



IT'S CHALLAH TIME!

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Photographs showcase children in a Jewish preschool as they prepare for Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, by making challah, a traditional, braided egg bread.

Judaism offers the opportunity to recite blessings at many times, including before and after eating, when appreciating appealing aromas, or upon seeing awesome sights. The more we stop and give thanks for the wonders of life, the more we appreciate those wonders.

SHABBAT BLESSINGS

On Friday evenings, some parents choose to bless their children before dinner, using established blessings or creating their own. For many, the chance to break away from the everyday routine and give their children a blessing is a highlight of the week.

Traditionally, boys are blessed using the names of Jacob's two grandsons, Ephraim and Menasseh. It is written in the book of Genesis (48:20): "On that day Jacob blessed them, saying, "By you shall Israel bless, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Menasseh.'" And so today parents repeat:

May God make you like Ephraim and Menasseh.

Girls are blessed with the names of the four matriarchs, with the hope that our daughters will share their strong, admirable character traits. And so today parents repeat:

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

Both of the blessings conclude with the words of the blessing:

May God bless you and watch over you. May God's countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God favor you and grant you peace.

CELEBRATING SHABBAT

Anita Diamant notes in her parenting book *How to be a Jewish Parent*:

Shabbat is also a day for saying yes. Much of the time parents are required to be nay-sayers; it's an important part of the job. 'No, you can't have chocolate cake for breakfast.' 'No, we can't play now' ... Shabbat is the day to try and let go of reflexive or automatic 'no's' and go out of your way to say yes.

Shabbat could be the time when dessert consists of two cookies instead of one, or children are permitted to cuddle with parents for one extra story at bedtime. These small indulgences can help build strong, positive feelings for this beautiful Jewish celebration.

A wonderful and easy activity to do with children is to bake *challah*! Use the recipe at the back of the book, one from the Internet, or a friend's favorite recipe. Pj