



## Keeping Sabbath

### About this Faith Practice

Sabbath is intentional time taken by individuals and faith communities to integrate the Divine with humanity and creation. Jesus models how to keep Sabbath both inwardly (through prayer, solitude, silence, and meditation) and outwardly (through communal ritual and acts of justice). Our inward movement toward a life centered in the Spirit indicates the reign of God within us. Jesus embodies the depth of sabbath-keeping experiences through outward action to followers and to those he encounters who have specific needs. Our practice of Sabbath is informed by God resting on the seventh day after laboring for six days to create the world, establishing a day of Sabbath. Building on this biblical tradition, some faith communities dedicate a specific day of the week to rest, worship, and work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

### Let's Begin...

Now that you've downloaded the files for your faith practice and age group or setting, you can get started planning one or multiple sessions:

**1 Open the .pdf file for your age group or setting. Choose an Exploration, the approach you think will help your group to best experience the faith practice. Choose any one of the following Explorations to use for one session:**



**Discovery**



**Scripture**



**Discipleship**



**Christian Tradition**



**Context and Mission**



**Future and Vision**

**Note:** If you're planning multiple sessions, you can follow the order suggested above or feel free to use any order that fits the needs of your group. Some groups may choose to start with Scripture and then see where that leads them. Others may be more ready to act in their community and might want to start with Context and Mission.

**2 Locate the Exploration you've chosen**

### 3 Look through all 9 activities and select the ones you would like to do with your group.

- If you're planning a 30–45 minute session, choose 3 activities.
- It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving.
- For 45 minutes to 1 hour, choose 4 or 5 activities.
- For a 1½ to 2-hour session, you can use all 9 activities.

**Tip:** Look for this symbol  to find activities designed for Easy Preparation (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church).

### 4 Make copies of any handouts () related to your activities. Order posters (), if using art (see "Ordering Posters," below).

## Use of Art, Music, and Scripture in Faith Practices

Faith Practices activities include many opportunities to grow in faith through the use of scripture, music, and art.

### Ordering Posters

If you choose activities that use an art image, you or your church will need to purchase posters of the art by clicking on the link provided in the activity. If you wish to use art, you will need to plan ahead, since it takes 1 to 2 weeks for the posters to arrive after you place your order.

### Art

Six posters are used with the faith practice Giving and Receiving Hospitality and may be ordered by clicking on the links provided.

#### From Imaging the Word Poster Sets:

"Out of Work" by Käthe Kollwitz (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"The Public Fountain" by Manuel Alvarez Bravo (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"Guatemala: Procession" by Betty LaDuke (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

#### From AllPosters.com:

"The Dance of Youth" by Pablo Picasso (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7>)

"Going to Church" by William H. Johnson (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters8>)

"Midday Rest" (after Millet), c.1890 by Vincent van Gogh (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters9>)

### Music

Three music selections are used with Giving and Receiving Hospitality. We have selected music which is easily found in many hymnals. A web link is provided to give more information about each music selection.

Let Me Enter God's Own Dwelling, Tune: Unser Herrscher (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong7>)

I Woke Up This Morning, Tune: Woke Up This Morning (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong8>)

I've Got Peace Like a River, Tune: Peace Like A River (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong9>)

### Scripture

Twelve Bible passages are used with Giving and Receiving Hospitality, two with each Exploration.

Discovery	Genesis 2:2–4	Luke 12:22–31
Scripture	Mark 2:23–3:6	Exodus 20:1–17
Discipleship	Luke 6:1–11	Deuteronomy 6:1–9
Christian Tradition	Mark 6:30–34, 53–56	Isaiah 58:9b–14
Context and Mission	Jeremiah 17:19–27	1 Corinthians 11:17–26
Future and Vision	Psalms 119:105–112, 129–136	Matthew 27:51–66 (Matthew 26:14–27:66)

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# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Discovery

### About this Setting

Sabbath is a gift that allows us to become relaxed, refreshed, and renewed. This setting provides an activity to prepare the human body, mind, and soul to experience the integration of spiritual and physical expressions of praising God. Using breathing techniques, worshipers of all ages are invited to center themselves. Each of us can access the Holy Spirit by becoming aware of our surroundings and our own presence among others. Prayer, music, and personal touch connect the members of the congregation in corporate worship.

While most of the activities in this Exploration can stand alone as part of a service of worship, some activities are built on or relate to one another.

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### BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Genesis 2:2-4**

**Luke 12:22-31**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities

### 1 Centering for Worship

Part of liturgy: Gathering

#### Leader preparation:

Consider the importance of posture: feet placed on floor, back against the pew, hands open and lying in the lap, and face with air brushing past it.

#### Supplies:

- Bible

Open a service of worship by inviting the participants to center themselves with a breathing exercise. Lead them in this exercise: Be aware of your surroundings. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Slowly release your breath. Be aware of your own body: your hands, your feet, your back, your face, your posture. Breathe in deeply. Hold that breath. Slowly release your breath.

Invite the congregation, while they are still focused on their breathing, to listen to the reading of Genesis 2:2-3. As they breathe in read, "On the seventh day God finished the work God had done," and as they breathe out read, "and God rested on the seventh day from all the work God had done." Breathe in, "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it"; breathe out, "because on it God rested from all the work God had done in creation." Repeat this reading several times. Then invite the participants to rest from the work they have done this week and to breathe in the Spirit of God. Breathe in the Holy Spirit and be refreshed with new life. God is present in this place. Let us worship God.

You might suggest that this breathing exercise can be used to prepare to keep Sabbath at other times as well.



### 2 Opening Prayer

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

#### Leader preparation:

Center yourself and become familiar with the prayer. Make copies of the litany to distribute, or make plans to project the litany during worship. If you print this litany in your order of service, be certain to include the appropriate copyright information.

#### Supplies:

- copies of the "Litany of Gathering," Attachment: Activity 2

Either print the litany in your order of service, or, if you use projected images, project the litany so that all in the congregation can participate in this gathering prayer.

### 3 Hymn of Praise

Part of liturgy: Hymn.

#### Leader preparation:

Singing together is an activity where all are invited. Selecting songs that express interrelatedness, our common purpose in encountering the Holy Spirit, one-ness in Christ, and the importance of finding community together is important to worship planning.



Rehearse the hymn “Let Me Enter God’s Own Dwelling” (tune: UNSER NERRSCHER) So that you are familiar with the lyrics and the tune. If you have a choir, ask them to be prepared to lead the congregation in the singing of this hymn. You can hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong7>. If you plan to project the words to the hymn, be certain that you comply with all copyright regulations.

### **Supplies:**

- copies of hymn
- computer and projector (optional)

As you introduce this hymn, remind the congregation that God dwells within each person as well as in the gathered community of faith. “God’s own dwelling” is not exclusive to the church on Sunday morning. The words of this hymn could be a personal morning prayer as well as a congregation hymn. As you contemplate keeping Sabbath, this hymn reminds us of God’s reign within our lives.

Invite the congregation to sing the hymn with joy and cheerfulness. Mention that the doctrine of the Trinity reminds us that we know of God in different ways — in creation, in Jesus, in the ongoing work of God’s Spirit. This hymn of praise also acknowledges the limits of our understanding of God.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities

### **④ Passing the Peace**

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

#### **Leader preparation:**

Be aware of visitors in the service of worship who may be uncomfortable with this ritual. In passing the peace we not only greet one another, we offer a blessing of Christ’s peace to one another. Passing the peace is a very traditional part of Christian worship. It is a way to both give and receive a blessing.

As we gather to keep Sabbath together, it is important that we are reconciled with one another. If anyone is not comfortable passing the peace to someone else, perhaps that is a sign that they need to work together to restore the relationship in order to celebrate the Sabbath together.

#### **Supplies:** None

Invite the congregation to stand and greet one another. This act reminds us that we gather not alone, but in community. We gather to experience the peace God gives and to be prepared to share that peace with the world.

In some congregations people stay where they are and greet those within arm’s distance. In other congregations people move about the worship space taking time to greet everyone. Provide instructions for how your congregation follows this ritual greeting so that visitors will be welcomed in a way comfortable for them.

**Leader:** The peace of Christ be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Leader:** Stand, move about, and greet one another in the name of our risen Christ.



### 5 Prayer of Commitment

Part of liturgy: Responsive prayer.

#### Leader preparation:

Become familiar with the prayer. Consider inviting several people to take the part of “Leader” so that there is more than one voice offering this prayer. These voices could be located at the front of the sanctuary or in various places around the worship space. Make copies of the prayer, or print the prayer in the order of service with the appropriate copyright information. If you use projected images in your service of worship, prepare a slide of the prayer.

#### Supplies:

- “Prayer of Commitment,” Attachment: Activity 5

Either print the litany in your order of service, or, if you use projected images, project the litany so that all in the congregation can participate in this prayer of commitment.



### 6 Scripture Reflection

Part of liturgy: Reflection.

#### Leader preparation:

God wants us to learn to live in total trust, without anxiety or stress, resting in God’s total abundance and provision. When we come to worship as a community of faith, we come to be renewed in God’s presence and refreshed through the Holy Spirit among us.

Visual images often help us discover inner feelings. Artwork used in worship can stand alongside scripture and evoke broader understandings. This worship experience uses the poster “Going to Church” by William H. Johnson in relation to Luke 12:22–31, “do not worry.” Obtain a copy of the poster for this activity.

#### Supplies:

- Bible
- poster, “Going to Church” by William H. Johnson, <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters8>

Read Luke 12:22–31. Place the poster on an easel in a prominent place in the worship space or project an image of the poster. Try to have everyone have a good look at it. Consider asking the following questions. People could be asked either to answer them aloud, or just ponder their thoughts.

- If you were in this painting, which person would you be?
- What, do you think, might have taken place before the people began their trip to church? What is your household like as people prepare to celebrate the Sabbath at church?
- What would it take for us to go to church without worry? How might attitudes need to change? How would we need to interact with others to achieve this feeling of rest without worry?



### Sending & Serving Activities

#### 7 Benediction

Part of liturgy: Sending.

**Leader preparation:**

Reflect on the worship experience.

**Supplies:** None

Use this prayer, or one of your own, as a sending forth: *Creator God, you bless us with joy and with rest. Keep us carefree and unhurried during the coming week. Help us become aware of your abundance and creativity in our play and in our work. Remind us that you are God and that your love fills and enables us to live in confidence and peace. We praise you and want to do your work without worry. Touch and refresh our minds, bodies, and spirits as we go our way. Amen.*

#### 8 “Profetiza, Pueblo Mio” (You Shall Prophecy, All My People)

Part of liturgy: Closing hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse “Profetiza, Pueblo Mio” (You Shall Prophecy, All My People) (Tune: Prophecy), <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal> (tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>), with musicians and the congregation.

**Supplies:**

- copies of hymn, <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>

Use the song to discuss the Spanish language as one of the many languages spoken in the United States. How important is translation in a multilingual society? How does providing liturgy, including music, in other languages enhance worship and help to build community? How does our recognition of many languages keep us aware of all of God’s people in many places, the entire realm of God? Is music a key source to improve communications among neighbors and congregants? Sing with gusto!

#### 9 Repast

Part of liturgy: Congregational celebration.

**Leader preparation:**

Organize an inclusive hospitality committee of racial and ethnic constituents. Invite the committee to plan a celebration multicultural meal.

**Supplies:**

- ethnic foods and beverage
- napkins, cups, plates, flatware

Plan for fellowship activities as part of a multicultural congregational meal. One option is to invite everyone to bring a favorite dish that represents their ethnic origin. Or, assign countries to different groups and ask them to prepare a dish common to that country.

### Reflect

These activities are designed to help us experience more deeply corporate worship as a Sabbath, a time of both rest and refreshment. In what ways have these activities helped you discover a deeper sense of Sabbath and worship?

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## Litany of Gathering

*Leader:* Great Creator, thank you for this beautiful day given so freely.

***People:* How can we not love you?**

*Leader:* We love you with all our hearts, minds, and souls.

***People:* We love you with our very lives.**

*Leader:* Yet, you love us even more than that. You made us in your image and breathed new life into our bodies.

***People:* You love us more than we can fully express or describe.**

*Leader:* Thank you for your mercy. You are God alone. There is no other god.

***People:* We come with our minds turned to you.**

*Leader:* We are here to worship and praise you.

***People:* We honor you by loving all your people.**

*Leader:* Give us courage to deepen our faith.

