

# SABBATH STATIONS

## Station 1: Exodus 20:8-11

This passage is from the Ten Commandments, which Moses delivered to the Hebrew people in the wilderness. We are to take a day of rest because God did. Resting on the sabbath is such a big deal that it was one of God's first commandments to the Hebrews. Notice how the commandment begins: "Remember." God asks us to remember that God rested and to be aware that we too need rest.

Use the supplies provided to create one or more reminders of this commandment. You might choose to make stickers that you could add to a calendar, a sign you could hang in your room, or a bracelet with six green beads and one red bead strung onto jute or twine. Take these creations with you when you leave this station.

## Station 2: Deuteronomy 5:12-15

This passage is from the version of the Ten Commandments found in Deuteronomy. Why were the Hebrew people supposed to observe the Sabbath by not working for a day? According to Deuteronomy, they were to refrain from working because they had been slaves in Egypt, where Pharaoh had forced them to work long days every day. Now that they were free, God wanted to make sure that they did not behave in the same way. The Israelites were to rest on the seventh day, and they were to allow their servants, their animals, and the foreigners living among them to do the same.

Using the paper provided, write a letter or short essay, explaining why you think this commandment is still relevant for our culture today. You might write a letter to an elected official or you might write a short essay that you could post on the Internet. Focus on how keeping the sabbath could have a positive effect on God's creation.

Leave your writing at the station, and post it on the bulletin board if one is provided.

## Station 3: Leviticus 25:1-7

Sabbath isn't just for people. God instructed the people of Israel to let their fields rest for one year every seven years. Letting the land rest allows the soil to retain its nutrients, because plant matter has time to decompose and enrich the soil.

Take a piece of fruit from the bowl and hold it in your hand. Slowly eat it, savoring its flavor, as you think about the importance of good soil in the world today. When you finish, place the rind or peel in the container labeled "compost." In a compost heap, scraps of food can decay and become organic material that can fertilize future plantings. Compost is an effective way to reuse what God has given us. Say a prayer of thanks for today's farmers, who grow our food while caring for the land.

## Station 4: Leviticus 25:8-17

Leviticus tells us that a special kind of sabbath was to be held in Israel once every 50 years. In that culture, when families became poor, their land was taken by the wealthy and the former owners became slaves. Every 50th year—the Jubilee Year—slaves were released, land was returned to its original owner, and debts were forgiven. This practice was intended to help restore balance to the economy and to make sure that the people had a just and fair economic system.

Write or draw on the table a representation of what the Jubilee Year might look like in our time. This table is a communal piece of art, so you can build on the contributions of others.

## Station 5: Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-27

In these two Scriptures, Jesus shows how wrong-headed some religious leaders were when it came to the sabbath. They were so strict in their interpretation and application of the sabbath commandment that they had lost sight of its purpose. Jesus said that God created the sabbath for our benefit.

How could the sabbath be a gift to us? How can our keeping the sabbath be a gift to our planet? Write your responses to these questions on the blank side of sheets of gift-wrapping paper then cut them out and tape them to the large gift.