

REMEMBERING THE SABBATH

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
(Exodus 20:8)

How does the Lord want us to remember the Sabbath day? Does He want us to spend the entire day at church or reading His Word? Think back to what the Lord did on the Sabbath day while He lived on earth. The gospels repeatedly tell us that the Lord entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and taught the people. One passage says: “As His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read” (Luke 4:16). The Sabbath is a time for learning about the Lord and worshiping Him—a time for remembering Him. But the Lord also healed many people on the Sabbath day, teaching us that: “It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:11). Yet another clue can be found in the meaning of the Hebrew word “Sabbath” which means rest. The Sabbath day is to be a day of rest—set apart from the other days of the week. Ideally, we will experience something of heavenly peace on the Sabbath.

READ: “Keeping the Sabbath” article by Kurt H. Asplundh

FOR REFLECTION: A Perfect Sabbath (ages 4 – up)

Ask each person in the family to describe what they think a perfect Sabbath day would be like. The Lord tells us that remembering the Sabbath should include instruction about the Lord and His teachings, time to think about eternal life, rest and relaxation, and love toward the neighbor (see *True Christian Religion* 301). How could your family implement these ideas into observing the Sabbath? Let everyone contribute ideas about what a perfect Sabbath might look like and then try to agree on one or two that you can implement.

READ: “Resting in the Lord” by the Rev. Walter E. Orthwein

PROJECT: Make a Sabbath Collage (ages 4 – up)

Make pictures that illustrate the way you would like to spend the Sabbath. Arrange these on a poster to remind you of your ideas about “the perfect Sabbath.”

ACTIVITY: Realizing the Potential of the Sabbath

Look at ways that you can make better use of this day.

ACTIVITY: Who Works on the Sabbath? (ages 8-14)

It would be ideal if everyone could rest and relax on the Sabbath, for we need a time of peace and renewal to “recharge our batteries” before returning to our daily uses. But as the Lord showed us while He lived on earth, we should not hesitate to help our neighbor on the Sabbath. The Lord Himself often healed people on the Sabbath.

- ◆ Make a list of people who sometimes have to work on Sunday.
- ◆ Now make a list of people who generally do not have to go into work on a Sunday.
- ◆ What kind of jobs must be done every day of the week?



WORSHIPING THE LORD

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
(Psalm 29:2)

An essential part of keeping the Sabbath day holy is to worship the Lord. Worshiping with others can be a special part of this day—the Lord’s day. But worshiping the Lord should continue throughout the day (and throughout the week) by trying to obey His commandments. For a person is in worship to the Lord whenever he is acting from love and charity. “A person is worshiping all the time if love and charity abide in him, external worship being only the outward expression of it” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618).

READ: “Why We Worship the Lord on Sundays” by the Rev. F. E. Gyllenhaal

FOR REFLECTION: Should We Compel Ourselves to Attend Church?

Consider the following teachings from the Lord's Word to help you reflect on whether we should compel ourselves to attend church. Also consider whether we should compel children to attend church if they are resistant?

- ◆ Worship of the Lord is from free choice but not compulsion (see *Heaven and Hell* 603).
- ◆ While a person is being regenerated, he exercises self-compulsion, from the freedom with which he is gifted by the Lord. In compelling oneself there is freedom (*Arcana Coelestia* 1947:1, 2).
- ◆ People should participate in external worship because it can prepare us to receive spiritual gifts from the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1618).
- ◆ Worship offered in freedom is worship coming from the heart (*Arcana Coelestia* 9588).
- ◆ When a person obeys the Lord consistently, it forms a habit that contains both affection and freedom (*Arcana Coelestia* 4884:2).

PROJECT: Where Two or Three Are Gathered Together (ages 5-9)

When we come together to worship the Lord, He can draw near us. Make a picture of the Lord in the sanctuary of your church. You may want to show the Lord holding out His Word to us, offering us the wondering teachings that can lead us to heaven!

