

The Game of Life  
Shabbat Edu Program  
Shalom Institute  
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EUs

- Shabbat can bring one *oneg*, joy, through the celebration of both positive and negative commandments.
- Avot Melacha, although determined by the rabbis as important, now serve as a jumping off point for liberal Jews, not necessarily defined rules.
- Shabbat potentially holds individual meaning for every Jew.
- Liberal Judaism encourages each Jew to observe Shabbat through creating/discovering value in what they do on Shabbat!
- Shabbat is a day when time, not space, is holy.

EQs

- What does celebrating Shabbat mean (as a whole and to me)?
- How do the positive and negative commandments of Shabbat detract from Shabbat, enhance Shabbat, or make it more meaningful?
- Why should I celebrate Shabbat?
- How do I make time (more) holy on Shabbat?

Goals

- To demonstrate that Shabbat observance can be meaningful.
- To help learners explore the prohibitions and positive commandments of Shabbat.
- To help learners determine what they want their individual Shabbat practice to look like
- To expose learners to the idea of time in space as holy and of *avot melacha*.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson...

- Learners Will Be Able To (LWBAT) compare and contrast various Shabbat rituals, determining which ones have meaning for them and which don't.
- LWBAT explain a Shabbat observance they want to bring into their life.
- LWBAT describe the difference between positive and negative commandments on Shabbat, including their relationship to *avot melacha*.

Materials:

- 1 dice for each time (6-8 total)
- Giant "board" taped out on basketball court or in dining hall (made out of construction/printer paper squares with the tiles already typed onto them)
  - Game tiles (written on construction paper and placed on board)

- Masking tape
- Peg hats for the players - different color for each team (so they know who is on the board)
- Mitzvah cards (7 decks of regular cards-each card is worth 5 points)
- Stop signs printed on paper (Appendix D)
- Scenarios for each stop sign
- Colored paper cut into squares to break learners into teams.
- List of Avot Melacha - one for each group (In appendix C).
- Basketball or gaga ball (preferably gaga ball)
- Veggies to make chopped salad (enough for each team)
- Ping pong paddles, ball, and table (already at camp)

#### Timeline

00-05 Settle In

05-15 Instructions and split into teams

15-1:15 Play Game of Life (Shabbat edition)

1:15-1:25 Sicha

1:25-1:30 Big group Wrap-Up

#### Expanded Timeline

##### **00-05 Settle In**

Help Participants (Pps) settle into the space. Likely bathroom break needed here. As Pps come in, hand them one of 6-7 different cards of different colors or suite, to break them into teams.

##### **05-15 Instructions and split into teams**

The facilitator (Elana) will come in front of the group to introduce the game.

ASK: Does anyone know the theme of the weekend? *Shabbat!*

SAY: Exactly! This weekend, our theme is Shabbat.

ASK: Who can tell me what Shabbat is all about? (take an answer or two)

Possible answers (share if not said): Shabbat comes from the Torah

Jews have observed Shabbat throughout history and there are always Jews who don't keep Shabbat.

There are many different ways to celebrate Shabbat, and often, each of us has our own way of doing it. In order to learn more about Shabbat, we're going to play a game - the game of Shabbat (also called the Game of Life). Although loosely based off the Game of Life, this game helps us explore Shabbat as a routine part of our lives. Shomer Shabbat, meaning keeping Shabbat with the letter of the law, is one way to keep Shabbat. For Shomer Shabbat Jews, Shabbat involves this list of 39 concepts, called *avot melacha*, that tells them the categories of what they cannot do on Shabbat. The rabbis imagined that these 39 types of creative work were related to different categories of work related to the Mishkan, the Tabernacle (that the Israelites built in the desert

when God commanded it). Although that is what the text says, we get to adapt it for ourselves. Today, that is our job: adapting the rules the rabbis made through figuring out what is meaningful to us (and what isn't).