***People:* Empower us to bring light to the world and make peace in our homes and in our communities, across this nation, and around the world.**

*Leader:* Give us vision and fill us with compassion.

***All:* O Holy One, thank you for all you do. Hallelujah. Shalom. Salaam. Right On! Amen.**



Attachment: Activity 5

## Prayer of Commitment

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you created us in your likeness. We are all part of your holy family.

***People:* We commit ourselves to welcome the stranger in our midst, not only because we were once strangers, but because we are kin.**

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you invite us to offer hospitality because that is where we can find you, where we can find ourselves entertaining angels.

***People:* We commit ourselves to opening our hearts to this reality and basing our social justice work on this principle of divine equality.**

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you ask us to read the landscape of our fears, the terrain of other people's sorrow, and to turn our borders into bridges of compassion.

***People:* We commit ourselves not to live in fear and to work toward the creation of humane borders that acknowledge that no human beings are illegal for seeking the right to work and feed their family.**

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you ask us to stand up to the powers and principalities that destroy human dignity.

***People:* We commit ourselves to creating fair and just policies and systems that recognize all persons' full humanity and eliminate barriers to their full participation in our society.**

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you ask us to create just laws for all your people.

***People:* We commit ourselves to voting "No" to punitive legislation that deprives others of due process or civil rights, and voting "Yes" to laws that protect and ensure these rights.**

*Leader:* Caring, Just One, you created this world and all that is in it, and it is good.

***People:* We commit ourselves to preserving the world through changing our lifestyles that are based on limitless consumption and thus limitless exploitation of others.**

*Leader:* The Caring and Just One has prepared us to be living sanctuaries for love and justice.

***All:* May we cross all the boundaries that separate us from our own true self and from others. May we know the joy and the suffering of interconnectedness. May we have the wisdom and courage to say "No" to unjust laws that deprive people of their dignity and rights. May our solidarity with others be a transforming power in the world. May we work together to restore and rebuild our beloved communities.**

(Written by the Rev. Loren McGrail and used with permission.)

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Scripture

### About this Setting

Children and teenagers are encouraged to participate in all aspects of this setting. Scripture becomes drama along with the use of music and dance to create a vibrant worship experience. Adults also participate to incorporate all ages in the celebration.

Occasionally, this setting includes activities that are built on or relate to one another, but most of the activities can stand alone as part of a service of worship.

### About this Exploration

Scripture defines Sabbath in several ways. Our journey will help us explore how Sabbath was given as commandment and blessing, and how Jesus expanded Sabbath to be more inclusive. Jesus reinforced the concept that the Sabbath was about God but for people (Mark 2:23–3:6). Sabbath is a time of blessing, a time to rest from daily work and restore energy and “godness.” Sabbath is not a time to worry about rules, but to work for God’s reign, letting God take care of the rest. What helps us focus on Sabbath? Consider how we can recharge, refresh, and renew our spirits, minds, and bodies.



## BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Exodus 20:1-17**

**Mark 2:23-3:6**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities

### ① Processional

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

#### Leader preparation:

Organize the children to enter the sanctuary in a pageantry of colors. Work with musicians to coordinate music with the children's entry. Have the children place the Bible on altar, place a globe in front of the altar, and arrange streams of colors on and around the altar. If more people are needed for the processional, recruit youth, young adults, and adults.

#### Supplies:

- inflatable 36" globe
- colorful, wide ribbons
- poles (36"-48")
- large Bible

The children will process as the congregation sings "I Want to Be Ready" (Tune: I Want to Be Ready). Hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/221syp3>. Have the children process into the sanctuary carrying a large, inflatable globe, waving streams of colored ribbons, and holding the Bible high with honor and respect. Arrange the items appropriately on and around altar. This is a pageantry of celebration and worship. Encourage the participants to sing cheerfully with big smiles and march with dancing feet.

### ② Greeting and Welcoming

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

#### Leader preparation:

Center yourself in preparation for worship. Survey the congregation for visitors or persons who have been absent for a long time.

#### Supplies: None

Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Welcome, my sisters and brothers, to this house of God, where everybody is accepted and no one is rejected. Here you are invited to worship God just as you are. We are so glad you are with us today. We know you have many options in terms of where you worship. It is our special joy that you have chosen to be with us. Come to this place to reflect on God's Word, rest from a week of labor, and be refreshed by the renewing of your bodies and souls. If you are comfortably able, please stand and join in singing our opening hymn.



### ③ Opening Prayer

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

#### Leader preparation:

Center yourself for worship. Familiarize yourself with litany.

#### Supplies:

- copies of the gathering litany, Attachment: Activity 3

Invite the congregation to participate in the gathering litany.



## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### 4 Hebrew Sacred Text

Part of liturgy: Scripture reading.

**Leader preparation:**

Secure three readers, dancers, musicians.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- instrumental music
- dancers
- copies of scripture, Attachment: Activity 4

Read the text in several parts while the dancers perform liturgical movement to Exodus 20:1–11. As each verse is read, the dancers' choreography will reflect the text. The music is inspired by the readings. The music begins. The readers follow. The dancers join.



### 5 Christian Sacred Text

Part of liturgy: Scripture reading.

**Leader preparation:**

Design and create props; coordinate the cast; study the scripture; assign roles; and rehearse the dramatization.

**Supplies:**

- improvised biblical clothing, including pullover caftans, scarves, head wraps, linen cloth, staffs or walking canes
- stalks of wheat
- copies of the dramatization of Mark 2:23–3:6 (NRSV), Attachment: Activity 5

Direct a cast of up to 24 persons in a dramatization of Mark 2:23–3:6.

### 6 Healing the Children of God

Part of liturgy: Photo images.

**Leader preparation:**

Take a digital camera as you explore the area surrounding your church looking for people and places in need. Ask permission to photograph individuals. Talk with people to hear their names and stories. In your photography focus on faces, signs that indicate specific services, such as social services, Salvation Army, and so forth. Take pictures of people's hands, people sleeping on sidewalks, persons working with people in need, including kitchen workers at a food pantry or soup kitchen, counselors, in-take workers, social workers.

**Supplies:**

- digital camera
- computer and projector
- background music (optional)

Plan to project your presentation in the sanctuary. Use your original photographs from the surrounding communities (as close to your church as possible) to show people living with social and economic challenges, and the nearby available



agencies to assist them. Provide subtitles of names and brief descriptions when appropriate. Use the following captions throughout the presentation.

- a. "The Sabbath was made for humankind."
- b. "Humankind was not made for the Sabbath."
- c. "So the Human One [Son of Man] is sovereign even of the Sabbath."
- d. "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath?"
- e. "Is it lawful to save life or to kill?"

## Discerning & Deciding Activities

### 7 Sabbath Service

Part of liturgy: Collection of goods and wares.

#### Leader preparation:

Identify an area of specific need to feed the hungry within the congregation or the surrounding community. Collect shoes or clothing for the needy; gather toys for children and youth; provide shelter for the homeless. Several weeks in advance of this activity, announce to the congregation the goals and objectives to meet a specific need. Place announcements in your Sunday bulletin and church newsletter, inviting people to participate by bringing specific items to church for distribution. Contact local social services agency to partner in distributing items to appropriate persons.

Invite a representative of the organization to which you are making the donation to be present in the service of worship when the collection is dedicated.

#### Supplies:

- handmade signs and posters
- poster board
- markers
- tape
- collection receptacles (boxes, barrels, baskets)

During a service of worship, the Leader or Liturgist might say: "For the past [specific time: month, weeks, days, etc.], we have been working with [name of organization] to collect items to assist people and families in need. Through your generous efforts, today we bring forward all the [name the items collected] we have collected. Joining us today is [name and title of person representing the partner agency]. We have worked in partnership to make it possible for us to give of ourselves to others. As we sing a hymn of dedication, we invite you to bring your gifts as we collect these items for the people of God."

After the hymn, invite a youth to offer this or a similar prayer: *Let us pray. Thank you, God, for these gifts that fill these (boxes/baskets) prepared for service to your people. Thank you for each one who has given generously and cheerfully. Bless these gifts that they will be used to encourage and support our sisters and brothers, adults and children. Help us to love one another as you love us. Amen.*



### 8 Benediction

Part of liturgy: Closing.

**Leader preparation:**

Designate a person to offer the benediction.

**Supplies:** None

Use this or a similar benediction: *Sisters and brothers, we gathered in this place to worship God. We sang hymns of praise to God's glory. We offered prayers for the healing of God's people. The Word of God has been spoken. Now it is time for our service to begin. Go into God's world as a source of blessing to those you meet. Proclaim the good news of God's love, the gift of Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Go boldly, unafraid, unashamed, and unapologetic in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

### 9 Recessional

Part of liturgy: Closing song.

**Leader preparation:**

Coordinate and choreograph the participants who will gather the globe, Bible, and banners from the altar (see Activity 1) and carry them to the rear of the sanctuary. Have the musicians rehearse the closing song, "Sing Them Over Again to Me" (Tune: Words of Life). Hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/ysbdt6>.

**Supplies:**

- inflatable 36" globe
- colorful wide ribbons
- poles (36"–48")
- large Bible

Invite all the leaders of the service to recess while the congregation sings "Sing Them Over Again to Me." Those who carried in the globe, Bible, and streamers for the processional can carry those items in the recessional.

## Reflect

These activities are designed to help us understand God's commands as an invitation to see life in a new way, to affirm and preserve life, and to be drawn to the meeting of human need. In what ways have these activities led you to a deeper understanding of, and a fuller living by, the grace in God's commandments?



## Litany of Gathering

*Liturgist:* God is in this holy place. Let the people praise God's name.

**People: We praise you, O God.**

*Liturgist:* God's blessings are infinite beyond our measure.

**People: We give you thanks, O God.**

*Liturgist:* We have not always done what God requires of us.

**People: Have mercy on us, O God.**

*Liturgist:* God's mercy endures forever.

**People: Have mercy on us, O God.**

*Liturgist:* God awakens us to see the magnificence of God's glory.

**People: We praise you, O God.**

*Liturgist:* Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet.

**People: We praise you, O God.**

*Liturgist:* Righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

**People: Show us your way, O God.**

*Liturgist:* Faithfulness will spring up from the ground.

**People: Teach us how to live, O God.**

*Liturgist:* Righteousness will look down from the sky.

**People: Rain your Holy Spirit on us, O God.**

**All: We are your people and you are our God. Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.**





### Attachment: Activity 4

**Reader One:** In Exodus 20, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. These laws and principals are for us to follow today. Then God spoke all these words:

**Reader Two:** I am the Sovereign your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

*(Dancers lift up your hands and interpret the passage)*

**Reader Two:** You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

*(Dancers spread your arms and interpret the passage)*

**Reader Two:** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

*(Dancers sway, fall down and interpret the passage)*

**Reader Two:** You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Sovereign your God, for God will not acquit anyone who misuses God's name.

*(Dancers jump across the floor and interpret the passage)*

**Reader One:** Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Sovereign your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore God blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

*(Dancers rise in praise and interpret the passage)*

**Reader Two:** This is the Word of God for the people of God.



### Attachment: Activity 5

## Dramatization of Mark 2:23–3:6 (NRSV)

Cast: Narrator, Jesus, Pharisee, man with withered hand, disciples, crowd

*Narrator stands to the side of stage. Jesus and his disciples walk in the wheat fields. The disciples grab wheat and eat. A Pharisee and a crowd stand on the opposite side of the stage from the Narrator and closely watch Jesus.*

**Narrator:** One Sabbath Jesus was walking with his disciples through the grain fields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. A Pharisee said to him:

**Pharisee:** Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

**Jesus:** *(Turns toward the Pharisee and the crowd)* Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.

**Narrator:** The Pharisee and those around Jesus were amazed by his response. Then Jesus said to them:

**Jesus:** The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Human One is sovereign even of the Sabbath.

*(Jesus and his disciples walk from the grain fields and move toward the altar where a man with a disabled hand is praying.)*

**Narrator:** Jesus entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. The religious authorities watched Jesus to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And Jesus said to the man who had the withered hand:

**Jesus:** *(Stands by man and pulls him up)* Come forward. *(Jesus turns to the Pharisee and the crowd)* Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill?

*(The Pharisee and the crowd silently glare at Jesus)*

**Narrator:** But the authorities were silent. Jesus looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man:

**Jesus:** *(Pulls the man's hand)* Stretch out your hand.

**Narrator:** The man stretched out his hand and it was restored. *(The Pharisee and the crowd run off stage with their hands in the air protesting)* The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the political leaders against Jesus and plotted how to destroy him.

