

The Shabbos Table



Inspiring the Jewish Future

Spring Regional Shabbaton | Camp Chi, Lake Delton, WI | May 23-27, 2013

The [**INCREDIBLE Awesome MEANINGFUL PowerFUL**] SHABBOS TABLE

1

ONLY THE FINEST...

We treat Shabbos with the best we have, as though a King sits at our table. After all, the Shabbos table celebrates Hashem's day of rest.

4

MIRACLES...

We remember the miracle of the Mannah that fell daily and sustained the Jews while they traveled through the desert by preparing two loaves of Challah.

2

Peace...

We light candles on Friday night, a weekly reminder that peace and light should permeate our home and our lives.

5

DEPTH...

If honey tastes better than salt, why not dip the Challah in honey? Honey coats the outside. Salt draws out from the inside. Salt reminds us to dig deep, not to focus only on the outside.

3

Fine wines...

In Judaism, wine is required only at special moments; weddings, Bris Milah and holidays. Shabbos too, we take the physical and elevate it.

6

THINKING OF OTHERS...

Like Avraham, a sign of our heritage is inclusion, ensuring that everyone has a place at the Shabbos table of our communities.



Inspiring the Jewish Future
מְהַדְרִים הַיְהוּדִים לְעָתִיד



GOAL:

Teens will learn that the values imbued in our Shabbos table contain some vital life lessons.

SETUP:

Before Shabbos lunch, bring teens around the Shabbos table that is already set.

Distribute [these cards](#) to all the teens, which will be used as the anchor for your discussion.

Teens will eat lunch immediately after the discussion.

INTRODUCTION:

We are currently sitting at a Shabbos table. **What are some of the strangest things you see at this Shabbos table that are unique to Shabbos?** (Take answers from NCSYers, validate their responses, etc.)

Today, we are going to go through 6 different aspects of things that are on a Shabbos table so we can understand in greater depth what the Torah intended for us to experience at the Shabbos table. Of course, there are so many more than 6 features of a Shabbos table, but time is short.

Using the cards, have a different teen read each thought from their card. Then elaborate on your own.

#1: ONLY THE FINEST...

We treat Shabbos with the best we have, as though a King sits at our table. After all, the Shabbos table celebrates Hashem's day of rest.

While on a Shabbaton, we don't have China for 400 people. But when we are at home, we certainly take out our finest dishes, glasses and silverware. Nothing but the best. We also try to wear our Shabbos finest, some reserving clothes specifically for Shabbos Kodesh.

What is the deeper value? In Jewish literature, there are those who teach that one of the best ways to make ourselves better people is by working on our externals and letting them sink in. On Shabbos, we create an external environment that is fit for a King. After a while, it'll rub off and we'll start living Shabbos like it should be... for the King. This is a great life lesson. Sometimes, we should work from the outside inward.

#2: PEACE...

We light candles on Friday night, a weekly reminder that peace and light should permeate our home and our lives.

On Friday nights, there is a custom to have candles lit. Our Jewish literature writes that we light these candles to ensure there is peace and light in our home.

What is the deeper value? The Jewish people are tasked with being a light unto the nations. Our job is to be refined, to embody the ideas of the Torah and portray them to all around us. On Shabbos, we remind ourselves of this, as we light up our homes and our families.

#3: FINE WINES...

In Judaism, wine is required only at special moments: weddings, bris milah, and holidays. On Shabbos too, we take the physical and elevate it.

Unlike all other examples in the Torah, the Kiddush that we say on Friday night is a Biblical commandment. Ideally, when not serving 250 minors, Kiddush is made over wine. Why? Very simple. Whereas the world over, people use alcohol as a recreational item, in Judaism, while we believe in recreation, it is not with wine or alcohol. The only time we use alcohol is when there is an opportunity for growth. Shabbos, Bris Milah, weddings, holidays.

What is the deeper value? Alcohol, like all things physical, can be used for the bad or for the good. Every Shabbos, we drink wine in a holy environment. Our task is to take the physical and make it meaningful. We don't utilize the physical world for the physical alone; always with an opportunity for holiness. There are no pleasures that the Torah ignores. All of them are not only permissible, but they are often Torah commandments. To have children, to drink alcohol, to give charity. We always engage the physical. The only question is how...

#4: MIRACLES...

We remember the miracle of the mannah that fell daily and sustained the Jews while they traveled through the desert by preparing 2 loaves of challah.

Miracles aren't just stories from our past. They aren't myths or fairy tales. They are piece of the fabric of our very lives. The loaves of Challah are our reminder that we are being watched over.

What is the deeper value? Parents take care of their children. Children can't possibly grasp the lengths that their parents will go for them. In the very same way, we are taken care of. The health of the human body is nothing short of miraculous. [Use any of the following as an example, or use one of your own]:

- Vision: Our eyes, which is nothing more than a compilation of cells, can see some 16 million shades of color, transferring a megapixel rate that cameras would be jealous of. And it transfers those images to a piece of meat inside our well crafter skulls. Seeing is believing.
- Sound: Our ears are shaped so that facing someone is best way to hear them. The sounds enter the ear canal, reverberating off of the tympanic membrane, which in turn creates a ripple effect via the incus, stapes and maleus bones, through the cochlea and finally through the auditory nerve into the ball of meat in our heads. Pretty awesome.

Sometimes we forget that miracles can happen on a "small" scale too. Miracles come in all kinds of packages. The loaves of challah on our table are a weekly reminder.

#5: DEPTH...

If honey tastes better than salt, why not dip the challah in honey? Honey coats the outside. Salt draws out from the inside. Salt reminds us to dig deep, not to focus only on the outside.

It's true. Sacrifices in the time of the Beis HaMikdash were not allowed to contain honey, but all of them required salt. Seemingly bitter, salt is excellent at extracting flavor from foods. Honey is quite tasty, but slow and viscous. The Torah didn't want us to forget to bring out our insides.

What is the deeper value? The deepest aspect of Judaism is the knowledge that we have a physical coat that surrounds our spiritual neshama. While at times, we get confused and allow our physical body to make decisions for us, we need to remember that our neshama or soul needs to be the GPS of our lives. They are not equal partners; the soul is the guide, the true essence of a person. We just need to make sure we are able to be in touch with that inner aspect of us. So we eat salt and not honey. We need to reach in and extract from within the greatest depths of ourselves.

#6: THINKING OF OTHERS...

Like Avraham, a sign of our heritage is inclusion, ensuring that everyone has a place at the Shabbos table of our communities.

A hallmark of the Jewish people and Jewish communities the world over, our tables are not our own. We frequently have company, often for people who are in need.

What is the deeper value? Real satisfaction from life does not come from the service of oneself, but from the service of others. To give engender a love for others. There is probably no commandment more frequently quoted than “Love thy neighbor as thy self”. It is not just a good idea; it is the key to all relationships that are good and the greatest source of pain for relationships that are not.

TRANSITION TO THE MEAL

When we are done with the material, the session can effectively blend right into the meal. We will make Kiddush and wash, etc.

Here is the last point to share:

Food is so incredibly physical. And yet our Torah literature asks us to eat 4 meals in 26 hours. Why? **Because even eating food can be part of the service of Hashem.** Nothing is left out. We are human beings, but elevated by the way we behave. And the Shabbos table is an arena for growth in the physical world, with the aim to make it more spiritual.