



MY FIRST SHABBAT BOARD BOOK

Written by Clare Lister

The preparations for and celebrations of Shabbat are introduced, showing some of the basic concepts of the Jewish day of rest.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Shabbat

Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest, begins at sundown on Friday evening and ends at nightfall on Saturday night. While there are various ways to observe the religious rituals of Shabbat, for many families Shabbat is a time to spend time with one another. This weekly holiday can be a lovely time for sharing dinner with guests, reading stories, talking, or taking a walk. After the hectic pace of the week, take the time to savor a meal and a conversation as a family.

The Creation of the World

Shabbat is the culmination of the Jewish story of Creation as outlined in the Book of Genesis in the Torah, the first part of the Bible. Regardless of your particular understanding of how the world came to be, these first few pages of *My First Shabbat Board Book* show some of the magnificent wonders of our world.

Blessings

Judaism instructs us to recite blessings before and after eating, before experiencing lovely aromas, or upon seeing awesome sights (Hertz, *Daily Prayer Book*, p. 961). Rabbi

Abraham Isaac Kook said, "When man acknowledges God with a benediction, and thus recognizes God's creation in whatever he enjoys, he will experience a heightened appreciation of God's grace, lovingkindness, and wisdom which are present in all creation."

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

My First Shabbat Board Book is a great book to talk with your children about as you look through it together! Very young children love perusing books illustrated with photographs, particularly those that include other young children! Point out the bright colors, the myriad of animals, the types of food and the variety of people. Your children will likely enjoy making sounds that go along with the different animals. Together, you can discuss animals that walk, those that fly, and those that swim. This book makes a great segue to helping little ones find objects or symbols in your home that are opposites in size, use, or appearance.

You will see a lovely picture of the father blessing each of his two children, a tradition for many parents before dinner on Shabbat evening. Boys and girls are blessed separately. Some families use the traditional blessing below, while others create their own.