

**Program Title: Sabbath Bride**

**Category: Jewish Learning**

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**Created for: NFTY-NE December Institute**

**Touchstone Text:** "L'cha dodi likrat kallah. P'nei shabbat nikabilah." and Shabbat 119a: R. Hanina robed himself and stood at sunset of Sabbath eve [and] exclaimed, 'Come and let us go forth to welcome the queen Sabbath.' R. Yannai donned his robes on Sabbath eve and exclaimed, 'Come, O bride, Come, O bride!'

**Goals:**

- Teach PP's about the Sabbath Bride
- To instill a deeper connection to Shabbat

**Objectives:**

- PPs will study "L'cha Dodi" and its origins
- PPs will learn about, discuss and personalize the concept of the Sabbath Bride
- PPs will receive a strip of white cloth to wear on Shabbat to further their connection with Shabbat

**Timed Procedure:**

1. Opening Skit.....	2 minutes
2. Break into groups.....	3 minutes
3. Name Game.....	5 minutes
4. Intro to L'cha Dodi.....	12 minutes
5. It's bride time.....	7 minutes
6. "I do".....	12 minutes
7. Wearing White.....	5 minutes
8. Regroup.....	3 minutes
9. Closing Skit.....	2 minutes
Total.....	51 minutes

**Materials:**

- Boom box/iPod and speakers
- CD with L'cha Dodi/iPod with L'cha Dodi on it (1 per group)
- White Cloth Strips/White (satin) ribbon – 10 inches long (1 per PP), at least ½ inch wide
- ½ pieces of paper
- Pens
- marker
- Handout 1
- Handout 2

**People:**

- 10 GL's

**Background Information:**

**Detailed Procedure:**

**1. Opening Skit.....2 minutes**

- 1: Hey, Herby! Remember when we went to Tzafat with L'dor V'dor this summer?!?  
 2: Yeah! It was totally amazing! All the kabbalists and kabbalah stuff was totally crazy awesome!  
 1: They had some really cool, mystical Shabbat traditions, do you remember what they were?  
 2: Hmmm....  
 (oooooooooooooooooooo)

**2. Break into groups.....3 minutes**

**3. Name Game.....5 minutes**

GL: Hi everybody, welcome! We're going to begin with a name game. Everyone please say your name, TYG and your favorite thing to do on Shabbat.

*(Hi, my name is Shab, and I'm from BAT, and my favorite thing to do is eat chicken!)*

**4. Intro to L'cha Dodi.....12 minutes**

GL: Excellent. Can someone summarize the skit please?

*(They were talking about their trip to Israel and that in Tzafat they learned about these cool kabalistic, Shabbat traditions.)*

GL: What is your favorite prayer on Shabbat? Shout 'em out.

(Sh'ma, Shalom Rav, Michamocha, V'shamru)  
(L'cha Dodi)

GL: Wow! That's so cool! My favorite prayer to sing on Shabbat is L'cha Dodi too! Does anyone know the origins of the L'cha Dodi prayer?

*(It was written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Kabbalist, Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz, who lived in Tzafat, Israel. It's actually an acrostic poem; the first letter of the first 8 stanzas spell his name, Solomon Halevi).*

GL: Nice job. Now that we have that introduction behind us, we're going to take a look the text of L'cha Dodi.

[Pass out Handout 1]

GL: Now we're going to listen to a recording of someone singing L'cha Dodi...follow along!

[Listen]

GL: Let's take a look at the English translation. Would someone like to read?

[PP take turns reading]

GL: Good reading! Does everyone see Solomon Halevi's name?  
(yes).

GL: Would someone like to explain what "Sh'mor" and "Zachor" are in Stanza 1?

*(Twice in the Torah, we're commanded to honor Shabbat. We must "remember" (zachor) the Sabbath by not forgetting to observe Shabbat, but also to yearn for Shabbat during the working week. Sh'mor, observe, instructs us to observe the laws of Shabbat. In both ways we keep Shabbat holy.)*

GL: Good explanation! If you notice stanzas 1,2 and 9 (and the refrain) are about Shabbat whereas stanzas 3-8 are about the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the coming of the messiah and the redemption of Israel. Does anyone see a connection between Shabbat and the coming of the Messiah?

*(Well, Shabbat marked the end of creation and now marks the end of a hard, stressful, busy week. The messianic age would mark the end of a destructive, hateful era and begin a new, peaceful era.)*

GL: Exactly! These sentiments weren't uncommon at all. L'cha dodi was written not too far after the Spanish Inquisition. The mystics in Tzfat really believed because of the horrors of the Inquisition, it would soon be time for the Messianic age. Alright, so now, let's take a look at hand out #2.

**5. It's bride time.....7 minutes**

[Pass out handout #2; have on PP read].

GL: What is the tradition we have when we sing the "Boi Kallah" verse of L'cha Dodi?

