

From the Fairfield Congregation:

## SHABBAT CEREMONIES FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY

The celebration of Shabbat is integral to Jewish tradition. Our Congregation usually gathers twice a month on Friday evenings, usually in a member's home, to welcome Shabbat, to catch up with friends, and to enjoy an often enlightening and entertaining program.

At most such gatherings the evening begins with a Shabbat Welcome Ceremony. The CHJ Ritual and Education Committee has prepared a collection of tens Humanistic Shabbat Ceremonies from which the host family can choose. Each ceremony includes a candle-lighting, short readings and a few songs, and is conducted so that all present may participate. The service ends with an opportunity for everyone to share a life cycle event, such as a new grandchild, a wedding, a family illness.

However busy the work-week, taking time to welcome Shabbat provides a sense of community with Congregation members, a link to Jewish tradition, and a measure of inner peace.

The following collection of ceremonies for Shabbat has evolved in our Congregation over many years and many authors. The first ceremonies are, generally, shorter than the others and designed for families to use at home. The others are more appropriate for community gatherings. Some include readings for candle lighting, bread and wine; others for candle lighting only. All who read this are encouraged to use what they like and to contribute their ideas for change. As with much in our Congregational life, it is a work in progress.

Home Shabbat services:

### Family Shabbat I

#### *Candlelighting, bread, wine*

**Host:** On this Shabbat we create our moment in time. We pause to reflect upon our yesterdays and tomorrows, to renew our ties with our families and friends, to restore our energies, to refresh our spirits.

**Reader 1:** As the sun descends and shadows lengthen, the distractions of the day give way to the stillness of night. It is time now for us to see not with our eyes, but with our hearts and minds. As the day gives way to evening, it is time for us to welcome the Shabbat.

**Reader 2:** The candles stand before us waiting to be lit. We recall our ancestors as we too seek to dispel the darkness and banish the cold, to bring glowing softness-, warmth and safety into our homes.

**Reader 3:** May the dancing flames of these candles kindle warmth within our hearts, wisdom in our minds, passion in our souls.

Baruch ha-or ba-olam.

Blessed is the light within the world.

**All:**

Baruch ha-or ba-adam.

Blessed is the light within each person.

Baruch ha-or ba-shabbat.

Blessed is the light of the Shabbat.

### **Wine**

**Reader 4:**

We celebrate the fruit of the vine and the bounty of nature as we lift this cup and sip its wine. For we are part of nature which gave us birth and continues to sustain us. Even as we depend upon nature, so do we influence its course.

**Reader 5:**

Through the search for understanding we have gained the knowledge to shape our world.

Guided by the best of human wisdom and the compassion of our spirit, we accept the responsibility which rests upon us.

May the taste of this wine upon our lips stir within us a reverence for nature and a respect for human endeavor.

**All:**

Baruchim ha-cha-him ba-olam.

Blessed is the life within the world.

Baruchim ha-cha-yim ba-adam.

Blessed is the life within us.

### **Challah**

**Reader 6:**

As the fingers of the challah intertwine, so do we join hands in our common humanity, sharing the fruits of our labors. We cherish that which has been created through human effort. For it is through the work of our hands, the strength of the human spirit, the vision of our minds, that our dreams are woven into the tapestry of time. We celebrate the accomplishments of yesterday and today, anticipating the possibilities of tomorrow.

**All:**

May the sharing of this challah strengthen our bonds with others who walk upon this earth.

Baruch a-mal ka-pei-nu

Blessed is the work of our hands.

Baruch cha-zon ha-adam.

Blessed is the vision of our minds.

Baruch le-chem ha-aretz.

Blessed is the bread of the earth.

*(Prepared by Stacie Fine)*

## Family Shabbat II

**Opening Song:**

Shabbat Shalom

**Leader:** We take this Sabbath as the Day of Rest, the Day of Renewal.

Let us breathe deeply and think of peace and quiet, a break from the busy week.

Let us be free of the burdens which must return; let us toss our burdens into the air on this night.

Let us think about the meaning of Shabbat.

**Reader I:** The Sabbath day brings rest, peace and calm after the weariness and commotion of the week. It should make us feel, as it did our parents and grandparents, that life is worthwhile. It should inspire us with confidence and with faith in ourselves and each other. It provides us with an opportunity to think that we are human beings and not machines. It bids us to care for our emotions as much as we care for our physical and material well-being. The Shabbat reminds us that we need roses as well as bread, that we treasure most our families, friends and our life of the mind.