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Discipleship

### About this Setting

This setting moves the congregation from the sanctuary to the streets of your community. Persons of all ages and abilities can participate in this practice of faith. It offers an opportunity to go into the community and invite others to come into the sanctuary. This setting combines historic justice activities with the role of the church in society.

Sometimes this setting includes activities that are built on or relate to one another, but most of the activities can stand alone as part of a service of worship.

### About this Exploration

Practicing the Sabbath leads us to a fuller understanding of who we are as children of God. God calls the people of Israel to keep the words on their hearts, to teach them to their children, to fix them as an emblem on their forehead. Jesus reminds the Pharisees that the law is there to free people from oppression, not further to oppress an already downtrodden people. As we explore what it means to keep the Sabbath, we will experience that the Sabbath becomes a way of being, as well as a way of doing.



BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:  
**Deuteronomy 6:1-9**  
**Luke 6:1-11**

### Exploring & Engaging Activities

#### ① Handbills/Door Hangers for God

Part of liturgy: Gathering. Some congregations might choose to do this at the close of the service of worship.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9. Organize teams that include people of all ages (children, youth, and adults). Make or provide maps of streets surrounding your church. Check local ordinances and codes regarding solicitation so that you do not violate any restrictions. Make and print handbills for distribution that say “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. A word of hope for our children to remember. From your neighbors and friends at [name of your church, address, and time of worship].” Several weeks in advance of this activity, place an announcement in bulletins, newsletters, on your Web site, and all media available to your congregation inviting people to assist in a canvas of the community. Make announcements during worship inviting people to participate. Discern the Spirit of God as you reflect.

**Supplies:**

- handbills or door hangers
- copies of a street map of the neighborhood

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9 to the congregation. Read aloud one of the handbills: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. A word of hope for our children to remember. From your neighbors and friends at [name of your church, address, and time of worship].” Invite teams of adults, youth, and children to come forward to receive handbills/door hangers and a map of the community around the church. Make sure each team has a map indicating the blocks they are to cover.

#### ② Signposts for God

Part of liturgy: Word and picture.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9. At least a week in advance, ask each group or organization in the congregation—boards, choirs, committees, youth, men’s and women’s groups—to prepare a poster that tells in pictures or words how they show love for God. Ask each group to be prepared to speak for one minute during worship about what is on its poster. This may help the group to examine the importance of its ministry.

**Supplies:**

- poster boards

After a reading of Deuteronomy 6:1-9, invite a representative from each group in the congregation to speak for one minute about the work of the group.



#### ③ Love God, Love One Another

Part of liturgy: Invocation.

**Leader preparation:**

Center yourself. Become familiar with the prayer.

**Supplies:**

- copies of prayer, Attachment: Activity 3



Make copies of the invocation. Print this invocation in your order of service bulletin, or project it on a screen during the service.

### Discerning & Deciding Activities

#### ④ “Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

Part of liturgy: Liturgical dance.

**Leader preparation:**

Select dancers to choreograph an interpretation of the hymn “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” (Tune: Sweet, Sweet, Spirit). Rehearse with the choir and/or instrumentalists along with dancers. You can hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/291xgcm>.

**Supplies:**

- appropriate dance wear such as leotards, white flowing skirts, fluffed white pants, white tops

Invite dancers to interpret the hymn liturgically as the congregation sings.

#### ⑤ Follow the Leader

Part of liturgy: Meditation.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Luke 6:1–11. Contact a local soup kitchen, food pantry, or homeless shelter to make an appointment to bring a group from your congregation to work serving a meal or assist in the agency’s work. Invite the participants to examine Luke 6:1–11 to find connections between what they observe at the local social service agency and Jesus’ ministry. Immediately following the work experience, invite the members of the group to write about their observations and reflections making a connection between the scripture and their experiences. Invite those who are willing to share their reflections in worship.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- notebooks and pens

Read Luke 6:1–11. Plan to include a time in a service of worship for those who participated in the activity to offer their reflections on their experience of service.

#### ⑥ Breaking the Law

Part of liturgy: Reflection.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Luke 6:1–11. Prepare a meditation on how faith has sometimes led people to break civil laws.

**Supplies:**

- Bible

In your meditation mention some biblical examples of breaking the law or challenging custom, such as the Hebrew slaves leaving Egypt, David eating the holy bread (1 Samuel 21), Jesus healing on the Sabbath (Luke 6) and speaking with a Samaritan woman (John 4). Offer some examples from more recent history, such as the Underground Railroad, Rosa Parks sitting on the front of the bus,



people sheltering Jews during the Nazi period, sanctuary for political refugees from Central America. Mention current laws or customs that need to change: treatment of homosexuals, treatment of immigrants, continuing racism. Focus on matters that especially touch your community.

### Sending & Serving Activities

#### 7 Go and Do Likewise

Part of liturgy: Benediction.

**Leader preparation:**

Reflect on the worship experience.

**Supplies:** None

Use this or a similar closing prayer: *We have come to the end of our worship. Now it is time for our service to begin. As the people of God, go into God's world and proclaim the good news of God's love. Do not be afraid. Do not be ashamed. Do not be apologetic about our humanity and faithfulness; in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

#### 8 "Guide My Feet"

Part of liturgy: Closing hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse the hymn "Guide My Feet" (Tune: Guide My Feet). You can hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/2bzwbnh>. Be prepared to speak about the hymn's historical significance. This song of encouragement was sung during the American Civil Rights movement as people "prayed with their feet" and marched past angry mobs. Explain the importance of music to motivate social justice movements, including the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

**Supplies:**

- copies of "Guide My Feet" (Tune: Guide My Feet)

Introduce the song "Guide My Feet," and speak of its historical significance. Then sing. Invite the congregation to walk around the worship space as they sing.

#### 9 Teach the Children

Part of liturgy: Recessional.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- poster boards

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9 with an emphasis on teaching the children. If you used Activity 2, invite the groups or representatives of the groups that spoke to hold their posters above their heads or in front of them as they recess from the sanctuary as a celebration of the life of the congregation and its love for God.

### Reflect

These activities have been designed to take you from your sanctuaries and experiences of worship to the communities in which you live, especially to people in need. In what ways have these activities led you, as individuals and as a congregation, to a greater concern for the communities in which your congregation finds itself?

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## Invocation

*Leader:* O Holy God, your love and mercy endure forever.

***People:* Thank you for your love and mercy.**

*Leader:* Creator God, your magnificent hands have shaped us in your image.

***People:* We are your people, and you are our God.**

*Leader:* Still-speaking God, your words instruct our path.

***People:* You speak to us and we are listening.**

*Leader:* Great Spirit, our love for you grows daily.

***People:* We love you with all our heart, soul, and mind.**

*Leader:* Caring God, you have called us to love one another.

***People:* We teach our children to follow your commandments.**

*Leader:* Merciful God, we have not always kept your commandments.

***People:* Christ, have mercy.**

*Leader:* Loving God, bring us closer to you.

***People:* Christ, have mercy.**

*Leader:* O Holy God, you know us better than we know ourselves.

***People:* You anticipate our needs.**

*Leader:* Merciful God, teach us to be peacemakers and to bring healing to your world.

***People:* Yes, God, we can do better. Thank you for your love and mercy.**

***All:* Amen.**

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Christian Tradition

### About this Setting

This setting encourages all ages to participate in acts of justice as a form of worship. It focuses on the other rather than the self. Worship is practiced outwardly and exposes the congregation to the vulnerabilities and fragilities of human experiences. God is active in our daily lives and connects us to the lives of others. Sabbath is not necessarily a time to escape reality, but to embrace the fullness of life.

Sometimes this setting includes activities that are built on or relate to one another, but most of the activities can stand alone as part of a service of worship.

### About this Exploration

Throughout the history of the church the practice of Sabbath has run from narrow to broad. Certain faith traditions establish restrictions limiting everything from household tasks to social activities on a Sabbath day. Other traditions focus on the intent of the practice: worship, study, and rest. All these traditions tend to highlight rest and re-creation. Current practices have broadened Sabbath to embrace the practice of justice and devotion in and around the moments of our daily life. These various interpretations provide the foundation for our practices of Sabbath today.





BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Isaiah 58:9b-14**  
**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities

### ① What Time Is It?

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Isaiah 58. Use a video camera to capture sports and entertainment activities that are conducted on Sundays. Video people who are busy working and traveling. Record signs, symbols, and crowds of people on sidewalks and cars in traffic jams. Explore your city for events and activities that cram our lives with busy behavior and idol worship. Use subtitles and captions to identify how we spend our time, such as: Isaiah 58:13, "Sabbath is a gift that breaks our habits and gives us time to rest, reflect, and revere the Creator," "What time is it?" "It's Sabbath time!" "It's time to stop and worship God."

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- video camera
- computer or DVD player
- projector (if applicable, use audio)

Play the video at the beginning of the service of worship as a Call to Worship.



### ② Sabbath Litany

Part of liturgy: Call to worship.

**Leader preparation:**

Read and become familiar with the litany.

**Supplies:**

- copies of litany, Attachment: Activity 2

Invite the congregation to participate in the litany.

### ③ "Este es el dia" (This Is the Day)

Part of liturgy: Opening hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse the song with the choir and musicians.

**Supplies:**

- copies of "Este es el dia" (This Is the Day) (Tune: Este es el dia), or computer and projector <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>

After practicing the song in both Spanish and English, lead the congregation in singing the song as the opening hymn of praise.



## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### 4 Doing Justice Is Worship

Part of liturgy: Reflection.

#### Leader preparation:

Read the play “Doing Justice Is Worship.” Cast actors and assign roles. Depending on the size of your congregation, you may need to choose just some of the roles. Make props to indicate street and buildings.

#### Supplies:

- copies of “Doing Justice Is Worship,” Attachment: Activity 4
- poster boards
- markers
- various worn and tattered clothing
- police uniform
- old military jacket
- lunch bags with fruit and food
- clerical collar
- suit for man
- baby-sized doll
- set design (optional)

Invite the cast to come forward and get in position. Then begin the dramatization.



### 5 Let Justice Sing

Part of liturgy: Scripture reading with special music.

#### Leader preparation:

Read Isaiah 58:9b–14. Choose two readers. Coordinate jazz musicians to improvise musical interplay with the readers. Set a rehearsal time for all who will be involved to coordinate this part of the service of worship. The musicians will begin with an improvisation on the biblical theme. They will design a musical bed over which readers will recite the scriptures. The readers and musicians will create interplay between text and interlude.

#### Supplies:

- copies of “Let Justice Sing,” Attachment: Activity 5
- jazz instrumentalists

Read Isaiah 58:9b–14 accompanied by improvisational jazz.



### 6 Jesus’ Compassion for the Sick and Hungry

Part of liturgy: Scripture reading.

#### Leader preparation:

Read Mark 6:30–34, 53–56. The week before, arrange for church school groups of various ages to draw their impressions of Jesus teaching along the shore, Jesus feeding the hungry, Jesus healing the sick, and Jesus in the boat with his disciples. Use a digital camera to capture each drawing, and download the photos onto a computer for projection. Select two readers; rehearse the readings with art work.



### Supplies:

- copies of the reading, Attachment: Activity 6
- Bible
- art materials: poster boards, color markers or water color paints
- digital camera
- computer and projector

Using a computer, project the drawings created by members of church school groups to accompany the reading.

## Sending & Serving Activities

### ⑦ Justice Is Worship

Part of liturgy: Offering.

#### Leader preparation:

Reflect on Isaiah 58:9b–14, the drama “Doing Justice Is Worship” (Activity 4), and art images used in worship. Prepare a list of concrete opportunities already in place for worshippers to engage in justice activities, especially in relation to the issues raised by the drama. Make copies of the list as a bulletin insert, with space for one’s name and for additional activities.

#### Supplies:

- list of justice activities

Present the list of opportunities to the congregation. Ask them to identify all areas in which they are now serving. If they are not now serving in any of these areas, invite them to consider one of these justice activities. Ask if there is any area they feel called to work in that is not on the list, and invite them to add this to the list. Invite the worshippers to place these lists in the offering plate as part of their gift.

### ⑧ “There Was Jesus by the Water”

Part of liturgy: Closing hymn.

#### Leader preparation:

Rehearse the hymn with the choir and musicians.

