

SHABBAT AT HOME

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SHABBAT PREPARATIONS

At Jewish homes, all work is done on the Friday before the Shabbat. This includes cleaning the house, preparing the food and clothing etc.

When having dinner, the table is set with the finest crockery and cutlery as well as a minimum of 2 candles which represent the 2 commandments about remembering and observing the Shabbat.

On the table there is wine (or grape juice) and 2 loaves of challah bread. The wine is sweet and is drunk from a goblet called the Kiddush cup. Drinking this wine on Shabbat symbolises joy and celebration. The loaves represent the manna that God gave the Israelites whilst they were in the wilderness.



LIGHTING THE CANDLES

A female member of the family has the honour of lighting the candles. She lights them at roughly 20 minutes before sunsets so that once they're lit she can welcome in Shabbat. She does this by waving her arms over the candles and closing her eyes, whilst saying: "Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us with commandments, and commands us to light the candles of Shabbat."

FRIDAY MEAL

After the evening service in the synagogue, the family returns home. The parents bless their children and then the head of the household will recite the Kiddush blessing, whilst holding the Kiddush cup. At the end of each blessing the family will say “Amen”. After that each family member will wash their hands as a sign of purification.

After washing their hands everyone will sit and the head of the household will take the cover off the 2 challah loaves, he then lifts them up and says a blessing. The bread is then broken into pieces and each family member will take a piece and dip it into salt. Then the meal begins. The meal lasts for a few hours and in between each course either a reading from scripture will be said or a song will be sung. There's no rush as it's a time to relax and enjoy the family's company. The meal is ended with a prayer of thanksgiving.



SATURDAY

On the Saturday, the family will go to the synagogue for a morning service. After the service the family will have another special meal.

In the afternoon, parents will be spend time with their children and study the Torah. After this there is another smaller meal before sunset.

The end of Shabbat is marked by the Havdalah service. This is performed in the home after nightfall, once three stars can be seen in the sky.



THE END

