



REFORM JUDAISM
Shabbat

23-24 October 2015

Shabbat Lech Lecha



Toolkit



Reform Judaism is delighted to partner our communities to celebrate our RJ Shabbat to match the diversity of who we really are. We are here to partner our communities through educational ideas and resources.

Tell us what you need!

Please contact our Community Partner,
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What is RJ Shabbat?

We will join Jews around the UK to celebrate Shabbat on 23-24 October.

Shabbat is the jewel in our week. Shabbat brings heaven and earth closer. Shabbat nourishes each one of us, and we can also deepen our relationships by being together in our homes and communities in peaceful and joyful encounter. Shabbat is the day in which we limit our outer activities so we can refresh our inner lives. Shabbat – 25 hours of reflection, of sacred moments, of joy and contemplation - is one of Judaism's greatest gifts to the world.

As the 12th century medieval poet *Yehuda HaLevi* wrote in the song *Yom Shabbaton*,

*“The day of rest should not be forgotten;
Its memory is like a fragrant aroma.
On it the dove finds rest
There shall rest exhausted ones.”*

As Reform Jews, we celebrate Shabbat in different ways that are meaningful to us, to our community and the people around us. Our Reform Judaism Shabbat (RJ Shabbat) will match our values - inclusive and open to everybody who wants to participate.

It is traditional to help others on a Friday so that they might have more a peaceful Shabbat. We can prepare for Shabbat by acts of *tikkun*, social action for others, that in turn, enable us to enter Shabbat in a better way for ourselves.

How to organise RJ Shabbat?

Planning ahead Step-by-Step:

The success of your RJ Shabbat will depend on the enthusiasm and time commitment of community volunteers. It is a fantastic opportunity to involve new members in planning RJ Shabbat activities according to their interests and availability.

Please try to be inclusive and involve everybody who offers their time, for however small a task. It will enhance theirs and your community's Shabbat experience.

With summer plans and HHD arrangements just around the corner, please feel free to contact RJ's Community Partnership team so we can help you with your plans for this exciting project.

Please consider these while planning:

- 1. What do we want to achieve as a community from RJ Shabbat?**
- 2. What resources (money and material) we need?**
- 3. Are our plans realistic?**
- 4. How do we communicate about RJ Shabbat with the rest of the community (High Holy Days are great opportunity to tell people about it but also social media, flyers and emails).**
- 5. How do we involve others than just the usual volunteers?**

RJ Shabbat at national level

This **Shabbat** is a special event for your community, but Reform Judaism would like you to consider adopting the following two elements into your RJ Shabbat programming, that will unite all 42 Reform communities in celebrating RJ Shabbat.

1—Social Action

The clergy and the board are keen to have a *Tikkun Olam* component to RJ Shabbat, and as our Shabbat is full of love and food, we wanted to remember those who are not so fortunate and would like offer the communities to focus on hunger/ poverty related project.

You can do it as a one-off or even better, starting a long term project with a local or international charity that strives to eradicate poverty/ hunger.

Challah for Hunger

Challah for Hunger brings people together to bake a difference through the baking and donating or selling of the *challah*. The money you raise from selling the *challah* goes to charities in the UK and abroad, supporting the fight against poverty and hunger worldwide.

<https://challahforhungerlondon.wordpress.com/>

Our contact there is Finchley Reform member, Debbie Rosenthal, who would be delighted to give you more details about the project and let you know what your community can do. You can contact her: london@challahforhunger.org

***** Please note that this project could be done in communities outside London as well, so don't be put off by the name. *****

Local Food Bank or other local charity

If you are already engaged with a local charity that works with homelessness, poverty, or hunger, please contact them to find out what kind of project you can do with them, which is unique for this Shabbat. You can combine with s for Hunger, food collection, offering a Shabbat meal at your community and so on.

If you have not established relationship with a local charity, RJ Shabbat is a fantastic opportunity to start a relationship and embark on an ongoing project to help those people in your area who need food and shelter.

2—Sermon

Another way we wish to mark RJ Shabbat nationally is by dedicating the sermon to the topic of Shabbat and including a short paragraph from Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner and our Chair, Robert Weiner. (The additional paragraph will be sent to all congregations in early October).

RJ Shabbat in our Communities

Below are some ideas that your community could run during RJ Shabbat.
We will be happy to help you develop the ideas below.

Preparation for Shabbat

- Making a *Havdalah* kit and using it during *Havdalah* at the end of Shabbat
- Making a Shabbat table set: *Challah* cover, decorating table cloths, candle sticks and wine cups.
- Baking *Challah* for communal dinner or donating for a *Challah* for Hunger project.

Shabbat services:

Friday evening and Shabbat morning

This is a wonderful opportunity to try something new in your community this Shabbat during your services. It could be a new song, introducing musical instruments or a short study/ discussion.

It might be also a good idea, if relevant, to offer different styles of services: creative, traditional, alternative or meditation.

If you are from a community without clergy, please contact us and we will help you thinking about the RJ Shabbat service that will suit you.