READ: “What Worship Is” a sermon by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

PROJECT: Banner or Firebrand? (*ages 9 – teens*)

When a person worships the Lord without charity in his heart, the angels see him as an actor with a firebrand in his hand. But when a person worships the Lord with charity in his heart, he appears to be a standard bearer carrying a banner (see *Doctrine of Charity* 177). Can you dramatize this idea? First make a "firebrand" and a beautiful banner as props.

CONJUNCTION WITH THE LORD

**Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.
(Exodus 20:8-9)**

The six days of labor preceding the Sabbath picture the work involved in overcoming our evils. The Lord wants to give us times of spiritual rest or peace. He knows that we need peaceful times just as we need physical rest for our bodies.

Activity: Six Days You Shall Labor (*ages 6 – up*)

Choose something that is good to do and make sure that you do it every day—for six days. By the time you reach the seventh day, it may well be a habit that you will find easy to continue doing. Take a day of rest on the seventh day and thank the Lord for His help!

Variation for Teens and Adults: Choose a truth that you would like to bring into your life and try to follow it each day, for six days. On the seventh day, take time to reflect on how this has affected your life. You may find that what you compel yourself to do at first, later becomes a habit, then a matter of conscience, and finally brings you delight.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: Looking Outward (*teens and adults*)

Reflect on ways that you can reconnect with the Lord and with the people in your life. Use the graphic organizer to note your ideas for ways to “connect” with the Lord and ways for connecting with others.

JOURNAL PAGE: Reflect on a Passage from the Word (*teens and adults*)

Read a passage from the Lord’s Word and then try writing about it, letting the words flow freely as your pen moves across the paper. See if this “free writing” helps you understand the passage better or gives you insights into how it might be applied in your life.

ACTIVITY: Meditate on Favorite Quotes from the Word

The Sabbath is a time for instruction, meditation, resting from our work, and loving the neighbor. Collect favorite passages from the Word (Old Testament, New Testament, and Heavenly Doctrines). Handwrite these on cards or use a computer to print them out onto special paper. Take time to reflect on these quotes.

SABBATH PEACE

“Rest on the Sabbath day” means the conjunction of the Lord with a person,
because a person then has peace and salvation.
(*Heaven and Hell* 287:3)

The celestial meaning of the commandment to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” is conjunction with the Lord, followed by peace because this conjunction gives protection from hell (see *True Christian Religion* 303).

In *True Christian Religion* 304, heavenly peace is compared with the state of mind that people enjoy when natural peace follows conflict, danger, or extreme stress. The examples given are peace after war, rest after severe labor, calm after a storm, spring after a terrible winter, a mother holding her baby after the labor of childbirth, and a ship passenger reaching land after experiencing dangers at sea. Below are several activities and projects relating to these examples.

PROJECT: Peace Is Like... (*ages 10 – teens*)

Make an accordion book or a mural that illustrates one of the examples given above (calm after storm, *etc.*). In six pictures or panels, show different stages of the dangerous or stressful situation. In the seventh picture or panel, show the happiness that comes when the danger is passed or the labor is over.

DRAMATIZATION: Peace After a Storm (*ages 3-8*)

Suggestions for dramatizing a storm followed by calm, or perhaps hard work followed by rest.

ACTIVITY: Write a Story About Peace After... (*ages 11 – up*)

Ask children to tell or write a story about one of the examples of natural peace being welcomed after experiencing troubles. They may wish to illustrate the story as well.

ACTIVITY: Talk to People Who Experienced World War II (*ages 10 – up*)

Talk with people who either fought in World War II or supported their country at home. Ask about the challenges of this difficult time. Then ask how they felt when peace was declared. How did they celebrate? You could also talk with veterans of a more recent war, along with members of their family.

JOURNAL PAGE: Metaphors for Peace (*teens and adults*)

Think about a time in your life when you experienced peace after a difficult time. Use the idea of transition from winter to spring, storm to sunshine, safe harbor after a dangerous voyage, holding a precious gift from the Lord after the rigor of childbirth, or peace after war as a metaphor for this situation in your life and write about it.