#### Supplies:

- copies of the hymn or computer and projector,  
<http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>; tune at  
<http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>

Introduce the hymn by saying it is based on Mark 5:21–42 and shows the pressures on Jesus to help those in the crowds. This is a reminder of the many needs of the world to which Christ calls us to help bring healing. Sing “There Was Jesus by the Water” (Tune: Talitha cumi), <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>.



### 9 Benediction

Part of liturgy: Sending.

**Leader preparation:** None

**Supplies:** None

Use this or a similar sending forth: *People are sick and hungry. They are tired and waiting. We have been called to go to them and become one with them. They are our sisters and brothers. They are our friends and neighbors. In their faces we will see Christ. Let us go and serve the people of God. When we care for those in need and do justice, we worship God. Go in the name of Christ Jesus. Go! Amen.*

### Reflect

These activities have been designed to remind us how the tradition, found both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the story of Jesus, calls us to serve and to act with justice toward those who are in special need. These traditions also promise us that God will furnish strength for the tasks God sets before us. In what ways have these activities helped you to understand the tradition in this way?



Attachment: Activity 2

## Call to Worship

*Leader:* We come into this sanctuary to worship God.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We have left behind our worries, fears, and busyness.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We stepped out of darkness, and God lights our path.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We were hungry, and God feeds us.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We were thirsty, and God waters us like a garden.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We were tired, and God is our strength.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We made mistakes, and God forgives us.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We come into this sanctuary to honor God.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

*Leader:* We take delight in serving God.

***People:* Praise be to God!**

***All:* This is the day God has made. We shall rejoice and be glad in it. Praise be to God! Amen.**



Attachment: Activity 4

## Doing Justice Is Worship

Cast:

- Man walks in and stands at center stage, holding sign: “Will work for food.”
- Woman sits on floor, holding sign: “I am hungry. Please help!”
- Child in tattered clothing walks across stage with hand out and stops.
- Man in worn-out military jacket slumps against wall.
- Woman holding baby in her arms walks halfway across stage and stops.
- Child wanders around stage lost and cries continually, “I want my mommy!”
- Man in suit walks slowly past the others, looks away, and exits.
- Pastor wearing collar walks, slows down, looks up, puts hands in pockets or clutches handbag, and moves on.
- Family of five huddles together in corner with sign “Homeless.”
- Police officer strolls in, looks carefully at each person, goes to crying child, and says, “Come with me. Your mother is looking for you.” He takes child’s hand and walks away.
- Four children carrying lunch bags walk on stage and hand each person a bag.
- Four people march into sanctuary, carrying signs: “END HUNGER NOW!” “STOP POVERTY!” “MAKE THE CHANGE!” “JUSTICE FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN!”

*(Selected cast members walk to center stage)*

**Man:** Doing justice means more than charity and handouts!

**Woman:** Doing justice means working to remove unjust laws!

**Child:** Doing justice means advocating to change unfair practices!

**Police Officer:** Doing justice means ending systems of oppression!

**Military Veteran:** Doing justice is standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters!

**Pastor:** Doing justice is worship!



Attachment: Activity 5

## Let Justice Sing

*(based on Isaiah 58:9b-14)*

**Reader One:** If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

*(Music comes forward)*

**Reader Two:** God will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

*(Music comes forward)*

**Reader One:** Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

*(Music comes forward)*

**Reader Two:** If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of God honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;

*(Music comes forward)*

**Reader One:** Then you shall take delight in God, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of God has spoken.

*(Music ends the interplay)*



## Reading based on Mark 6:30–34, 53–56 (NRSV)

**Reader One:** The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. Jesus said to them,

**Reader Two:** Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.

**Reader One:** For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many people saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.

**Reader Two:** As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

**Reader One:** When Jesus and his disciples had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.

**Reader Two:** And wherever Jesus went, into villages or cities or farms, the people laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Jesus that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.



# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Context and Mission

### About this Setting

This setting is for adults who seek to explore and expand their worship experience and their congregation's mission. It examines Communion as an expression of God's openness to all people.

Sometimes this setting includes activities that are built on or relate to one another, but most of the activities can stand alone as part of a service of worship.

### About this Exploration

Jeremiah goes to the busiest places in the city to call the people to observe Sabbath as a day intentionally set apart by God. In the same way we are called to take the gift that is Sabbath to our communities and then on to the wider world. As communities of faith we are encouraged to model Sabbath living that is joyful, inclusive, and not burdensome. The Corinthian church was challenged to rethink the way they lived out the Sabbath together in community. Maybe we will have to do the same! What do you mean—change?



BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:  
*Jeremiah 17:19–27*  
*1 Corinthians 11:17–26*

### Exploring & Engaging Activities

#### ① How Are We Living Our Mission?

Part of liturgy: Congregational conversation.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Jeremiah 17:19–27 and 1 Corinthians 11:17–26. Review your congregation's mission statement. Print it in your bulletin or project it during the service of worship. If your congregation does not have a mission statement, consider using your denomination's statement of faith.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- copies of mission statement or equipment to project it

Begin with a prayer for strength for the congregation. Explain that the purpose of the congregational conversation on mission is to gain a clear understanding of the congregation's mission and to consider how the congregation is living out its mission. Read the mission statement, phrase by phrase. For each phrase, invite the worshipers to name aspects of the life of the congregation that live out that portion of its mission. When you have gone through the whole statement, lead a prayer, affirming the work being done in living that mission. Also, raise up the areas of mission that need strengthening or have been neglected.

This reflection may lead to considering changes in the congregation's mission statement, asking questions such as: In what ways does the congregation live up to its mission statement? Is the mission statement still relevant and up to date? What is missing that needs to be added? Your goal is to have a clear understanding of the mission of your congregation.

#### ② Communion Informs our Mission

Part of liturgy: Meditation on Communion.

**Leader preparation:**

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17–33. Invite some youth to act out verses 20–22. Prepare the meditation.

**Supplies:**

- Bible

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17–26. While you are reading, invite some youth to act out silently verses 20–22: Well-dressed people eat dinner and get drunk; people in poorer clothes go hungry.

Speak briefly about the first-century Eucharist. Like the Last Supper at which it was instituted, the Eucharist was part of a group meal. The church of Jesus-followers was a revolutionary, inclusive community: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor, slaves and masters (Galatians 3:26–28). But in Corinth, the celebration of the Eucharist showed their economic divisions, not the new kind of life Christ gave them.

Ask questions about the life of your congregation. You cannot be all things to all people, but do people from all socioeconomic levels feel welcome in your congregation? In what ways do you demonstrate welcome? Whom might you be afraid of welcoming? Who might be afraid to come to your church?



Walter Brueggemann defines the kingdom of God as “public life reorganized toward neighborliness” (“The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity,” *Christian Century*, March 24, 1999). Ched Myers defines the kingdom of God as “the social condition in which there are no rich or poor” (*The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics* [Washington, DC: Church of the Savior, 2001]; Brueggemann and Myers are quoted in Michael Schut, ed., *Money and Faith* [New York: Morehouse, 2008], 29, 69). Invite responses to these quotes.



### ③ Prayer of Confession

Part of liturgy: Prayer of confession.

**Leader preparation:**

Review the prayer.

**Supplies:**

- copies of prayer, Attachment: Activity 3

Use the prayer of confession spoken in unison.

## Discerning & Deciding Activities

### ④ “Take My Gifts”

Part of liturgy: Offertory hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse the hymn “Take My Gifts” (Tune: Talavera Terrace).

**Supplies:**

- copies of the hymn, <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>; tune on <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>

Introduce this wonderful offertory hymn by saying its first line: “Take my gifts, and let me love you.” Both the text and the refreshing tune were written in 1991. Sing the hymn.

### ⑤ How Do We Serve God?

Part of liturgy: Reflection with photo images.

**Leader preparation:**

Invite a small group to work with you on creating the photo image presentation. Use a digital camera to capture religious symbols, icons, stained glass windows, and activities of people in worship or publicly serving God. As much as possible, use settings in your own community. Design posters with a single word written on each, such as “Love,” “Compassion,” “Forgiveness,” “Mercy,” “Justice,” “Mission,” “Communion.” Read Jeremiah 17:19–27 and Exodus 20:8–11. Use the images to produce a video presentation to be used during a service of worship. Display the posters in the front of or throughout sanctuary.

**Supplies:**

- digital camera
- DVD player (optional)
- computer and projector
- poster boards



- markers
- Bible

There are benefits to keeping the Sabbath day holy, and there are consequences if we do not. Reflect on the biblical references above, and share your perspectives on the text. How do we observe Sabbath? In what ways do we not? How is Moses' instruction to the Israelites relevant today? Show the video presentation developed by the small group.

### ⑥ Invitation to Discipleship

Part of liturgy: Opening the Doors of the Church.

**Leader preparation:**

In some Christian traditions, immediately following the sermon, there is an invitation to Christian discipleship. Some congregations call this invitation "Opening the Doors of the Church."

If this is not part of your congregation's tradition, plan to visit a congregation where this is a part of the worship service. Talk with the pastor or deacons about this aspect of worship. Sometimes there is a prayer for healing or to receive and bless persons who come forward as witnesses or converts. Among historic African American churches this is the most significant form of increasing membership and witnessing to persons who are seeking to find deeper meaning in their faith. The "Invitation" or "Opening the Doors of the Church" is a response to the sermon or overall worshiping experience. The leader stands before the congregation and asks directly, "Is there anyone here today who wants to follow Jesus?" A similar question may be asked, for example, "Who wants to be a disciple of Christ?" The appeal may include an invitation to persons who are experiencing challenges, health issues, job loss, or other crisis. Some people may be new in the area and looking for a "church home."

**Supplies:** None

Extend an invitation to persons to join the church as members or disciples of Christ. Be imaginative and passionate during the invitation. While the Great Commission is interpreted to send Christians into all the world, Opening the Doors of the Church invites and welcomes people to come in and become members of the local church or disciples of Christ.

## Sending & Serving Activities

### ⑦ "They Asked, 'Who's My Neighbor?'"

Part of liturgy: Closing hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse the hymn with the choir and musicians. Take pictures of people in need in your community. Create a PowerPoint presentation with words of the hymn framed with photo images.

**Supplies:**

- copies of the hymn "They Asked, 'Who's My Neighbor?'" (Tune: Neighbor), <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>;  
tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalc>
- computer and projector



This new hymn retells the parable of the Good Samaritan. As they sing, invite the congregation to ask themselves, “Who are our neighbors in need?”

### 8. Benediction

Part of liturgy: Sending prayer.

**Leader preparation:**

Reflect on the service of worship.

**Supplies:** None

Use this or a similar sending forth: *As we leave this place and go into God’s world, we take the love of Christ with us and share God’s peace that is beyond understanding. We hold this day to be sacred as a time to rest, to re-create, and to revere God. Let us keep this Sabbath day holy by honoring God as the people of God. Amen.*



### 9. Recessional

Part of liturgy: Close of worship.

**Leader preparation:**

Invite some people in the service to gather the posters used during worship (see Activity 5) and include the posters as part of the recessional.

**Supplies:**

- appropriate recessional music

Have the designated participants pick up the posters displayed around the sanctuary. Invite them to walk to the front of the sanctuary and then recess down the aisle to the rear of the sanctuary as music is played.

## Reflect

These activities have been designed to remind us of our God-given mission to be God’s voice and hands and a demonstration of God’s intent. In what ways have these activities helped you and your congregation to see more clearly your congregation’s mission and to consider how faithfully you are living that mission?



## Prayer of Confession

Almighty God,

Whose breath quickened us,

Whose tongue named us,

Whose language we are:

Grant us grace to be true words —

Not gentle when it is in anger that we live,

Not smooth when it is desperation that we know,

Not patient when time has narrowed down to now,

Not wise, not neat, not all our fences mended,

But words, broken yet honest words, and lost,

Stumbling their way toward silence.

Take us back. Recall us. Then speak us once again.

Set us in order. Mend our shattered syntax. Set all our commas straight.

Imbue in us a power that keeps company with pain,

Then march us across the pages of this beautiful, fragile, tormented, and perishable earth to sing the songs of Zion.

In the name of the Word made flesh, made dead, and made alive again. Amen.

(Barbara Sargent. © 1994 The Pilgrim Press. *The New Century Hymnal*, #837. Used by permission.)