Seudah Shlishit (Third Shabbat Meal) and/or *Havdalah*:

Seudah Shlishit and *Havdalah* are really nice and relaxing ways to finish your Shabbat, either at home or as a community.

During *Seudah Shlishit* it is customary to have light refreshments and the activities could include family/ children activities, *shiur*/ study sessions, *Shira B'tzibur* (sing along), picnic in the park etc...

Find more ideas: <http://www.reformjudaism.org/blog/2012/08/21/100-things-do-shabbat>

Proposed programme: after eating and blessing in the *Seudah*, the whole community can prepare for *Havdalah*: making *Havdalah* kits, learn about the origins and symbols of *Havdalah* and learning how to sing the *Havdalah* tune etc. Each group then will have an input in a creative communal *Havdalah* after sunset.

Shabbat meals:

During Shabbat we, traditionally, eat three meals: Shabbat dinner, Shabbat lunch and *Seudah Shlishit*. As food is an important element of Jewish life, RJ Shabbat is another good opportunity to enjoy quality time with other people, learning about Shabbat, to eat and enjoy homemade food.

Chavurah meal at the synagogue:

If you wish to eat as a community, a wonderful way to do it is to invite all members to *chavurah* lunch at the community - either Friday evening or Shabbat lunch. The idea is that everybody brings a veggie/ fish dish or dessert to share and drinks are provided by the community.

Chavurah meal hosted by members:

Another option is to celebrate Shabbat at members' homes. This is a wonderful way to eat and study in *chevruta* (small groups) and maybe even invite people that you always wanted to invite and get to know better and never had a good excuse.

TIP: Hosted meals are better organised centrally by the synagogue. It is time consuming, but completely worth it if you have the time to sort it out. The best way is to divide your membership by postcode and/or street names, find local hosts and allocate invitees to each host. Please allow plenty of time to let people know about it and ask them to sign in/ volunteer to host.

Learning about Shabbat:

Please use these social events to learn and discuss Shabbat with your friends and wider congregation. Please refer to the educational material and postcards or clergy to plan the education part of the event.

RJ Shabbat at a Glance

Please also see the educational materials and Shabbat postcards. Alternatively you may wish to speak with a rabbi, cantor or the RJ team to help plan the education part of the event.

Torah V'avodah: Prayer, Study, and Social Action

Replenishment

Explore

At Home or at Shul (time for yourself or with loved ones)

- Study Torah with a friend
- Hold a *Havdalah* service
- Visit elderly friends or relatives in their nursing home
- Go through clothing or household items that you don't use anymore and donate them
- Volunteer
- Sign up to read Torah or *Haftarah* at services
- Download RJ Shabbat Postcards and discuss what Shabbat means to you

- Turn off your electronics, computers, tablets
- Take a nature walk in the park or woods
- Read a good book
- Soak in a hot bath
- Read a little Torah
- Take a nap
- Meet friends in a park for a picnic
- Have friends over for *Seudah*/ Shabbat meal

- Call a close relative or friend who you haven't spoken to since Passover
- Try Yoga or Meditation
- Visit a museum
- Welcome a new person to your Shabbat dinner
- Make Kiddush at both dinner and lunch, sing a Shabbat song and/or read a poem
- Bake your own *challah*

As a Community (Inter- generational)

- Provide an alternative Shabbat service to your traditional one
- Enable members to meet and interact with new people over *oneg* ("delight") - Shabbat evening activity)
- Make birthday cards for the elderly members of your congregation
- Bring a bunch of flowers/ decoration to the local nursing home
- Take part in *Challah* for Hunger or Food Bank project
- Offer intergenerational activities during *Seudah Shlishit* (third meal on Shabbat afternoon)
- Learn about *Havdalah* & prepare a creative *Havdalah* service

- Take a nature walk in the park or woods and run a text study during break
- Communal picnic in the park
- Host/ visit a potluck Shabbat lunch
- Welcome new members at your Shabbat events
- Arrange *Havdalah* or Shabbat Kit workshops
- Allow time for community reflection or contemplation on how we as a community can be even more socially aware

- Plant flowers and Enjoy looking at them next Shabbat!
- Israeli dancing
- Sing along
- Prepare inclusive activities that incorporate all ages, abilities, family status etc.

Families with children

- Make plans to come to ShabbatTots or a family service with another family
- Reenact the story of the Torah portion
- Ask your children why Shabbat is one of the 10 Commandments
- Visit an elderly home as a family and help running *Kabbalat* Shabbat or just talk to the residents

- Organise your boxes of family pictures. Revel in fond memories
- Fly a kite
- Build the Second Temple with Lego

- Play a new board game with your kids
- Bake *Challah* with your kids
- Help your kids draw place mats for Shabbat dinner
- Finger-paint with your kids. Get messy!
- Build a fort with your kids in the living room or backyard
- Make Kiddush before lunch (p 454 onwards in the *siddur*)
- Join your community's intergenerational and/or family activities



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