

Shabbat: Remember & Observe

Facilitator Guide

What inspiration can we take from our weekly Shabbat rituals to remind us of the hostages? As we celebrate Shabbat, what might we do to remember those who cannot celebrate it fully?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What inspiration can we take from our weekly Shabbat rituals to remind us of the hostages?

As we celebrate Shabbat, what might we do to remember those who cannot celebrate it fully?

FRAMING THE ISSUE

Shabbat is a precious time in Jewish tradition. It is a time for rest and contemplation, when we come together, as a family and in community. As we gather with our own families, we remember those families who have had to spend way too many Shabbatot without the presence of their loved ones, not knowing where they are or what they are going through. Many of the rituals related to Shabbat provide opportunities for us to remember the hostages and pray for their return. Specifically, we will explore the rituals of lighting candles, of blessing the children and the Shabbat table.

Info For Facilitator



Target Audience:

Children, Teens, Adults



Length Of Program:

30-90 minutes, depending on which parts you choose



Materials & Prep:

- Printed Source Sheets (if you are using them)
- For the **You Be Their Light** candle packs: Order tealights and cellophane bags, print cards (details and links in the **Take Action** section below)
- Devices for watching the video

Additional Resources:

[Video of Rachel Goldberg's UN Geneva speech](#)

LET'S EXPLORE

Note to the Facilitator:

In the separate source sheet there are two sections: One on **Shabbat Candle Lighting** and one on **Blessing the Children**. We recommend you review them in advance and choose, depending on the Jewish background and ages of the participants, whether to focus on one or both sections, and whether to explore the texts and facilitate a discussion around them or briefly introduce the ideas and move straight to the **Take Action** section.

Below are some possible discussion questions for each section:

Lighting Shabbat Candles

- *Does your family light Shabbat candles?*
- *Who lights them?*
- *How many candles are lit and why?*
- *Has something changed in your candle lighting traditions since October 7th?*
- *If you were to add an additional prayer this coming Shabbat, what would you ask for?*

Blessing the Children

- *Do your parents bless you on Friday night? If so, do they use the traditional blessing or a different one?*
- *If you have children, do you bless them? What blessing do you give them?*
- *In her UN Geneva speech, what does Rachel Goldberg, mother of captive Hersh Goldberg Polin learn from the choice of brothers that inspire the traditional weekly blessing of our sons?*
- *What is the demand she makes of us, all humans, to choose and to do?*
- *What might her speech inspire you to do and how might you share it with others?*



For further reference, you can listen to the entire speech [here](#).

TAKE ACTION!

Lighting Shabbat Candles: Join the **You Be Their Light** Initiative

AS AN INDIVIDUAL:

Set up additional blue or yellow candles next to your regular Shabbat candles, or use them as your own Shabbat candles. Wherever you are, light them at your local Shabbat time to join a global wave of unity. We're synchronizing our hearts and prayers across the world at the same time.

Before you light these flames, take a moment. Capture a photo of your setup and share it with us using the hashtag #YouBeTheirLight. Then, switch off all social media. Step away from the noise to focus your thoughts and prayers solely on this moment of peace and hope.

When the time comes, light the candles, wave your hands over them three times, and make the blessing using the card provided. This is your moment to pray for your hostage. Say their name, say your prayers, and let your hope shine through.



AS A GROUP, YOU CAN HELP SPREAD THE #YOUBETHEIRLIGHT INITIATIVE AND BRING IT TO OTHERS IN 4 EASY STEPS:

1. BUY the [candles and the cellophane bags](#)
2. PRINT the cards. The pack can include two or three cards: (depending on what your community decides to do): [Hostage card](#), [Released Hostage card](#) and [Editable Candle lighting card](#) (For local Shabbat times, click [here](#)).
3. PREPARE the kits by placing two (preferably blue) tealights and the customized cards inside a cellophane bag. Hosting a 'pack-a-thon' can effectively bolster the initiative and involve more community members.
4. DISTRIBUTE the bags to members of your school / youth group / camp / JCC / synagogue or at other communal initiatives and locations. Encourage recipients to post pictures on social media, prior to candle lighting, with the hashtag #youbetheirlight.



For more information, resources and examples, check out <https://www.youbetheirlight.com/>.

Set an Empty Place Setting at Your Table

Many families and organizations have been setting an empty chair (or multiple empty chairs) at their Shabbat and holiday tables, to note the captives who are missing from our Shabbat tables. You can use the hostage cards above to reserve a place card for a specific hostage. Or you can download and print a poster from [here](#) and put it on the chair.

In larger settings, such as a camp or synagogue, you could set an entire table for the missing hostages, as a space-based installation that keeps our awareness of those who are not here to celebrate with us.



Empty Shabbat Table at King David School
in Armadale, Australia

CLOSING INTENTION

Invite your participants to each write a personal, individualized prayer (or a joint, group one) on behalf of the hostages that they can recite every week on Shabbat, until all the hostages have returned.