In a moment, you will **split into groups based on the card** you were handed when you came in (direct the different cards to different areas around the basketball court). In your groups, I want you to look at the 39 types of creative labor and come up with at least two reasons for why these are the things the text says we cannot do on Shabbat. (After a minute or two, ask for suggestions. Possible answers include: *planting, cooking, sewing, hunting, dyeing-all related to things you have to do; takes extra effort, involves creativity, things we don't do today, related to the work of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle.*

Regardless of if learners say that they don't do these things today, ASK: what are things that we might do today that come from these old things? Possible answers: *cooking, turning on lights, driving, writing letters, coloring, boiling water (for tea/soup/showers)*

Invite learners to turn back to the front. Give INSTRUCTIONS

STAFF: Your job is to help learners look at these lists and talk with them if they cannot come up with anything!

Look over the list of the 39 *avot melacha*:

Remember, this list was made by Jews living 2,000 years ago.

Find a task they did then, that we no longer do today (*ex: shearing sheep*) (and look up when done)

Now, ASK yourself this question and discuss with someone next to you: Why would the rabbis have forbidden what you chose (like sheep sheering) on Shabbat?

Do we do anything today that is like what you choose (like sheep sheering)? (*maybe cutting your hair?*)

Look over the list with a partner and find a task that you would NOT want to be forbidden on Shabbat (*for example, tying a knot or baking, tearing*)? How would you change it or adapt it for today, but still make it different so it fits into living Shabbat as a different ways?

What is a task you would like to forbid on Shabbat that isn't on here? (*doing homework, driving, clearing the table, doing dishes, cleaning my room*)

Now that we've looked at these 39 *avot melacha*, these creative labors, we will put our learning into practice. We are going to play a game that cycles through the days of the week, where you will come across many activities to do. Every 7th day, (ASK: Why every 7 days - *Shabbat!*) you'll come to a stop sign, where you have to determine if the activity is Shabbat friendly - if it breaks any of the categories of the *avot melacha*. Then, you have to figure out if NOT doing that activity would be meaningful to you or not and why - come up with a reason, using your own values of why you would do this activity on Shabbat or now.

For staff: you will each facilitate a group going around the board. Your job is to help them understand what Shabbat is all about, and to help them figure out which tiles break the 39 *avot melacha* and which aren't. Help remind them of what they've already found and what they haven't. You will have **stickers of two different colors**, so they can mark on Appendix A what is Shabbat friendly and what isn't (at the end, they will categorize it and determine why). Although there are scenarios that are Shabbat friendly and some that aren't, the learners are allowed to come up with their own answers.

Important extra info for staff:

- Each team starts at varying places along the board, so everyone can play at once.
- Encourage/help learners come up with ideas.

Staff - Once you are in your small groups, you need to give the instructions to the participants.

Instructions for participants:

- You will start off at one point on the board. You must go around the board at least twice
- Teams start off with 100 Mitzvah points. The goal is to end the game with 100 Mitzvah points.
- For answers that involve finding individual meaning, you can collect Mitzvah points.
- You will take turns rolling two dice, to move on the board
- Every time you come to a stop sign, you have to stop and "decide to do/not do" a scenario. The stop signs come every seven spaces. (**While giving instructions, ASK: Why are the spaces every 7 spaces?** *Answer: because Shabbat is every 7 days...* if Pps don't say that, you should say that).
- When a player come to one of these spaces, they will be given a scenario/activity
  - Players must use the 39 *avot melacha*, creative labors sheet, and determine if the activity would involve breaking any of these "rules." If so, which ones.
  - If it does, they have to figure out whether they want to do the activity anyway but then explain how they would make it special for Shabbat.
  - If it doesn't break any of the rules, they can do it! (see next bullet)
  - If the card is naturally Shabbat friendly, it is an activity and player(s) must follow directions for activity and do it (with the team if instructed).
- If this is an activity that can be done at camp (like make up rap, do a dance, make a house of playing cards - go do it!
- Because you are doing this with a team, you can discuss with them, so everyone knows what the options are and can make their own choices.
- The rest of the spaces are like the game of life: these are regular weekday activities. (Points if they come up with a way to make it Jewish during the week-come tell facilitator if that happens)

15-1:15 Play Game

Play the game. Staff, help Pps figure out the *avot melacha* and encourage them to be creative in finding out what is meaningful to them. Help them follow the game.

