

Wait! It's Friday

written by
Chris Barash

illustrated by
Christine Grove

PJ Library®

READING
GUIDE

{ How does preparing for something make it special? }

You Deserve a Break Today

Everyone in this book looks forward to Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. This weekly holiday, which arrives at sundown on Friday evening and continues till nightfall on Saturday, is a time for ritual, togetherness, and most of all, rest. According to Jewish tradition, no one should work on Shabbat. That includes servants, visitors of all backgrounds, and even work animals, like horses and oxen. Maybe that's why Sampson the dog and Sisi the cat look forward to Shabbat, too!

Count Your Blessings

One way that families make Friday night special is by reciting blessings, including a blessing that parents say over their children. This tradition has biblical roots: The patriarch Jacob blessed his son Joseph and grandsons Ephraim and Menashe, and the priests who supervised the sacrificial services in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem said blessings over the people. Today this ritual can create extra closeness — it combines the intimacy of a blessing, the power of touch, and a quiet moment between parent and child. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/waititsfriday.

Heaven on Earth

Jewish legend compares the rest and relaxation of Shabbat to a little piece of paradise here on earth. Many families traditionally begin their Friday night celebrations by singing “*Shalom Aleichem*,” which is sort of a shout-out to heavenly guests — come in peace and go in peace! — that welcomes them into the home for Shabbat.

Go the Extra Mile

Many households are filled with hustle and bustle in the hours leading up to Friday night. Tablecloth, flowers, candlelight, home-baked challah — why all the fuss? Everything we do to make our observance more beautiful adds to the *mitzvah* (Hebrew for “commandment” or good deed) of celebrating Shabbat. That's called *hiddur mitzvah*, Hebrew for “enhancing the commandment.” Is it more work? Well, maybe — but all that preparation results in a *Shabbat shalom*, a peaceful Shabbat.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

How is this family getting ready for Shabbat?

What do you think this family feels when Shabbat arrives? Why might they feel this way?

What are some good ways to take a break on Shabbat?



HANDS ON!

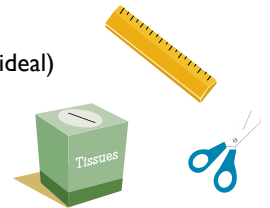
Make a Tzedakah Box



With Uncle Bill's help, the child in this story drops coins in a *tzedakah* box, a collection box for charity. It's traditional to avoid carrying money on Shabbat, so on Friday afternoons, many people empty their pockets by putting some money aside for those in need. Creating a special box for *tzedakah* is another example of *hiddur mitzvah*, enhancing the commandment.

Supplies

Empty tissue box (square is ideal)
Ruler
Construction paper
Scissors
Glue
Crayons, markers, stickers



- 1 Measure the sides of your tissue box, and cut down the construction paper accordingly.
- 2 Glue the construction paper to the sides of the box. (Don't cover the opening on top.)
- 3 Decorate the construction paper however you like.

In the hours leading up to Shabbat, put a little money in the *tzedakah* box with your child. Take the opportunity to discuss who this money is for. Will you donate it to an animal shelter? People who are hungry? When your *tzedakah* box is full, let your child help deliver or mail the money to its intended recipients.