# Keeping Sabbath



## Exploration: Future and Vision

### About this Setting

This setting is a total congregation extravaganza. It involves all ages and abilities to participate in the passion story. Although it appears complicated, actually, it is a reading of the scripture in dramatic format. It follows the text closely and allows the congregation to portray the story of Jesus' experiences of betrayal, denial, and isolation. This setting could be used in separate parts over two Sundays.

Sometimes this setting includes activities that are built on or relate to one another, but most of the activities can stand alone as a part of a service of worship.

### About this Exploration

Sabbath implies renewal based in reflection. Rooted in the past, Sabbath beckons us toward the future. It calls us to encounter God in the present moment. Sabbath is a way for us to remember that we are God's beloved children. Awareness of God's presence can guide us through all of life's experiences. As God's people, we often find ourselves facing challenging times, not unlike those faced by the psalmist and by Jesus' followers after his crucifixion. At such times, a sense of God's presence can guide our choices toward a future filled with the possibilities of Sabbath transformation.



BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:  
**Psalm 119:105–112,  
129–136**  
**Matthew 27:51–66**  
**(Matthew 26:14–27:66)**

## Exploring & Engaging Activities

### ① Trail of Sorrow

Part of liturgy: Gathering.

**Leader preparation:**

Select a cast of actors to dress in classical biblical clothing. Rehearse the song, “Were You There?” (Tune: Were You There),

<http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>;

tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>.

Gather props to represent Christ’s passion.

**Supplies:**

- large cross
- large Bible
- large stone (theatrical stone made of paper and painted)
- classical biblical clothing (homemade costumes)

As a processional into the sanctuary, use a dramatic pageantry of characters from the Passion. Have them march into the sanctuary carrying props from the story. Include in the march: Roman soldiers, disciples, the women, high priests, Pilate, Jesus. Project the lyrics of the song along with depictions of the Passion while the choir and congregation sing “Were You There?”



### ② Speaking to God

Part of liturgy: Opening prayer.

**Leader preparation:**

Become familiar with the prayer “Speaking to God.”

**Supplies:**

- copies of prayer or computer and projector, Attachment: Activity 2



Invite the congregational to pray the prayer in unison.

### ③ Psalm 119:105–112, 129–136

Part of liturgy: Responsive reading.

**Leader preparation:**

Make copies of the responsive reading based on Psalm 119, or prepare the reading to be projected. Recruit a leader for the reading.

**Supplies:**

- copies of responsive reading or computer and projector, Attachment, Activity 3

Use the responsive reading of Psalm 119: 105–112, 129–136.





## Discerning & Deciding Activities



### ④ Pain and Suffering before Joy

Part of liturgy: Scripture reading as drama.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Matthew 26:14–75. As you study the play based on the reading, determine who will be the actors. Recruit people to design the sets and conduct the rehearsals. This requires considerable time for creativity and imagination. Pull together a select support team of artists, technicians, and laborers. Get the whole congregation involved.

**Supplies:**

- copies of the dramatization, Attachment: Activity 4
- classical biblical period clothing
- props for set design
- table
- bread and grape juice
- cast of actors
- stage crew
- sound effects
- lighting grid
- audio board with microphones
- swords, clubs
- designated space in congregation

Present the scripture through the dramatization based on Matthew 26:14–75.

### ⑤ “Standing at the Future’s Threshold”

Part of liturgy: Congregational hymn.

**Leader preparation:**

Rehearse the hymn with the choir and musicians,

<http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>;

tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>.

You can hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/24thdnq>.

.

**Supplies:**

- copies of the hymn, <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal>

Introduce the hymn as one that invites us to face the future unafraid, working for justice, confidently moving forward as part of Christ’s pilgrim band. Sing “Standing at the Future’s Threshold” (Tune: Lux Eoi).

### ⑥ Hope Brings Joy

Part of liturgy: Reading of scripture as drama.

**Leader preparation:**

Read Matthew 27. Study the play based on the reading, audition actors, design sets, and conduct rehearsals. This requires considerable time for creativity and imagination; recruit support teams of artists, technicians, and laborers; get congregation involved in the scripture story.



### Supplies:

- copies of the dramatization, Attachment: Activity 6
- biblical period clothing
- props for set design
- pieces of silver
- cast of actors
- stage crew
- sound effects
- lighting grid
- audio board with microphones
- designated space in the congregation

Present the scripture reading interpreted through dramatic presentation.

## Sending & Serving Activities

### 7 “God’s Eye Is on the Sparrow”

Part of liturgy: Closing hymn.

#### Leader preparation:

Plan to project the lyrics along with art images picturing singing and freedom to frame the verses of the song. Rehearse the hymn with choir and musicians, <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal> and <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>. You can read the lyrics at <http://www.tinyurl.com/2evrsyb> and hear the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/24fzv93>.

#### Supplies:

- copies of hymn
- computer with Internet access and projector

Sing “God’s Eye Is on the Sparrow” (Tune: Sparrow) and project art images.

### 8 Go into the World with Joy

Part of liturgy: Benediction.

#### Leader preparation:

Become familiar with the prayer.

#### Supplies: None

Use this or a similar prayer as a benediction: *Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ, our Savior, is alive! Death could not keep him away. The grave could not hold him. Christ is alive! There is joy this morning! Go into the world with joy. There are people waiting to hear the good news. Tell the world Christ lives. Tell the world of God’s love. Go, my sisters and brothers, go without fear; go without shame; go without apology. Go in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

### 9 “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

Part of liturgy: Recessional.

#### Leader preparation:

Organize and coordinate a recessional of the cast of characters, led by Jesus. Rehearse the sending hymn with the choir and musicians.



### Supplies:

- costumes from processional and dramatic readings
- copies of the hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (Tune: Haamburg), <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnal> and <http://www.tinyurl.com/NCHymnalcd>

Recess from the sanctuary with Jesus leading the crowd. This is both a somber reminder of the Passion and the difficult moments in our own lives, and a joyful celebration of the new life of Easter.

## Reflect

These activities have been designed both to remind us of the difficulties, hardships, and disappointments that came to Christ and that come to us as Christ’s followers, and to remind us of the hope for new life and promise of support that the gospel provides. In what ways have these activities succeeded in strengthening you for the journey?



## Speaking to God

O God, merciful and loving Creator, your people have gathered, and we stand before you with all our faults and frailties. We come into your house of prayer because we honor and worship you. We bring our joys and pains, our burdens and concerns. Here we are, O God, just as we are, with our lives in your hands.

In the beauty of this day, we listen to hear your still-speaking voice. The chirping of birds, the scurrying of critters, the crying of infants, and the shining brilliance of the sun all remind us of your constant presence with us. Your love touches us and lifts our souls.

In this moment, God, give us courage in the struggle for justice and peace. Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Come now, Caring Just One, for you are our God, and we are your people. We pray that we will find favor in your sight as we seek to do your will.

Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.



## Psalm 119: 105–112, 129–136

*Leader:* Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

***People:* I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to observe your righteous ordinances.**

*Leader:* I am severely afflicted; give me life, O God, according to your word.

***People:* Accept my offerings of praise, O God, and teach me your ordinances.**

*Leader:* I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.

***People:* The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts.**

*Leader:* Your decrees are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

***People:* I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.**

*Leader:* Your decrees are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.

***People:* The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.**

*Leader:* With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.

***People:* Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your custom toward those who love your name.**

*Leader:* Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me.

***People:* Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts.**

*Leader:* Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.

***People:* My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.**



Attachment: Activity 4

## Dramatization based on Matthew 26:14–75

**Cast:** Narrator, Judas, Peter, Jesus, First Man, Second Man, Caiaphas, Religious leader, First Girl, Second Girl, Woman

### Scene 1

**Narrator:** One of Jesus' twelve disciples, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and religious leaders and said:

**Judas:** What will you give me if I betray him to you?

**Narrator:** The religious leaders paid Judas thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray the Messiah. On the first day of Passover when unleavened bread was prepared and eaten, Jesus' disciples came to him and said:

**Peter:** Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?

**Jesus:** Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, 'My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'"

**Narrator:** So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. That night, Jesus took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said,

**Jesus:** Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

**Peter:** (*agitated along with other disciples who are greatly distressed*) Surely not I, Lord?

**Jesus:** The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Human One goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Human One is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.

**Judas:** Surely not I, Rabbi?

**Jesus:** You have said so. (*Jesus takes a loaf of bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to his disciples*) Take, eat; this is my body. (*Jesus takes a cup, gives thanks, and hands it to a disciples*) Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in God's kingdom.

(*The disciples begin to sing a hymn and start to walk out*)

**Jesus:** You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.

(Dramatization based on Matthew 26:14-75 continued)

**Peter:** Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.

**Jesus:** Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.

**Peter:** Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you. *(Disciples nod and murmur in agreement with Peter. Jesus leads the disciples across stage to a garden and stops by a tree)*

### Scene 2

**Narrator:** Jesus went with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane and said to them:

**Jesus:** Sit here while I go over there and pray. *(Peter and the two disciples walk with Jesus away from the other disciples. Jesus is agitated and turns to Peter)* I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.

*(Jesus goes away and throws himself on the ground and prays)* Abba, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want, but what you want.

*(Jesus walks to his disciples who are asleep and he shakes Peter)* So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

*(Jesus walks away again; stops and prays. He is in agony)* Abba, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

*(Jesus walks back to Peter and the other two and finds them sleeping. He turns away from and takes a few steps. He stops, falls on his knees, weeps, and prays again)*

Abba, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

*(Jesus stands up and returns to Peter and the others)* Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Human One is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

### Scene 3

*(Judas comes with the chief priests and religious leaders. Some are carrying swords and clubs. Judas walks up to Jesus and kisses him on the face)*

**Judas:** Greetings, Rabbi!

**Man:** *(carrying a sword)* You are under arrest!

**Jesus:** *(turns to Judas)* Friend, do what you are here to do.

*(Dramatization based on Matthew 26:14-75 continued)*

*(The man with the sword grabs Jesus by the arm and leads Jesus away. Peter pulls his sword and swings at the other man, who has Jesus' arm)*

**Jesus:** Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to God, who will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way? Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled. *(Everyone leaves the stage)*

### Scene 4

**Narrator:** The disciples all deserted Jesus. Those who had arrested him went to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. Peter followed at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward. *(Two men stand up from the audience and point toward Jesus at the side of stage)*

**First Man:** This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."

**Second Man:** He said he could build the great temple in three days.

**Caiaphas:** *(stands up)* Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?

*(Jesus silently stares at the two men)*

**Caiaphas:** I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

**Jesus:** You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Human One seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

**Caiaphas:** *(tears his clothes)* He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?"

**Religious Leader:** He deserves death.

*(The crowd jeers. A man slaps Jesus on his face)*

**First Man:** Prophecy to us, you Messiah!

**Second Man:** Who is it that struck you?

*(The crowd laughs along with the religious leaders)*



*(Dramatization based on Matthew 26:14-75 continued)*

### Scene 5

**Narrator:** Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard near a young servant-girl.

**Girl:** You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

**Peter:** *(stands up and walks to middle of stage toward a second girl)* No, I was not. I do not know what you are talking about.

**Second Girl:** This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

**Peter:** You are liar! I do not know the man.

*(The crowd walks up to Peter)*

**Woman:** Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.

**Peter:** I swear to God I do not know the man!

*(The sound of a rooster crows)*

**Peter:** *(weeps bitterly and speaks, mostly to himself)* Jesus said before the cock crows, I will have denied him three times. *(He cries uncontrollably)*



Attachment: Activity 6

## Dramatization based on Matthew 27

**Cast:** Narrator, Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Jesus, First Soldier, Second Soldier, Woman, Man, Joseph

### Scene 1

**Narrator:** Peter cried all night after the rooster crowed three times. He denied Jesus, and the other disciples deserted Jesus. Jesus faced his accusers all alone. Early the next morning, the religious leaders called together the elders of the people. They conferred against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

**Judas:** I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

**Caiaphas:** What is that to us? See to it yourself.

**Judas:** Take back your money. I don't want it. *(Judas screams in agony, throws down the pieces of silver, and runs away)*

**Caiaphas:** *(reaches down and picks up the pieces of silver)* It is not lawful to put these silver pieces into the treasury, since they are blood money. Here, let's buy the potter's field as a place where we can bury foreigners who die in our city.

**Narrator:** To this very day, that plot of land is still called the Field of Blood. That fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah who said, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me." As for Judas, his act of betrayal was too great a burden for him. He ran from the temple and went and hanged himself. Jesus was taken to stand before Pilate, the governor.