1:15-1:25 Sicha

Elana announces: Thank you for playing the Game of Shabbat. Now, I invite each group to find a space to sit and figure out why we did what we just did.

Instruct Pps in your group to work together and figure out why they think certain activities were okay, and why others were not. What characteristics does each group of activities have?

For Staff: answers in *italics* are SUGGESTIONS of what Pps might say. If they don't get to those points, help steer them in that direction! The bolded question is the really important one. Try to steer your conversation in that direction.

Once they've done that, ASK the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the things that traditional Judaism says are Shabbat appropriate activities? *Anything that doesn't derive from the 39 avot melacha.*
2. What are the characteristics of the activities that weren't okay for Shabbat? *They come from the 39 categories of things related to the creation of the mishkan; intolve doing things... "work"*
3. Do you think we should follow the *avot melacha* today? Why or why not? *No, because Shabbat is meaningful still without them. Yes, it's helpful to have rules. No, the rules are really old. (advanced answer) No, I don't want a Temple anymore, so I don't need to follow them. Some of them are nice because they help us do fun things, or think about things differently!*
4. Would you want to go to school everyday? Why or why not? *it's boring. I don't like it. It's hard. I need a break. I like to have fun. Yes.*
  1. Shabbat gives us a break in our week. But sometimes it is hard to do every week because it can get in the way of things. What gets in the way of you observing Shabbat at home (or if you don't observe Shabbat at home, why do you think you don't? *I want to spend time with friends who live far away. I don't care. I want to use electronics. We spend time with famly in other ways.*
5. How can changing how you do something make it more meaningful to you? (i.e. reading a book, but doing it alone, playing a video game but wearing a kippah while doing it) *It makes me more grateful for what I have/do the rest of the week. I'll be bored. I can do things I wouldn't normally do.. By changing how I do it, I think about it differently. It doesn't change anything*
6. **Many liberal Jews follow some of these rules, but have adapted them for the modern day. What is one thing you want to add to your Shabbat life to make it more meaningful/special? (If not, why don't you want to change anything?)** *take time for family time. Do a meal together. Go to synagogue. Do competitive cooking. Play video games with kippah on.*

1:25-1:30 Wrap-Up

Elana will wrap up.

(either use or comment with the points after the paragrah) Today we offered you time to learn about Shabbat observance as it is traditionally one. Some Jews practice Shabbat by not doing any of those things, and some do all of them. In liberal Judaism, each Jew gets to decide what is right for them. That means each of you has the opportunity to do some, all or none of these things. The

important thing is to know that they exist and why. In playing this game, we learned about *avot melacha*, the 39 categories of creative work that traditional Jews don't do on Shabbat. Today we learned about being Shomer Shabbat. I hope that each of you learned something about Shabbat, and how you want to do it. If you notice, all the activities we will do the rest of the day doesn't break the laws of Shabbat as we learned them. If you have questions or comments, please ask them! This is complicated and also not the law for everyone.

—wrap up that this is real; not just a game we're playing. Judaism looks different for different people, and some people do follow the “rules” very specifically. And liberal Judaism provides the opportunities to find meaning in Shabbat.

Appendix A: Stop Sign activities/scenarios (with the *avot melacha* and possible explanations)  
Scenarios...Get mitzvah points for answering with what is meaningful to them or not. If they come up with a reason for why they would or would not do this activity on Shabbat, or how they would adapt it, they get 5 Mitzvah points.

