

Bar and Bat Yisrael Shabbat Log

What is Shabbat?

Shabbat is the traditional Jewish practice of dedicating the 24-hours between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday to rejuvenation, relaxation and restoration. During this “palace in time” we set aside the clatter of commerce and devote ourselves to deeper pursuits such as: nurturing friendships and family relationships, engaging in community, practicing kindness, taking care of the Earth, studying Jewishly, and cultivating contentment. Our focus moves from our weekday efforts devoted to striving and acquiring more stuff and shifts to appreciating what we have and who we are.

Our Intention:

In the context of your Bat/Bar Yisrael preparation, we wish to help you develop a Shabbat practice that is meaningful to you. Therefore, we are not asking you to commit to traditional practices such as not using electricity, not driving and spending the day in synagogue although you may partake in those if you wish.

Rather, we ask you twice a month to choose different Jewish activities to do on Friday night or Saturday. The goal is to find activities that reflect innovative ways to practice Shabbat, which will make your life more meaningful. (Heavy words, but when you find the right weekly practice it works!)

Your Challenge:

Try a different practice twice a month for 4 months. Write a paragraph in your Shabbat Log describing what you did and how it went.

Examples:

Here are some Shabbat Practice ideas. You can use these and/or think of your own.

1. Make a list of all the things that happened this week for which you are thankful and read the list to your family. Allow them to ask questions about what you wrote after you finish reading. Perhaps do this as a family project. Everyone shares his or her list before dinner on Friday night or at a special family breakfast Saturday morning.
2. Cook a special dinner for your family on Friday night. It is traditional to decorate the table with a white tablecloth, flowers and our very best silver and dishes, as if welcoming royalty. The Shabbat is often called the “Sabbath Queen” because it is such a special time, as if royalty was visiting.
3. Don’t do any errands or shop on Saturday. Make careful, intentional decisions about how to spend your newly free time so that it feels like Shabbat.
4. Don’t complain. Every time you are tempted to complain, turn it around. For example, if you have a really tough soccer game Saturday morning,

- instead of complaining that now you are tired, comment instead on how fortunate you are to have such a great soccer team that enables you to play so hard.
5. Be kind to your sibling. For example, you might offer to read a book to a younger sibling and let them select the book. Or let him or her join in your game. Or try to avoid whatever it is you do sometimes that drives your older brother or sister crazy.
 6. Invite some friends or neighbors to help you clean up a park for one hour or more. Bring trash bags and work gloves and see how many bags you can fill.
 7. Plant a tree.
 8. Shovel the sidewalk for your neighbors and do not accept payment. Do it simply because it is a nice thing to do.
 9. Take your dog on an extra long walk. Try to notice as much as you can about your surroundings as you walk.
 10. Read a Jewish book. Perhaps *The God Upgrade* or *God in the Wilderness*, by Rabbi Jamie Korngold.
 11. Plan ahead for Shabbat by doing all the homework you would usually have to do on Saturday ahead of time. Make careful, intentional decisions about how to spend your newly free Saturday so that it feels like Shabbat.
 12. Bake a challah or if you already know how to bake challah, experiment with different challah recipes.
 13. Call your grandparent and have a meaningful conversation about what you did this week. Ask them about their week. Tell them you love them!
 14. Attend an Adventure Rabbi Shabbat service. Try to follow along and participate in as much of the Hebrew as you can. Many of the prayers are the same ones that you will be part of your ceremony.

Shabbat Log:

Write-up your Shabbat experience in your Log.

Here are some ideas, in no particular order, which might help you figure out what kind of things we want you to write about. (Not that you will answer each of these every time, which would create a boring Log.)

First, describe what you did. Then,

- I learned...
- I felt...
- Something interesting I noticed when I was doing this...
- This was different than what I usually do because which makes me realize I would like to
- What I liked about the experience ...
- What I disliked about the experience....
- How the experience changed me...

- Ways I might continue to incorporate this into my regular schedule ...
- I felt closer to because.....
- I felt more connected to my Judaism/ family/ friend/ planet earth, neighborhood/ because usually I..... but today I.....
- I thought that this experience would be but in reality it was
- I was better prepared to go back to the frenetic pace of the school week after this practice because

Reflect on what you learned about these B'nai Yisrael and Shabbat themes:

- Responsibility
- Taking care of others
- Slowing Down
- Contentment vs. acquisition
- Thinking about the larger world not just myself
- Standing where it will have been right to have stood

Final Summary:

In approximately one page, summarize what you did and what you learned through the Shabbat experience. You will read this at your Bar or Bat Yisrael ceremony.

Shabbat Logs

	Date	Description of What I did:	My Thoughts About It:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

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