*.
7. Ask: What is the connection between the book we just read and the items you collected? [If no book was read, simply ask: Why do you think I asked you to find six regular items and one special one?]
8. Discuss how Shabbat is a special day. Point out that it comes along once each week after six regular, non-Shabbat days.
9. Discuss different ways that people make Shabbat special. Some possible ways include:
 - a. Eating challah and grape juice
 - b. Spending time with family
 - c. Eating a special meal
 - d. Turning off devices
10. Encourage students to find one way that they can make Shabbat special themselves. Make sure to remind them to check with their adults before putting ideas into practice. Students share their special Shabbat practices next time.