### Scene 2

**Pilate:** Are you the King of the Jews?

**Jesus:** You say so.

**Pilate:** Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you? Sedition, incitement, treason, blasphemy.

**Narrator:** Jesus stared directly at Pilate but gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Meanwhile, at the festival the governor was accus-

(Dramatization based on Matthew 27 continued)

tomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. Pilate realized that it was out of jealousy that the religious leaders and elders of the people had handed Jesus over to him. But Pilate's wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him."

**Pilate:** Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?

**Caiaphas:** (*turns to the audience*) People, tell Pilate you want Barabbas! Scream as loud as you can, "We want Barabbas! We want Barabbas! We want Barabbas! Join me now ... say it, "We want Barabbas! We want Barabbas!"

**Pilate:** (*turns to the audience*) Which of the two do you want me to release for you?"

**Audience:** We want Barabbas! We want Barabbas!

**Pilate:** Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?

**Audience:** Crucify him! Let him be crucified!

**Pilate:** Why, what evil has he done?

**Caiaphas:** (*turns to Pilate*) Give us Barabbas. Free Barabbas!

**Audience:** Give us Barabbas! Give us Barabbas!

**Pilate:** (*takes a bowl and fills it with water to wash his hands*) I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.

**Audience:** His blood be on us and on our children!

**Pilate:** Go away. I will release Barabbas! You are killing an innocent man.

### Scene 3

**Narrator:** Jesus, was taken away, beaten, and carried into the governor's headquarters where soldiers stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him.

**First Soldier:** Hail, King of the Jews!

**Second Soldier:** Some king you turned out to be!

**First Soldier:** Where is your army, king? (*pulls off Jesus' clothes and throws an old robe around him*)

**Narrator:** They led Jesus away to be crucified. They came upon a man from Cyrene named

(Dramatization based on Matthew 27 continued)

Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (*which means Place of a Skull*), they offered Jesus sour wine to drink.

**Second Soldier:** Hey, king, have a drink on us. (*He hands Jesus a cup. Jesus drinks it and spits it out quickly. The soldiers laugh loudly*)

**Narrator:** They took Jesus and placed him on a cross and killed him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. People came by and as they watched what was happening, they began to deride Jesus.

**Woman:** You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!

**Man:** If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

**Caiaphas:** He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if God wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son."

**Narrator:** Even the bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

**Jesus:** *Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?* My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

**Man:** This man is calling for Elijah.

**Woman:** Give him something to drink. Give him some wine and let him drink.

**Caiaphas:** Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

**Jesus:** (*cries with a loud voice and dies*) My God! My God!

**Narrator:** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified.

**First Soldier:** Truly this man was God's Son!

**Second Soldier:** (*trembling with fear*) How could this be? What kind of man was he that earth shakes and the dead rise up? Yes, truly, he was the Son of God.

### Scene 4

**Narrator:** There were many women who witnessed everything that happened. They were there.

*(Dramatization based on Matthew 27 continued)*

Looking from a distance, they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him everything he needed as much as they were able. Among the women were Jesus' mother Mary, and Mary Magdalene, along with Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. On the night that Jesus was crucified, a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

**Joseph:** My lord, I have come to ask for the body of Jesus to be buried in my own new tomb. Everything is arranged for his burial.

**Pilate:** So be it! My soldiers will assist you. What has happened here is a terrible thing. That man was innocent and should not have been killed. You may take his body and give him a proper burial. There is so much about the people here I will never understand.

**Narrator:** So, Joseph took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. He laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. Meanwhile, Caiaphas, the chief priests, and the Pharisees went back to Pilate.

**Caiaphas:** Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again." Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, "He has been raised from the dead," and the last deception would be worse than the first.

**Pilate:** You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.

# Keeping Sabbath



## Intergenerational

### About this Setting

Have a group ranging from five to eighty-five years old? Have 20 minutes to three hours to fill? Fear not! Intergenerational groups provide an opportunity to involve everyone in the congregation — playing, learning, and working together. There's a valuable place for everyone. Intergenerational resources assume groups that include people of all ages: children, youth, young adult, and adult. There are many benefits from learning to practice one's faith in a group that includes a variety of levels of faith maturity. Leaders are encouraged to remember that each person in an intergenerational group has gifts to offer and to receive from others in the group. Choice is the name of the game! Choose from the activity options what appeals to you and your context, and have fun together! Remember, success in intergenerational group activities depends on leadership from the facilitator: choose appropriate people for appropriate tasks, regardless of age. If a small group is not working out, intervene and reorganize groups as needed.

### Intergenerational Options

These activities may be used to build an intergenerational event for the commencement or conclusion of your series on "Keeping Sabbath" (up to three hours). Or, the activities may be used independently (15–20 minutes each), interwoven with age-specific activities throughout the series. An intergenerational event might be used during a time of year that is already set aside as special, such as Advent, Kwanzaa, Lent, Vacation Bible School, or forty days of prayer for children.

## Keeping Sabbath



## INTERGENERATIONAL

Familiarize yourself with all twelve activities, four from each of the categories of Exploring and Engaging, Discerning and Deciding, and Sending and Serving. Consider the age of participants and the time available for this event, and choose a group of activities that will meet your needs.

For an event lasting one to two hours, choose three or four activities from the list of twelve. There are enough activities for three or four events! Or, choose a single activity (15–30 minutes) to use as the activity at a community meal or other gathering. Wearing name tags is a good idea, as often older and younger members of a church do not know one another's names.

Each activity ends with a prayer appropriate for the end of the session.

Gather as a church family to grow together and have fun!

### Exploring & Engaging Activities

Whether we are new to a particular faith practice or an old hand with much experience, all of us benefit from new opportunities to explore the shape of the faith practice and to engage the issues of faith that the practice offers. Sometimes this is a matter of learning new ideas about the practice. Sometimes this is more about reflecting on what we have done in our practice. The activities in Exploring and Engaging help us figure out how a faith practice intersects with our life and the life of the community of faith.

### Discerning & Deciding Activities

Practicing our faith always involves discernment: naming the realities of our community and world and seeking the will of God for our lives and for the world. We then decide how we will act, what we will do, what values move us forward, what faith has called us to do. The activities in this section give us opportunity to practice by discerning and deciding.

### Sending & Serving Activities

Practicing our faith involves serving others and being sent out as empowered disciples of Jesus Christ. We need time in our exploration to plan how we will serve. We need moments that send us forth blessed by the community from which we venture out. The activities in this section offer opportunities to practice our faith through sending and serving.

### Intergenerational Leader Preparation

Yikes! All these ages! So many people with so many interests and needs! Take a deep breath. Breathe in, thanking God for this opportunity to bring God's people together. Breathe out, releasing your worries and anxieties about how this activity or event will turn out. Check in with yourself. Has the necessary preparatory work been done? Are you feeling excited about the activities you've chosen? Are you eager to help your congregation learn more about the practice of Sabbath? Are you familiar with special needs of folks you expect to participate? Breathe in, "Hear, O Israel: the Sovereign is our God, the Sovereign alone..." (Deuteronomy 6:4). Breathe out, "...and you shall love the Sovereign your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

What about those teenagers? In several of the activities, teenagers and older children engage as teachers or activity leaders with younger children. Invite those teenagers you have chosen for more responsible roles of leadership to gather with you and other leaders/teachers to join in a prayer of preparation.

*Prayer: God of the Sabbath, thank you for caring for us during work and play. Enable us to relate to all those gathered today, bringing them ever closer to you through our Sabbath activities. Help each of us (name each person in the prayer circle) to be the best leader we can be today. May all of us learn better what Sabbath means and how to practice Sabbath in our own lives and as a church. Amen.*



## Exploration: Discovery

**BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:**

**Exodus 20:8-11**

**Luke 4:16-21**



### 1 Sabbath: A Mixer (Exploring and Engaging) (Easy preparation)

**Leader preparation:**

We keep Sabbath by building our community of faith. This activity works as a mixer to build community. It can also be used as a time to stretch and move in between more sedentary activities. It's a great way to be sure everyone says something. Be sure to include introductions (of partners), as in many congregations older and younger members do not necessarily know one another by name. If there are several elderly or otherwise less-mobile participants, consider placing chairs in pairs around the room, so one person can remain seated while the second, more mobile person in each pair moves to find a new partner. If you have a participant who is not mobile, be sure that, when people move to find a new partner, someone always goes to that person. If there is an even number of other participants, the leader can sit out and focus on time-keeping. This is an activity for pairs. Groups of three do not work for this activity because of the time restraints.

**Supplies:**

- list of sentences to complete
- a watch or clock with a second hand
- a room in which people can move around easily

Participants will share with one another, one on one, about "Sabbath," allowing people an opportunity to share their experiences and explore various interpretations of Sabbath.

1. Read aloud Genesis 2:2-4 to gathered group.
2. Mixer:
  - Have each person find a partner and introduce himself or herself. If the group is large enough, encourage the participants to find someone they do not know well, or someone of a different age group.
  - One ground rule for this activity is: No interrupting!
  - Each person has one minute to complete this sentence, "When I hear the word 'Sabbath' or 'Sabbath time,' I think..." (if participants find it difficult to complete a sentence, ask them, "Describe what 'Sabbath' or 'Sabbath time' means to you").
  - Call time at the end of one minute, saying something like, "Now the second person has one minute to share."
  - At the end of the second minute, have everyone say good-bye to their partner and find a new partner. Start with introductions again, and then share (each for one minute) on the second sentence/question.
  - With their partner each person has one minute to complete this sentence: "One of my favorite ways to take a break (a Sabbath) during the day is ..." This might be phrased, "What do you do when you want to take a break during the day?"
  - Repeat the process for each sentence/question below, or until interest wanes.

You may find that one minute is too long a time; feel free to make the time shorter if talking has waned.

Sentences to complete: (When reading the incomplete sentence aloud, draw out your voice over the blank spaces to imply there is something missing.)





- When I hear the word “Sabbath,” I think of...
- One of my favorite ways to take a break (a Sabbath) during the day is...
- Something that keeps me from having a break (Sabbath) in my life is...
- One of my favorite (Sabbath) activities at church is...
- Something that draws me closer to God is...
- A song that brings me closer to God is...
- When I am tired, I like to...
- (Think of your own!)

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for this community of sharing and growing. Thank you for Sabbath time during which we draw closer to you as we draw closer to one another. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

## 2 Sabbath Cinquain (Exploring and Engaging) (Easy preparation)

### Leader preparation:

We keep Sabbath by remembering God in word. Cinquains are poems that follow a particular pattern. Familiarize yourself with the cinquain format by writing some trial poems on simple subjects such as “cat” or “flower.” Print the cinquain format on a large sheet of newsprint or poster board. Consider ways the final cinquains might be shared with the wider community, perhaps in your church newsletter or during a service of worship. If you are including a worship component as part of an event, you might plan to include these poems.

### Supplies:

- numerous large sheets of newsprint and markers
- cinquain format printed clearly on large paper

In groups the participants will write cinquain poems on the theme “Sabbath.” Introduce the cinquain format, explaining that a cinquain is a five-line poem using different parts of speech to describe the theme, which is the single word on line 1. In our case, the theme word will be “Sabbath.” The lines get longer, then shorter, resulting in a diamond-shaped poem.

### **Cinquain format:**

Line 1: one word (subject or noun)—theme of poem

Line 2: two words (adjectives) that describe line 1

Line 3: three words (action words ending in “ing”) that relate to line 1

Line 4: four words (feelings) that relate to line 1

Line 5: one or two words (synonym of line 1 or a word that sums it up)

### **Sample:**

Flower  
bright magnificent  
growing bending adorning  
joyful happy glad love  
God’s creation

Closing prayer: *Use the completed cinquain as the main section of the prayer, starting with “God, we thank you for Sabbath,” ending with “Amen.”*



## Exploration: Scripture



### 3 Community Unity Collage (Discerning and Deciding)

#### Leader preparation:

Photocopy several copies of the figures in “The Dance of Youth” by Pablo Picasso. Cut out around each individual figure until you have one cut out for each participant. Prepare a bulletin board with the banner “We Are United through Communion.” This activity is especially meaningful in faith communities where all ages are welcome at communion.

