

Torah Tips

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Shabbastic Garden of Eatin'

Something wonderful happens "in the cool of the evening"¹ on Friday evening. Think of Shabbat as a family garden, and like the first family, Adam and Eve, the Creator has put you and your family there to beautify it.

The Creator already planted the eternal trees to feature in a Shabbastic garden: Enjoyment of the day, the holiness of the day, not to kindle a fire¹ on this day, not to work at your occupation on this day,¹ and not to buy and sell on this day.¹ The "Not" trees in the garden protect one's ability to enjoy the day and make it holy like the Creator does.

Let's think about the great trees of enjoyment and holiness in this Shabbastic garden and what will bring out its beauty in the home:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, "You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who **sanctifies you**. Therefore, you are to observe the sabbath, **for it is holy** to you.'" (Ex 31:12-14)

Holiness means to set apart with the idea of gathering the set apart thing to things of like kind. The Holy One sanctifies His People with Shabbat and makes them holy. This gathers Israel as a holy nation no matter where they live "from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same."¹ A bride is holy to her husband, set apart from all others, but gathered to him. Shabbat is a place for like-minded people to gather, and it starts at home, so let's prepare landscaping in our garden that will beautify it with growing holiness and enjoyment.

Step One: Make it Special



That which is holy is not mundane, so find ways to do daily things in a special way on Shabbat. These *special ways of doing things* can become very comforting routines for the family, but some families like to innovate new ways of doing Shabbat things. Some people like to plant dependable perennials, but others like to plant seasonal annuals that add variety and spontaneity. Arrange your Shabbat activities for enjoyment!

Here are some practical suggestions to grow an aura of holiness in the home. Holy things are special things, so if you have Great-Grandma's good china or tableware, take it out of hiding on Shabbat. My mom bought her Snow Pine china the year I was born...and no, I won't tell you what that year was! Every Shabbat when I eat from those plates, I remember the love for the Word that she planted in me.



If you don't have anything special, you can have fun planting an orchard: a Shabbat collection of tableware, serving bowls, or candlesticks. You can go with a theme, such as grapes, pomegranates, or palm trees, or with a patchwork of bright colors. You can spend lots of money on matched pieces at Judaica shops, or you can comb online auctions or yard sales to pick up inexpensive pieces that form a fun collection. Who said an orchard is only one type of fruit tree? The pieces may not be new, but they are new and special to you.

A few years ago, I found a Shabbat glass collection that I really wanted, but it was expensive, so over the years I've added pieces as I could afford them. With my older pieces, I can change the table settings for feast days and incorporate different challah covers to compliment them. Those three meals of Shabbat will bloom into a Garden of Eatin'!



There are other ways of incorporating special things into Shabbat. Sometimes I plant things just for fun, not to eat or because of their beauty. Encourage the kids to imagine fun twists on the day, like using a special toothbrush or pillowcase. They can have special Shabbat pajamas. Let them pick a special toy that they play with only on Shabbat.

There can even be a game that the whole family plays every Shabbat. One family I know goes on relaxing family hikes on Saturday afternoons during the warmer months. Family and congregational activities gather children to those of like mind on Shabbat, and they help to hedge out competing secular activities that lure them outside of the Shabbat garden. A little chick in Hebrew is an *efroach*, which has the same Hebrew root word as flowers, *perachim*. Happy little chicks who gather under the mother bird's wings on Shabbat are like a garden full of flowers. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times I would have gathered you as a

hen gathers her chicks under her wings."ⁱ

Just like landscaping around the home, these basic plantings will grow as you trim some places or encourage growth in others. Anything new feels awkward, but over time, Shabbat home traditions become a weekly source of comfort. In our home, we use a special Shabbat hand towel on which to arrange our coffee, tea, and cocoa service. This towel was given to us by a dear friend, and we must have that special towel for Shabbat!



Step Two: Only You Can Prevent Garden Fires

One of the Shabbat boundaries is *not to kindle a fire*. If a fire starts on Shabbat, it might set the whole garden on fire, which would destroy delight in the day. Practically, this means gardeners need to be careful about when and where they light the garden party torches! Jewish calendars and Shabbat apps give candle lighting times for many locations. These ensure that no one lights the Shabbat candles **after** Shabbat has already come in. There is an eighteen-minute window with the published times, so don't panic if you are a few minutes late, and if you need to light earlier in the summer due to the longer days, you can. Those little chicks can become peckish when they are hungry!



Scented candles on Shabbat don't just make Shabbat smell good, they lend a Shabbastic atmosphere of peace. Like Shabbat candles, though, make sure to light them **before** Shabbat sets in, and always make sure candles are away from traffic and little hands for safety. Don't count on the old tablecloth trick working if a two-year-old tries it.

Orthodox Jews do not manipulate On/Off switches on electronic devices on Shabbat. This observance is so that the electrical circuits won't "fire," but this is too technical for newcomers. There is a great object lesson, though: there are literal fires, and there are emotional fires!