(Some of these activities will only be Shabbat activities, some will be weekday activities, and there will be some that are listed for both. There is also potential for the facilitator to choose an activity that the Pps encountered that “week” and then use that as the scenario for Shabbat)

- Go to the bathroom
- Tie your shoes
- Take a shower
- Cook a meal
- Talk on the phone
- Watch a movie
- Write a letter
- Draw a picture
- Play a game of knock out or gaga (Activity: do, play one round of gaga or one round of knock out)
- Go grocery shopping
- Play on the computer
- Read a book
- Have a meal with your family
- A sleep over with a friend
- Write down and perform a rap (Activity: Figure out how to make it Shabbat friendly)
- Make up a dance (Activity)
- Climb a tree
- Go to synagogue
- Go on a picnic
- Play a game of ping pong! (Activity)
- Build a castle out of playing cards (Activity)
- Go to school
- Make a snack (Activity: go to the dining hall and make a chopped salad)

- Turn on the lights when you get home/turn them off when you go to sleep
- Play a video game
- Send a friend a snapchat
- Post on instagram
- Buy and eat a piece of candy

Just weekday tiles:

- You don't want to take out the trash. Lose 5 Mitzvah points
- Rude to parents. Lose 5 Mitzvah points
- You learn a Jewish song. Gain 5 Mitzvah points
- You open the door for someone or wait for someone. Gain 5 Mitzvah points.
- Pick up trash. Gain 5 Mitzvah points (go find a piece of trash - one per teammate - and throw it out). Earn an extra Mitzvah point for each piece of trash picked up.
- Say hi to the rabbi. Earn 5 Mitzvah points.
- Say something nice to someone. Earn 5 Mitzvah points.
- Give tzedakah. Earn 5 Mitzvah points.
- Go to the doctor and get a clean bill of health. Earn 5 Mitzvah points.
- Do your chores without being asked. Gain 5 Mitzvah points.
- Help a friend with something. Gain 5 Mitzvah points. (Extra 1 point each for each thing you could do to help a friend)
- Go to Hebrew school. Gain 5 Mitzvah points.
- Be grateful for your food (by saying a blessing over it or just saying thank you for it). Gain 5 Mitzvah points.
- Do your homework.
- Litter. Lose 5 Mitzvah points.

Appendix B: Shabbat explanations (same order as appendix A)

These give the activity and which of the 39 avot melacha that they break. Then, there are possible answers that learners may have. The learners are encouraged to offer what they would do differently to make the activity special for Shabbat, regardless of whether they choose to do it or not. If they have other answers, it is totally fine and encouraged, as long as the answers are thoughtful!

- Go to the bathroom
  - traditionally cannot tear...Decided to tear toilet paper because it's easier and doesn't add meaning not to
- Tie your shoes
  - No tying a knot. *Do because you need your sneakers tied. Don't do and wear different shoes to make Shabbat special.*
- Take a shower
  - can't wring things out, and can't heat water. But I feel better when I shower, so I will shower to be in a good mood for Shabbat (because it's happy day)
- Cook a meal
  - No fire (burning) allowed to be lit. You can make a salad or cut up veggies. (STAFF: *can also open bags and prepare things to be eaten. Also, okay to heat things up in al-*