#### Supplies:

- bulletin board or large sheet of poster board for collage background
- poster, “The Dance of Youth” (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters7>) by Pablo Picasso
- individual figures cut from photocopies of “The Dance of Youth”—on different colors of paper
- scissors
- markers
- Bibles
- basket(s) to hold cut-out figures
- poster pins or staplers to attach figures to larger bulletin board

The participants will create a congregational collage illustrating that communion and Sabbath draw us together in unity.

1. Ask participants to locate and read 1 Corinthians 11:18 in their Bibles.
2. Ask: What might have caused the divisions and factions Paul describes in the congregation in Corinth? What causes people not to get along? What has caused misunderstandings and hurt feelings in your church? Be sure young and old have a chance to share.
3. Explain: Paul explains that communion, a Sabbath activity, will help us overcome our differences and divisions.
4. Show the poster “The Dance of Youth” by Pablo Picasso. Ask what the participants see. What are the figures doing? Explain that they are united in a joyful dance. The dance brings them together as community, “in communion” with one another.
5. Explain that communion and Sabbath draw us together in unity, as these figures are drawn together in a dance.
6. Give a figure to each person. Have markers ready for people to print their first name on the figure. Have pins/stapler ready to attach each figure to the bulletin board (on and around the poster of “The Dance of Youth”) to join in the dance.

*Closing prayer: God, thank you for the Sabbath practice of communion that unites us in community like dancers in a dance. Help us work in union to overcome any difference we have, so we can joyfully worship and serve you together. Amen.*



## 4 Interviewing Jesus and Moses (Discerning and Deciding) (Easy preparation)

### Leader preparation:

This activity offers an option of interviewing either Jesus or Moses about Sabbath and Sabbath-keeping. If you choose to hold both interviews, they can be done one after the other or at different times.

### **Option 1: Interview of Jesus of Nazareth**

#### Leader preparation:

Be sure the Jesus actor reads Mark 2:23–3:6 ahead of time. Choose someone who will be able to think on their feet and keep the interest of the group.

#### Supplies:

- robe (helpful but not essential)
- Bibles
- paper and pens

Someone, in the role of Jesus, answers interview questions about Sabbath and Sabbath time, referring especially to the incidents of Mark 2:23–3:6.

1. Announce that we are going to have a very special visitor today: Jesus of Nazareth! He will be available to answer questions about Sabbath and Sabbath time. He and his friends were recently in trouble for breaking a couple of Sabbath rules: not to harvest grain and not to do the work of a doctor.
2. Have participants locate and read together (one person reading aloud) Luke 4:16–21.
3. In small groups (three or four of varying ages) brainstorm questions you would like to ask Jesus about what happened and about Sabbath and Sabbath time. Each group will write down their top two questions and decide who from their group will ask Jesus these questions.
4. Jesus arrives! Have Jesus greet everyone saying, “Shalom” and “Peace be with you.”
5. Extend a warm welcome to Jesus. As if you are the host of a panel, let Jesus know the group has several questions to ask him. Invite each group, one by one, to ask their top question. Let Jesus briefly respond to each question. Don’t let one response go too long. If time allows, let each group ask their second question. (A prepared question to ask early on might be, “What is a commandment?” in order to explain that these biblical commandments are more like directives one would receive from a helpful teacher than like commands an army general would give.)
6. Let everyone know Jesus has to get back to Galilee. Thank Jesus for coming. Ask everyone to bid him farewell. Jesus leaves.

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for Jesus, who has taught us about Sabbath-keeping and that doing good is always more important than following the world’s rules and laws. Help us boldly to do good and to work for justice in our community and world. Amen.*

### **Option 2: Interview of Moses**

#### Leader preparation:

Be sure the Moses actor reads Exodus 20:1–17 ahead of time. Choose someone who will be able to think on their feet and keep the interest of the group.



### Supplies:

- robe (helpful but not essential)
- Bibles
- paper and pens

Someone, in the role of Moses, answers interview questions about Sabbath and Sabbath time, referring especially relating the information from Exodus 20:1–17 regarding God’s Ten Commandments.

1. Announce that we are going to have a very special visitor today: Moses, leader of the Israelites! He will be available to answer questions about Sabbath and Sabbath time. He recently received the Ten Commandments when he was on Mount Sinai and has just shared them with the Israelites. One of the commandments is about remembering Sabbath. Read Exodus 20:8–11.
2. In small groups (three or four) brainstorm questions you would like to ask Moses about what happened and about Sabbath and Sabbath time. Each group will write down their top two questions and decide who from their group will ask Moses these questions.
3. Moses arrives! Have Moses greet everyone saying, “Shalom.” (You might explain this is a common greeting in Hebrew, Moses’ language, that means “peace.”)
4. Extend a warm welcome to Moses. As if you are the host of a panel, let Moses know the group has several questions to ask him. Invite each group, one by one, to ask their top question. Let Moses briefly respond to each question. Don’t let one response go too long. If time allows, let each group ask their second question. (A prepared question to ask early on might be, “What is a commandment?” in order to explain that these biblical commandments are more like directives one would receive from a helpful teacher than like commands an army general would give.)
5. Let everyone know Moses has to get back to the Middle East where he and the Israelites live. Thank Moses for coming. Ask everyone to bid him farewell. Moses leaves.

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for Moses, who taught us about Sabbath and your directives and commandments. Help us learn them and understand them for ourselves and our time. Amen.*



## Exploration: Discipleship



### 5 Creating Sacred Sabbath Space (Discerning and Deciding) (Easy Preparation)

#### Scripture Focus:

Exodus 20:8, “Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.”

Leader Preparation: Review the questions and adapt them as necessary for your group.

#### Supplies:

- chairs arranged in groups of three or four
- large newsprint or poster board
- colored markers for writing and drawing
- paper and pens for groups



- crayons
- tape to hang paper/board
- magazines that can be cut up
- scissors

This activity invites participants to reflect on what they find restful and renewing. Remembering Sabbath is an activity of the mind. By reflecting on what is restful and renewing for us, we can better know how to keep Sabbath in our lives.

Directions: Work in groups no larger than three or four so that each person will have ample time to share. Be sure each group has a span of ages.

1. Discuss the following questions about Sabbath, remembering that Sabbath is a time of rest and renewal when we focus on our relationship with God. Smaller children may understand “feel calmer” or “get stronger” more than “renewal.”
  - When you think of Sabbath, what story or book comes to mind or is especially meaningful to you?
  - When you think of Sabbath, what room, space or place comes to mind or is especially meaningful to you?
  - When you think of Sabbath, what food comes to mind or is especially meaningful to you?
  - When you think of Sabbath, what song comes to mind or is especially meaningful to you?
2. Write or paste the words and illustrations from all the groups on a large paper or poster board beneath the phrase “Sabbath Space.”

Closing prayer: *Spirit of peace, thank you for Sabbath space in our lives. Thank you for special things in our life that help us remember Sabbath, that help us rest and renew ourselves. Through Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.*

## ⑥ Letting Go and Letting God (Deciding and Discerning)

### Leader preparation:

Read Exodus 20:8–11. Particular elements of our lives separate us from God, while other elements draw us closer to God and one another. Sabbath is a time to draw closer to God and one another.

### Supplies:

- Bible
- table (safe area for lit candles)
- one candle for each participant (tapers in sand or tea lights work well)
- matches
- pieces of colored yarn about 8" long (one for every participant)

This activity encourages participants to reflect on the things that separate them from God and those things that draw them closer to God.

1. In groups of twos, answer the following questions:
  - What worries you about home, school, health, family, friends, the world?
  - What work or activities separate you from God? Another way to ask this is, What work or activities make you feel stressful?
  - What behaviors or activities do you do that you wish you did not do?
2. Explain that Sabbath practices of lighting candles and praying can help us draw closer to God and one another.
3. Invite each person to light candles for the worries, stresses, and compulsive behaviors they mentioned.



4. Pray: God, we offer our worries, stresses, and behaviors to you. Amen.
5. In groups of two, answer the following questions:
  - When you have a holiday or vacation, what do you look forward to?
  - What draws you closer to God? Another way to ask this is, What work or activity makes you feel more peaceful and good about yourself?
  - What draws you closer to others? Another way to ask this is, What work or activity makes you feel more peaceful and good about others?
6. Give a piece of yarn to each participant. Have their discussion partner tie it on a finger, around their wrist, or onto their clothing somewhere, for example, around a button or a purse strap. Explain that tangible objects can help us remember God and draw closer to God.

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for all things in our lives that give us comfort, peace, and goodness. Help us take Sabbath time to remember these things when we feel worry or stress. Amen.*



## Exploration: Christian Tradition



### 7 Creating a Sabbath Worship Center (Exploring and Engaging)

#### Leader preparation:

Keeping Sabbath means we cease work and remember and communicate with God through worship. This Sabbath worship center may be created at the outset of the event and then used throughout the event. Other objects might be added. A closing worship time might use this same worship center as its focus. Be sure to blow out the candle after this activity. While communion elements are brought to the Sabbath table, this activity does not include sharing in a communion meal. If you wish, you could share communion from the table at some time during the event.

#### Supplies:

- candle in holder and matches
- Bible
- bread on plate or in basket
- red juice in a cup
- small table
- tablecloth (a special one if available),
- bowl
- pitcher of water
- reading parts printed out, Attachment: Activity 7

The group brings items to create a Sabbath worship center. Each item brings meaning and part of the Christian story, to enhance our Sabbath time by reminding us of God, Jesus, and our community.

Put a table in center of circle or front of room. Distribute items among the participants for them to bring forward at the appointed time. Designate two children to bring items forward, one to carry the item and the other to read, allowing non-readers to fully participate.

- Bring forth the tablecloth. A child reads, "This tablecloth reminds us of the Sabbath cloths that adorned the Sabbath table in Jewish homes long



ago and today. Our worship tables are often covered with special cloths. This tablecloth makes this ordinary table special.”

- Bring forth the candle and light it. A child reads, “This light reminds us of God, who created by saying, ‘Let there be light.’ Light gives warmth and life that we might live.”
- Bring forth a bowl and pitcher of water. Place the bowl on the table and pour in the water. A child reads, “This water reminds us of the springs of life. Water quenches our thirst and grows our gardens. This water also reminds us of our baptism into the community of faith.”
- Bring forth a Bible. A child reads, “This special book reminds us of the stories of our forebears in the faith like Sarah and Abraham, Moses and Miriam, Mary Magdalene and Jesus, and many others. It also helps us know how to follow Jesus.”
- Bring forth bread and cup. A child reads, “This communion meal of bread and juice reminds us of Jesus, who shared a meal with his friends before he died. Sharing this bread and juice, we are one with Christ and with one another.”

We gather around this worship table to have Sabbath time, time to rest and think about God.

*Closing prayer: Dear God, Creator, Christ, and Spirit, we pause from the hustle and bustle of our lives to remember you. You are the source of our being, the light of our lives, the bread and juice that feed so much more than our bodies. You feed our spirits too. These symbols of our faith -- fire, water, word, communion -- draw us away from the distractions of our lives and draw us closer to you. May each of us feel you in this Sabbath moment. Amen.*

### 8 Meditation on Mandalas (Exploring and Engaging)

#### Leader preparation:

Read Mark 6:30–32. Browse through the numerous mandalas created by children on display at <http://www.tinyurl.com/cgd2g>. Creating mandalas is a traditional form of Buddhist and Hindu meditation in Tibet. Sometimes the intricate design is made with sand and lasts only a short time. The process, not the outcome, is the focus. Print out a mandala pattern to be colored for each participant. To download a free black and white mandala pattern to color, go to <http://www.mandali.com/sample/> or <http://www.tinyurl.com/7pxgea>, which also features numerous brilliant mandalas. To order a mandala coloring book, go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/28w4vfm> (\$11) or <http://www.mandali.com> (\$8-\$10). Set out all coloring materials on the tables. Place an uncolored mandala sheet at each place.

#### Supplies:

- a mandala pattern for each participant
- bright colors for drawing (pencils, markers, and/or crayons),
- tape or pins to hang up finished mandalas
- tables and chairs
- CD player
- CD of soothing music
- a printed copy of a colorful mandala

A traditional Sabbath activity is meditation. Coloring the intricate patterns of a mandala provides a meditative centering activity that appeals to all ages.

1. Invite all the participants to find a place at a table, creating a blend of ages and abilities at each table. At their place they will find a mandala pattern sheet.