- Have you ever used email or social media, and someone said or wrote something that made you angry? If parents want to draw children into the peaceful garden on Shabbat, then parents have to make an effort, too. Consider not using electronic devices such as laptops and iPads on Shabbat, at least for social media. Perhaps it can be limited to Bible study or watching a Torah teaching?
- For some children...and grownups...a Shabbat jigsaw puzzle is fun, and there are vendors that turn a personal photo into a jigsaw puzzle. They are a little more expensive than a store-bought puzzle, but imagine the fun kids can have taking pictures representing a Bible theme. Families could exchange puzzles to keep them fresh. Play a Torah teaching audio or read Bible stories during puzzle time, and you'll be surprised what kids will remember. Better yet, take the opportunity to work spiritual principles into a personal conversation.
- Not having a microwave or coffeepot buzzing enhances the peace of the day. Using a microwave to reheat cooked food is not a violation of cooking on Shabbat, for the food is cooked already. A stovetop warmerⁱⁱ or crockpot, however, also reheat cooked food, but maybe not as fast. Of course, who's in a hurry on Shabbat?
- There is no problem with making coffee or instant cocoa on Shabbat, for the beans are already roasted. Adding hot water will not cook them further, but heating boiling water violates the instructions not to boil.ⁱⁱⁱ Because our family likes coffee, tea, and sometimes cocoa on Shabbat, an easy solution is a hot water urn. A hot water urn will hold the water just under the boiling point, and it is a way to make routine coffee or tea special. In fact, why not have a special Shabbat coffee or teacup?
- Save gourmet coffee or tea for Shabbat, and there are multiple, inexpensive tea infusers or coffee drippers to try. Our favorite is a dripper made with a wooden-handled beaker. Put the coffee filter in the top, add coffee, and then dispense the hot water. It makes wonderfully delicious coffee. There are many of these inventions, and one-cup coffee drippers range from \$5 - \$15, depending upon whether it's plastic, ceramic, or stainless steel. Make it special, and make it fun. While the beeping microwave or slurping coffeemaker are not fires, there are ways of heating things that warm the Shabbat garden without shattering the peacefulness.



Step Three: Kinder-garden



One of the essential trees of Shabbat is sharing it with others. Remember, all the commandments hang upon loving God AND loving people. *Being kind to others* is essential on Shabbat, but with the power of the Holy Spirit, Yeshua assured his disciples that they could be an even kinder garden to welcome others into the holiness of the day. The final step is demonstrating love to others by keeping the Sabbath Day holy.

Kinder-garden begins with the family. Shabbat is special for women, who have the privilege of lighting candles to welcome in the Shabbat for the family. If a husband is kind to his wife during the week, then he can be kinder on Shabbat! In some families, men take care of clearing the table and washing the dishes on Shabbat, which is very kind when Mom has been preparing for the Shabbat meals all week and may have cooked and cleaned all day on Shabbat!

- Make Shabbat special for the lady of the house, and it adds holiness to the day. Bringing flowers to one's wife on Shabbat truly crowns the garden with colors of appreciation and beauty for her hard work.
- The family can "toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these."^{iv} Rest from occupational work on Shabbat makes Israel like beautiful flowers in the Father's garden, and a family at rest on Shabbat is more glorious than King Solomon.
- Either spouse can kindly give the other an opportunity for a Shabbat afternoon nap by offering to watch younger kids, but the kinder-garden also looks outside the immediate family. A *tzedekah* box is a decorative container to collect money for the needy. Younger children may enjoy decorating their own boxes. In many Orthodox Jewish families, the entire family use *tzedekah* boxes, and each person puts money in his or her box just prior to sundown on Shabbat.



The children receive their allowances, and immediately they place 10-20% into their boxes. The boxes are then put away, and it's time to light the Shabbat candles. While the children are trained to kindly share their tithes on "payday," they associate the act with the joy of Shabbat. The tithe is rewarded by a celebration with good food, good smells, candlelight, prayer, family, songs, and sharing it all within a community of faith.

A kinder gardener's eye for creativity and imagination will dress and protect a garden centered around the Tree of Life, the Wisdom of the Word. Make it special, be kind, and let the Holy Spirit be the fire that lights your Shabbastic home.

*A beautiful, handmade *tzedekah* box by artist Sylvia Alotta*
www.studioalotta.com

Be Kind!



Helpful Resources List:

- Special tableware and candlesticks
- Special household items and games
- Hot water urn
- Single-cup drip coffee makers
- Stovetop warmer or crockpot
- Jewish calendar
- Family and like-minded believers
- Fresh flowers
- Tzedekah* box

Helpful BEKY Books:

- Growing in Holiness: the Hebrew Calendar Day by Day (BEKY Book 10)*
- The Sabbath: His Day of Delight (BEKY Book 9)*

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ⁱ Ge 3:8

ⁱ Ex 35:3

ⁱ Le 23:3

ⁱ Ne 10:31; Am 8:4-5

ⁱ Ps 113:3

ⁱ Mt 23:37

Some stovetop warmer manufacturers, such as Classic Kitchen, offer models that don't generate excessive heat into the room, which can be miserable in warmer climates.

ⁱ Ex 16:23

ⁱ Lu 12:27

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