- ready lit oven or on plata (a warming plate that plugs into the wall). Do and make warm food because it brings me joy to eat it. Do make warm food because it tastes better made that day. Don't make warm food because you do the rest of the week - so eat something cold or only warm it up. Compromise: you don't make something new, but feel alright warming something up.*
- Talk on the phone/text
    - No electricity (which derives from no burning allowed on Shabbat). Texting: related to writing. *Talk on the phone, but only to family because I don't talk to them the rest of the week. Talk on the phone because I want to add to the joy of Shabbat by playing with a friend. Not talk on the phone because I can do it the rest of the week, so this time I will make plans ahead of time or only play with the people around me. Not talk on the phone/text because I do it so much during the week that I want a big separation.*
  - Watch a movie
    - No electricity (which derives from no burning allowed on Shabbat). *See above. Maybe do because one time whole family sits together. Or only do if the whole family is together.*
  - Write a homework assignment
    - Cannot write two letters together or erase two letters. *Do homework because this is a good time to get things done and have a busy Sunday. Do homework because it's a break from the week. Don't do homework because don't like it. Don't do homework because it's an easy thing not to do (not a great answer). Don't do homework because encourages doing other activities that increase joy!*
  - Draw/paint a picture
    - Possibly about tracing, or writing/erasing. *Do because it brings joy. Do if on the subject of Shabbat. Do because don't take time for art in the rest of the week and love it. Don't do because can do sand art, or work with clay. Don't do because don't like it that much. Don't do because really like art and want to find art in the world without doing it (so appreciate art in the world).*
  - Play a game of knock out or gaga (activity)
    - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*. DO IT!
  - Go grocery shopping
    - Carrying, driving (which is electricity, so about burning), using money.\* *Go grocery shopping because less people in the store so more relaxing. Go because able to go with parents and actually pick out what you want. Go because love food and being there is fun! Don't go because don't like it. Don't go because don't like being in car and can't drive on Shabbat. Don't go because so many more things to do which ARE enjoyable.*
    - For STAFF To explain if kids curious: \*Technically, money on Shabbat is not prohibited, but the rabbis determined that using money isn't in the spirit of Shabbat. Partly because it's related to business practices and business used to be written down on paper which broke another of the 39 *avot melacha*.
  - Play on the computer/iPad

- No electricity (which derives from no burning allowed on Shabbat). Possibly writing/ erasing. *Don't do because can do other things that bring joy - actually play with friends, go outside, play a board game. Do because can look up facts when in discussion with people. Do because not allowed to do much during the week and it's fun. Don't do because causes fights between siblings over who gets the computer. Don't do because parents like kids to spend time with them.*
- Read a book
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*.
- Have a meal with your family
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*.
- A sleep over with a friend
  - Depending on what you do, probably doesn't break any of the 39 *avot melacha*.
- Write down and perform a rap (activity minus writing)
  - (If done without writing) totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*.  
HELP LEARNERS SEE THAT AND THEN DO!
- Make up a dance (activity)
  - (If you are your own source of music) totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*. DO IT!
- Climb a tree
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*.
- Go to synagogue
  - Cannot drive on Shabbat, cannot carry (like tallit or a baby)\* *Conservative moment is totally alright with people driving to temple on Shabbat, because they are going to do something related to Shabbat!*
  - FOR STAFF: \*There is a go around to this, called an eiruv, that gets put up around a city and means that people can carry within it. It basically makes the whole city someone's "house"
- Go on a picnic
  - If make it all cold and walk somewhere, not a worry. If drive, driving=no burning.
- Play a game of ping pong! (activity)
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*.
- Build a castle out of playing cards (activity)
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*. GO FIND A DECK AND DO IT!
- Go to school
  - Writing, erasing, etc. *Don't go to school because we don't have school on the weekend. Don't go to school because need a break from school. Go to school, but don't write.*
- Make a snack (activity)
  - Totally fine for Shabbat according to 39 *avot melacha*, if don't cook something (salting means for meat, not for other food). GO TO DINING HALL AND MAKE A SALAD FOR SEUDAH SHLISHIT, THE 3RD MEAL, LATER TODAY!
- Turn on the lights when you get home/turn them off when you go to sleep