**All:** The Shabbat helps bring us closer to one another in love;

With laughter and soft words,

With shared concerns and mutual respect.

Together we help each other make our homes a sanctuary

With family bonds that are strong and enduring,

Based on truth and trust.

The Shabbat helps us care for each other and our world  
And live for peace and for justice everywhere.

May the joy of Shabbat gladden our hearts,  
And may its peace quiet our spirits.

### CANDLE-LIGHTING

**Reader 2:** As the sun descends, and the day gives way to the night, the candles stand before us waiting to be lit. May their flames kindle warmth within our hearts, wisdom in our minds, passion in our souls.

### WINE:

**Reader 3:** We celebrate the fruit of the vine and the bounty of nature as we lift this cup and sip. For

we are part of the nature which gave us life and continues to sustain us.

**Reader 4:** May the taste of this wine upon our lips stir within us a reverence for nature and a respect

for the sand, the trees, the animals, the oceans, the earth and all that lives upon it, and the sun, moon and stars in the sky.

### CHALLAH

**Reader 5:** As the fingers of the challah intertwine, so do we join hands in our common humanity,

sharing the fruits of our labors. We cherish that which has been created through human

effort. For it is through the work of our hands, the strength of our spirit, the vision of our

minds, that our dreams become real.

**Reader 6:** We also cherish that which has been created by nature, the earth, fruits and animals that

have given their lives for the sustenance of our lives.

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**Reader 7:** May the sharing of this challah strengthen our bonds with all other living things.

## **Conclusion**

**Leader:** Reach out your hand stretch from shoulder to nail... ahh

But there is a limit to our reach

a space just beyond our grasp.

So take ONE other hand, extended, stretched and limited,

and reach from their reach, doubling the effort

pushing back the beyond.

But still there is that space not touched, that place not grasped.

So take yet another hand and reach yet another length,  
adding arms and merging efforts  
until all are held and all are holding:  
the first embracing the last,  
and the last embracing the first.  
And suddenly there is no reach and no reacher;  
United as one, we find the beyond to be within.

Together let us bring peace to. the world.  
Together let us bring peace to ourselves.  
Together let us say: Amen.

**Song:** Hiney Matov

Aveynu Shalom Alechem

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## **FAMILY SHABBAT III**

**Song:** Shabbat Shalom

**Candles:**

Blessed is the light within the world.  
Blessed is the light within each person.

Blessed is the light of the Shabbat.  
(The candles are lit.)

Light dispels the darkness around us.  
Friends dispel the darkness in us.  
We celebrate the triumph of light over darkness.  
Together, may we come to know the blessings of light, friendship, freedom, dignity and truth.

### **Bread.**

Baruch a-mal ka-pei-nu  
Blessed is the work of our hands.  
Baruch cha-zon ha-adam.  
Blessed is the vision of our minds.

Baruch le-chemha-aretz  
Blessed is the bread of the earth.  
May we enjoy the fruits of our labor, the work of our hands.  
May it remind us that there is hunger in the world.  
And let us also remember that humankind does not live by bread alone.

(The bread is shared)

### **Wine**

Baruchim ha-cha-gun ba-olan  
Blessed is the life within the world.  
Baruchim ha-cha-yim ba-adoa\am.  
Blessed is the life within us.

The Shabbat wine is a symbol of the wholeness of life.

There are times when we drink from bitter cups, yet there are also times when we savor the sweetness and happiness that exalt and celebrate life.

The wine reminds us that life is both joy and sorrow.

We accept them both, and so, all that life offers.

(the wine is shared)

### **Conclusion**

May the blessings of peace and kindness,

Graciousness, goodness, and compassion

Flow among us

And all the communities of Israel,

All the peoples of the world.

May this Shabbat bring peace and restoration.

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### **Family Shabbat IV**

November, 1999

(adapted from the *Book of Blessing*, Marcia Falk, 1996)

#### **Candles**

May our hearts be lifted,  
Our spirits refreshed  
As we light the Sabbath candles.

#### **Wine**

Let us bless the source of life  
That ripens fruit on the vine  
As we hallow the seventh day-  
The Sabbath day

#### **Bread:**

Let us bless the source of life  
That brings forth bread from the earth.  
Let us acknowledge the source of life,  
Source of all nourishment.  
May we protect the bountiful earth  
That it may continue to sustain us.  
And let us seek sustenance  
For all who dwell in the world.

May the blessings of peace and kindness,  
Graciousness, goodness, and compassion  
Flow among us

And all the communities of Israel,  
All the peoples of the world.

May this Shabbat bring peace and restoration.