2. Explain that this activity is about meditating and meditation – going to a quiet place to be renewed, which is a traditional Sabbath activity in Christianity and a common practice in other religions, specifically Hinduism and Buddhism.
3. Show an example of a finished mandala. Invite everyone to begin coloring a mandala, using the activity as a time to center themselves, to enter into the quiet space and the beauty of the design, thinking about God and God’s beautiful creation.
4. Play the soothing music in the background. Allow as much time for drawing as the participants are comfortable with.
5. Hang the completed mandalas in a meditation gallery.

Closing prayer: *God of quiet places, thank you for Sabbath time and Sabbath activities that help us slow down and appreciate the beauty around us in your creation. Amen.*



## Exploration: Context and Mission

### 9 Sabbath—Time to Remember Others (Sending and Serving)

#### Leader preparation:

Read Luke 4:16–21. Prayerfully consider those in your congregation who are unable to be at this intergenerational event. To expand this activity, prepare a list of the names and addresses of a variety of people beforehand: inmates at a local jail or prison, homeless people in your community, residents at a local care center, prisoners of conscience (list available from Amnesty International, <http://www.tinyurl.com/pfjta6>), global mission partners of your denomination, children sponsored by members in your congregation, etc.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- pens
- blank greeting cards (church stationary works well, but any cards will do)
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- church directories (ideally with photos)
- stickers
- crayons or markers

Moving from exclusion to inclusion, the group first remembers those often excluded in our communities. Then the group focuses on those from the congregation who are marginalized and absent from this intergenerational event in order to include them by sending cards of greeting and prayer to them.

1. Read: Luke 4:16–21.
2. Brainstorm: Turn to the person next to you and think of people in your community and the world who are “poor, captive, blind, oppressed.” (You might use more familiar words for different ages such as: lonely, unhappy, sick, in jail, marginalized, excluded, forgotten.)
3. Plenary: Have each pair share one person or type of person they thought of. Write these on newsprint or a whiteboard (or just listen).
4. Ask the large group: Who is not here today at this event? List them by name on newsprint or a whiteboard. Who is sick? Who is in the hospital?





- Who is elderly and shut-in? Who is away or abroad? (Peace Corps and Vista volunteers, service men and women, missionaries, others.) Who is away at college?
5. Divide into groups to write cards to people on the list. Ask each group to take one to three cards and write the name of a recipient on a card. Have groups decide what to write on the card and how to decorate it (if blank). Smaller children can put stickers on or draw something. Be sure everyone signs their name, or has their name added (if they cannot write).
  6. Option 1: Pass out envelopes with the cards and have each group address the envelope and place the card inside, ready to mail. Distribute church address labels to be affixed. Option 2: Collect the completed card (with name of recipient clearly printed on each) and send later.

Closing prayer: *Great Spirit, you call us into relationships, and Jesus reminds us on that Sabbath day long ago that we are connected to the poor, the oppressed, the captive, and the ill. We pray for all your people, especially those whom we have remembered and written to today. Thank you for your word in our midst that compels us to reach out beyond our comfort zones. Amen.*

### 10 Create a Sabbath Space for Birds (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Gather and set out supplies. Decide if participants will share jars of peanut butter and bowls or bags of seeds, or if it will work better to dish out smaller quantities of peanut butter and seeds into bowls or paper cups. Identify places where the feeders may be hung.

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- pine cones (the bigger the better)
- peanut butter
- birdseed
- kitchen knives for spreading peanut butter on pinecones
- sturdy string or twine for hanging bird feeders outside
- scissors
- one or two large flat ceramic baking or serving dishes (to serve as bird baths)
- water for bird bath

Create a bird-friendly area outside the church by making and hanging bird feeders and setting out bird baths.

1. Invite the participants to locate and read aloud Exodus 20:8-11.
2. In groups of three (including different ages) have participants discuss: Who and what rests on the Sabbath, according to God's wishes in this story? (family, workers, slaves, men and women, livestock [working animals], foreigners; everything that works, including livestock) What are livestock? Which animals are "working animals"? "Sabbath is a chance for nature to rest from human interference," explains Cath James of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. What does this quote mean to you?
3. Explain that while birds are not "livestock," we're going to use our Sabbath time to make life easier for the birds that live near our church.
4. Have participants divide into pairs, with different ages in each pair, ideally an adult and a child or youth. Each pair receives one pinecone, twine/string, and access to peanut butter and birdseed.



5. For feeders: Tie twine around top section of pine cone, making it secure for hanging. Spread peanut butter on each pine nut (petal) of the cone. Press birdseed into the peanut butter. Hang feeders outside if weather permits. Otherwise, keep to be hung later.
6. For birdbaths: Have groups of two or three take the ceramic birdfeeders outside, locate a safe and protected spot, and fill them with water.

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for animals, for those that help us by working in fields, and for those that live independently of humans. Thank you that we can use this Sabbath time to remember them and provide the birds of this community a place to enjoy. Amen.*



## Exploration: Future and Mission

### Making Eyes of God (Exploring and Engaging)

#### Leader Preparation:

The Huichol Indians of Mexico and the Aymara Indians of Bolivia weave brightly colored yarn on a simple frame of two crossed sticks to create a design called ojo de Dios or eye of God. Review the illustrated instructions at <http://www.tinyurl.com/3hh6ge> or <http://www.tinyurl.com/ydktccr> and make at least one eye of God, so that you are familiar with the process. This can seem difficult initially, but with patience the task is easily completed, even by young children, and the results are usually pleasing. The more contrasting the colors of yarn, the brighter the finished product. Plan to pair up each child with an adult, or two children with an adult.

#### Supplies:

- several skeins of medium weight bright colored yarn
- sticks for the X-shaped frame: popsicle sticks, craft sticks, twigs or chopsticks work well (two for each participant)
- craft glue
- scissors

Create eyes of God as Sabbath meditation focal points.

1. Read Psalm 119:105.
2. Hold the sticks in an X or cross position. Wrap the yarn around the center of the two sticks to hold them together in a cross shape.
3. Take one color of yarn and wrap it over and around one stick, then over and around the next, over and around the next, and so on. Keep doing that until the color is used up.
4. Tie a different color string onto the old one with a tight knot.
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until complete.
6. Take a piece of string for a hanger, cut it, and tie or glue it to your eye of God.
7. Hang up your eye of God as a focal point to use during Sabbath exercises of prayer and/or meditation.

Closing prayer: *God, thank you for beautiful symbols that remind us of you. Bless these eyes of God that they may help us enrich our Sabbath life. Amen.*



## **Keeping Vigil: Proclaiming the Good News (Sending and Serving)**

### Leader preparation:

Read and reflect on Matthew 26:14–27:66. The Sabbath after Jesus was executed was a quiet day of fear and hiding; many of Jesus' friends abandoned him, and like Peter, denied even knowing him. Keeping vigil is for many Christians an important response to injustice, so that we do not succumb to the fear and hiding of those first disciples. Familiarize yourself with religious groups that hold regular vigils, such as those listed by state at <http://www.utahpeace.org/vigil.htm>. (Note: Bellingham, Washington, is home to the longest-running peace vigil in the United States. Started by Howard and Rosemary Harris more than forty-six years ago, it has lasted more than four generations. Members of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ in Bellingham,

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2ayuwhm>,

are instrumental in keeping that weekly vigil going every Friday, particularly Alfred and Dotty Dale, both in their mid-eighties!) Prayerfully consider injustices or special needs of which members of your church might already be aware: e.g. children at the local school who receive free meals, homophobia in your community or in the news, a local business with unfair employment practices, the exploitation of coffee growers by large corporations (if your church uses Fair Trade coffee and tea, some members will be familiar with this concern), a local environmental concern, a current war, families who need food (and come to your church's food bank), children sponsored by your church or individual members, etc. Gather supplies to make placards for the vigil. You may need to check with local authorities to determine if a permit is needed for your vigil.

### Supplies:

- poster boards
- wooden slats
- staple gun
- poster paints or large markers
- Bibles
- poster, "Guatemala: Procession" (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>) by Betty LaDuke

A Sabbath vigil: a response to injustice. This activity can be broken into parts: reflection and discussion, clarifying the message of the vigil, preparing posters, holding the vigil. The actual vigil might be a culmination of your Sabbath event, or a follow-up at a different time. If there is already a regular local peace and justice vigil, consider joining in. Some regular vigil groups already have plenty of signs for participants to hold.

1. Invite the participants to locate and read aloud Matthew 27:27–56.
2. Ask: When Jesus was being tortured and was suffering, who tried to help him? Point out that the male disciples are not around and the female disciples are standing and watching from a distance, not getting involved.
3. Ask the participants: Have you ever seen someone be treated badly? What did you do? It is likely someone will say they were afraid to do anything to help. Use this as a segue to talk about fear, and how fear can protect us by keeping us safe, but how it also can stop us from helping someone who needs our help.
4. In pairs or groups of three (mix different age participants as much as possible, to encourage intergenerational interaction), have the participants consider: Who in our world is suffering as Jesus did? Who is being tortured? Who is being kept from food and safe water? Who is being abandoned by our society?



5. Ask each small group to share one or two examples with the larger group. Write out a list, noting those mentioned by more than one group. They may share a wide variety of responses. Listen respectfully, and, if helpful, guide the conversation to the things upon which you were reflecting during your time of preparation.
6. Explain that it is important for faithful Christians to turn to God when they are afraid, and to ask for (pray for) courage to do the right thing.
7. Back in pairs and groups of three, have participants share: What are some injustices (something that is not fair or good) in the world that make you angry to hear about? For example, war, hungry children. Then have each group share with the large group one or two things they listed.
8. Describe the ancient practice of vigil-keeping and its relationship to Sabbath keeping (a time set aside when we work and witness for justice). Display the poster “Guatemala: Procession.” Explain that sometimes people walk (or march) as part of a vigil.
9. Have participants choose one issue of injustice on which to focus.
10. Invite the participants to make posters related to the issue of injustice they have chosen: for example, Christians for peace; Jesus fed the hungry. So should we; God is love; Everyone is God’s child; God loves everyone--gay and straight; Honk for peace--make God smile! Be sure statements are faith-based and not just an opinion. Staple the decorated poster boards to the slats. Be sure they are secure, with the slat going up almost to the top of the poster board to avoid bending.
11. Pray before heading outside: God, help us not be afraid to speak out for what is right. Grant us courage as part of our Sabbath keeping practice boldly to share our faith with others. May we not be caught silent and hiding on the Sabbath as the first disciples were when Jesus was crucified. May our Sabbath actions help those who, like Christ, suffer injustice at the hands of those more powerful. Amen.
12. Be sure to talk about tolerance before heading out to the vigil. Consider what to do if rude actions or comments are received from people driving or walking by.
13. Stand by the road near the church holding the signs high for passersby to see (or join a preexisting vigil). Be sure there is enough room for pedestrians to pass by easily and safely. Joyfully proclaim the Good News of God’s love, peace and justice.

### Reflect

What an amazing group of people have gathered here: young and old, energetic and thoughtful, brash and timid, faithful and doubtful. What a privilege it is to work with them, to teach and learn together, to stretch and grow. How has God used you during this intergenerational event? What moments were filled with delight? What challenges did you face? Is there any follow-up needed, regarding either activities or relationships? Who stands out for you from this event? Who may need special prayers or pastoral care? Now it is time for you to think of ways to renew and refresh yourself, to take Sabbath time, to apply the lessons presented (and hopefully learned) to your own life, starting now. May God be with you as you continue to grow in the faith practice of Sabbath-keeping.



### Attachment: Activity 7

*Tablecloth is brought forward.*

A child reads, "This tablecloth reminds us of the Sabbath cloths that adorned the Sabbath table in Jewish homes long ago and today. Our worship tables are often covered with special cloths. This tablecloth makes this ordinary table special."

*Candle is brought forward and lit.*

A child reads, "This light reminds us of God, who created by saying, 'Let there be light.' Light gives warmth and life that we might live."

*Bowl and pitcher of water are brought forward.*

Place the bowl on table and pour in the water. A child reads, "This water reminds us of the springs of life. Water quenches our thirst and grows our gardens. This water also reminds us of our baptism into the community of faith."

*A Bible is brought forward.*

A child reads, "This special book reminds us of the stories of our forebears in the faith like Sarah and Abraham, Moses and Miriam, Mary Magdalene and Jesus, and many others. It also helps us know how to follow Jesus."

*Bread and cup are brought forward.*

A child reads, "This communion meal of bread and juice reminds us of Jesus, who shared a meal with his friends before he died. Sharing this bread and juice, we are one with Christ and with one another."