- Technically, burning - fire. *Do because environmentally friendly/responsible. Don't do because very different from week. Don't do because make you aware of how much electricity you use. Do because don't want a bulb to burn. Do because hard to sleep without it, and sleeping will make you a nicer person on Shabbat.*
- FOR STAFF (If kids ask or you think they'll be interested): But, conservative movement has said it's alright because lights today don't actually use fire to work and so it is acceptable. Also, it is more environmentally friendly.
- Play a video game
  - No electricity (which derives from no burning allowed on Shabbat). Possibly writing/erasing. *Don't do because can do other things that bring joy - actually play with friends, go outside, play a board game. Do because can look up facts when in discussion with people. Do because not allowed to do much during the week and it's fun. Don't do because causes fights between siblings over who gets the computer. Don't do because parents like kids to spend time with them.*
- Send a friend a snapchat
  - No electric (burning). CAN DO IT IF CREATE A HUMAN SNAP. CREATE A HUMAN SNAP TO "SEND" TO ANOTHER GROUP AND SOMEHOW GET THEIR ATTENTION TO "SEND IT" AND SHOW THEM. MITZVAH POINTS IF RELATED TO SHABBAT.
- Post on instagram
  - No electric (burning). CAN DO IT IF CREATE A HUMAN PICTURE TO "POST". CREATE A HUMAN INSTAGRAM POST TO "SEND" TO A STAFF MEMBER AND SHOW THEM. MITZVAH POINTS IF RELATED TO SHABBAT.
- Buy and eat a piece of candy
  - Money handling. *Do because it tastes good. Don't do because have some sweets at home. Do because don't get candy the rest of the week. Don't do because make good dessert for Shabbat instead. Don't do because parents don't like when you eat it, and want to listen to them.*

Appendix C:

# 39 MELACHOS TABLE

<b>Ch</b> חֹרֵשׁ Choresh Ploving	<b>Zo</b> זֹרֵעַ Zoreah Sowing	<b>Ko</b> קוֹצֵר Kotzair Reaping	<b>Mm</b> מַעְמֵר M'amair Gathering	<b>Du</b> דָּשׁ Dush Threshing	<b>Zr</b> זֹרֵה Zoreh Winnowing	<b>Mv</b> מַבְעִיר Ma'avir Kindling	<b>Mc</b> מַכְבֵּה Mechabeh Extinguishing
<b>Bo</b> בּוֹרֵה Borer Boring	<b>To</b> טוֹחֵן Tochain Grinding	<b>Mi</b> מִרְקֵד Miraked Sifting	<b>Lu</b> לֶשׁ Lush Kneading	<b>Of</b> אֹפֶה Ofeh Baking		<b>Kt</b> כּוֹתֵב Kotav Writing two letters	<b>Mk</b> מוֹחֵק Mochaik Erasing two letters
<b>Go</b> גּוֹזֵז Gozez Showering	<b>Me</b> מִלְבֵּן Melabain Whitening	<b>Mn</b> מַנְפֵּץ Menafetz Disentangling	<b>Tz</b> צוֹבֵעַ Tzovayah Dyeing	<b>Tv</b> טוֹוֵה Toveh Spinning	<b>Ma</b> מַסֵּךְ Maisach Mounting warp	<b>OB</b> עֹשֶׂה בַּיּוֹם Oseh Be'it Batal Meirin Preparing to Weave	<b>Ha</b> חוֹצֵא Hotza'ah Carving
<b>Or</b> אוֹרֵג Oraig Weaving	<b>Po</b> פוֹצֵעַ Potzai'ah Separating threads	<b>Ko</b> קוֹשֵׁר Koshair Tying a knot	<b>Mr</b> מַתִּיר Matir Untying a knot	<b>Mt</b> מַחֲתֵךְ Mechateich Cutting	<b>Tf</b> תּוֹפֵר Tofair Sewing	<b>Kr</b> קוֹרֵעַ Ko'reah Tearing	<b>MP</b> מַכֵּה בַּפִּיִּשׁ Makch B'Pai'ish Socking the head blow
<b>Td</b> צָד Tzud Trapping	<b>Sc</b> שׁוֹחֵט Shochet Slaughtering	<b>Mf</b> מַפְשִׁיט Mafshit Skinning	<b>Mb</b> מַעְבֵּד M'abaid Salting	<b>Mi</b> מַטְחֵק Memacheik Smoothing	<b>Mh</b> מַשְׁרֵט Mesharteit Tracing lines	<b>Bn</b> בּוֹנֵה Bonch Building	<b>So</b> סוֹסֵר Soiser Demolishing

Appendix D:

