

## SABBATH CELEBRATION

This outline for a Sabbath celebration is put together for families with small children and thus is shorter. It is designed with Saturday night in mind, but can certainly be used at other times as well. Remember, Sabbath is to be a time that is different. The emphasis is on being and enjoying all that God has created. To this end we suggest following these guidelines. Table setting should be on the formal side. Even dress could be more formal indicating the specialness of this time. Candles are included. You may want to include three candles representing the Holy Trinity. The bread is preferably home made and perhaps can be from a batch with which the children helped. The fruit of the vine (unlike the Jews we use juice- buying non-alcoholic sparkling grape juice just for Sabbath celebration adds to the uniqueness of the time.) Dinner is brought in after the ceremony; often this is the "big" meal of the week. Sunday dinner should be simpler for this reason and in keeping with the "rest" of the Sabbath. Each family member that can read is given a sheet with this litany on it. Include the children as much as possible- hiding eyes, lighting candles, reading, giving their own blessing/prayer, and honoring questions. Make this time your own. Many families also include songs of faith at appropriate places. Often a guided conversation regarding the past week and its blessings, or some other topic related to thanksgiving and rest takes place during the meal. Family time or farther preparation for the Sabbath can be a part of the rest of the evening. Please know that touch is important and communicates in ways that words cannot.

### I. Candle Lighting

All are seated, room is dark. Adult or child is ready to light the candles. Other children cover their eyes.

Parent: God said...

All: Let their be light...(as candle are lighted, children uncover their eyes.)

Parent: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has made us  
holy by your living word and taught us to kindle  
the Sabbath light.

### II. Welcoming and Explaining the Sabbath

Parent: God commanded: "Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath, set aside for the Lord your God." On that day...

All: We rest

Parent: We rest from our work, putting aside workday thoughts and cares, and celebrating the gift of life and love in our family.

All: We remember.

Parent: We remember that God made the whole world. God cares for us as a parent cares for his or her own children. We remember that God sent his only son, Jesus, as teacher, healer and redeemer for all the world. And we remember how God has cared for us this week.

(Here you may ask for persons to share how God has cared for them the past week.)

All: We get ready.

Parent: Tonight, we get ready for tomorrow's worship, to receive our Lord, as a bride is made ready to receive the bridegroom. Let God's Spirit of love come now and bind us together in harmony and peace.

All: Let us welcome the day of the Lord!

### III. Blessing the Children

Parent: On this day we thank you, God, for (child's name)\_\_\_\_. May the Lord bless you and take care of you; may the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

(As s/he says this, the parent is encouraged to move around the table and place his/her hands on children's heads as s/he gives each the blessing.)

### IV. Blessing the Juice and the Bread

Parent: (Fills juice glass and holds it up.)

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has provided us with the fruit of the vine. (Others' glasses are filled and they drink together.)

Parent: (Holds up bread) Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has provided us with bread. (Bread is broken and passed around the table and all eat together.)

### V. Meal is Enjoyed Together

(from Fellowship of Hope, a Mennonite Congregation in Elkhart, IN)