



THE SABBATH LION

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In this Algerian folktale, Yosef is determined to keep the Sabbath – even though he is in the middle of a dangerous desert journey. But he knows he'll be all right because he is getting help from a powerful friend.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

All over the world, for thousands of years, Jews have celebrated the Sabbath, known in Hebrew as *Shabbat*. Mention of Shabbat appears in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, *Bereshit* (Genesis), when God creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh. In Jewish tradition Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends Saturday evening when three stars can be seen in the sky.

It is customary to begin Shabbat by lighting candles, then to sanctify the day with *Kiddush*, a blessing over wine or grape juice, and finally to bless and eat *challah*, a special braided bread. Some families go to synagogue to pray and hear a reading from the *Torah*, the first five books of the Bible. Guests are often invited to festive Shabbat meals.

Speaking of guests, tradition says there is one guest who visits homes every week and has for centuries! That guest is *Shabbat HaMalka*, the Sabbath Queen. Sometimes referred to as a *kallah* (bride), the Sabbath Queen is mentioned in Jewish stories dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. While singing *Lecha Dodi* during Friday night Shabbat services, it is customary for congregants to stand, face the door and bow to welcome the Sabbath Queen.

Yosef and his family lived in Algiers, the capital of Algeria. Jews have lived in all corners of the globe – and everywhere they go, they take the customs of Shabbat with them.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Inviting the Sabbath Queen to your home on Friday night is a wonderful chance to engage your child's imagination. What would you do to get ready for royalty? Brainstorm what special Shabbat preparations your family can make. For example:

- Make special foods with your child, such as challah or cookies.
- Decorate your home with a white tablecloth, flowers on the table, and homemade Shabbat-themed place mats.
- Make royal crowns to wear at the Shabbat table. Use construction paper, staples, pens and glitter. Each member of the family can be part of the queen's royal court!

Be sure to take time during the Shabbat meal to talk with your child about what you are grateful for.

Geography Challenge: Where is Algeria?

Where exactly is Algeria, and how far across the desert did Yosef have to travel to reach Egypt? Using an atlas or an online map of Africa, trace Yosef's heroic journey. Do you know people who have traveled to an African country? Invite them as Shabbat guests and ask them to share tales of their travels.