*(We rise, turn and face the entrance. We bow to the left, right and center as we sing the last line of that verse).*

GL: Do you think this tradition also combines the theory of Shabbat Kallah and Shabbat Malkah?

*(Yes, because when a bride enters the synagogue people rise and watch her enter, and when in the presence of a queen, it is customary to bow).*

GL: Does anyone connect more to the interpretation of Shabbat Bride or Shabbat Queen? Or, do you even agree with these interpretations or have any additional thoughts?

*(I connect with.....) (I don't agree.....)*

**6. "I do".....12 minutes**

GL: Shabbat commences with the Sabbath bride meeting her groom...a wedding. What are some of the key components of a wedding?

*(Bridal Party, Flowers, a Chupah...etc.) ("I do")*

GL: The statement to which the bride and groom say I do is " Do you \_\_\_\_\_, take \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife? ("I do"). Do you promise to love, cherish and protect her, whether in good fortune or in adversity, and to seek with her a life hallowed by the faith of Israel? ("I do") We, tonight, are the groom at the wedding for Shabbat. Imagine you really were taking Shabbat to be your bride, what would your "I do" statement be? Because this is a different type of marriage (than a real bride and groom) your commitment to them is different. So rewrite the "I do" statement to fit your marriage with Shabbat, to fit the way you observe/would like to observe Shabbat, and to fit your view of our marriage to Shabbat.

[pass out markers and papers]

[PP's take time to think about it, write, decorate, create something they'll want to keep]

*For example: "Do you \_\_\_ take Shabbat to be your halachically wedded wife? Do you promise to love, honor and remember her? Do you vow to relax, study, be with family, and pray with her? I do." (They can be longer, more in depth, a different format, more fitting to their lifestyle and more creative!)*

GL: Ok, let's go around and share what we wrote!

[PPs share and keep their vows]

GL: Wow those are awesome! You should keep these vows with you, hang it in your room or carry it with you, so you always remember the covenant you have with Shabbat, and though it may be hard, you'll try to uphold these vows.

GL: Now, the Sabbath Bride has entered on Erev Shabbat. Traditionally, she is bringing in a day for relaxation, prayer, study and connection with G-d. For you personally, when the Sabbath Bride enters Friday Evening, what does she represent to you? What is Shabbat to you?

[Give PPs a moment to think]

*(Saturday is usually a very busy day for me, but I guess the Sabbath Bride brings an end to a hectic school week and a day/2 days for other fun activities)  
(It's the same for me).*

**7. Wearing White.....5 minutes**

GL: As you may know, it is customary to wear white to Erev Shabbat Services. Does anyone know why?

*(White represents purity)  
(To honor the Sabbath Bride)*

GL: Do you like this tradition? Do you think this tradition can help make Shabbat more sacred or more holy for you?

[Make sure general consensus is yes or at least probably]  
*(Yes, I think it's really cool. It's another way to separate Shabbat from the rest of the week – make it more different and more holy.)*

GL: Exactly! I know we've all brought our own smashing and probably *not* white outfits for tonight, but to still honor the Sabbath Bride and start a new tradition, we've brought you each a strip of white cloth. You can wear on your wrist, neck or in your hair. We'd really like if you'll wear this every Shabbat, but especially, PLEASE wear it TONIGHT for Shabbat.

[Handout strips of cloth, 1 per PP, and one for you!]

GL: Ok, let's regroup!

**10. Regroup.....3 minutes**

**11. Closing Skit.....2 minutes**

2: Hey! Still thinking about our awesome trip from this summer?

1: Yeah! How could I forget – especially Shlomo and his crazy acrostic poem!

2: It's my faaaaaaaaaavvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv.....

1: Mine too! Shabbat Shalom, Herby, see you later!

2: Good Shabbas to you too Abe.

Handout #1

L'cha Dodi

(copy of the mishkan t'fillah page?)

Pg 14-15 in the NFTY Mishkan from convention

Handout #2

The Talmud discusses the Friday evening habits of two rabbis:

The text says that Rabbi Chanina would dress in fine clothes, stand at sunset on Friday evening and call out, "Come let us go forth to welcome the Sabbath queen." While Rabbi Yannai would dress in fine garments and exclaim, "Come, O bride! Come, O bride." (Talmud, Shabbat 119a)

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Shabbat Kallah: Shabbat is often referred to as the *Shabbat Kallah*, the Sabbath bride.

In the beginning of creation, every day of the week, except Shabbat, had a partner. Day 1 and 4 are linked in the formation of light and the creation of the luminaries; days 2 and 5 are linked in the formation of water and their being gathered into seas; days 3 and 6 are linked in the creation of earth and its vegetation. Only the seventh day was without a partner. G-d then promised the Shabbat that the Jewish People would be its partner. Therefore, the Jewish People go out to greet the Shabbat just as a groom goes to meet his bride.

Shabbat Ha Malkah: While the *Kallah* represents the feminine and sensual side of Shabbat, the more regal, majestic aspect of *malkhut*, or kingship, is felt through the Shabbat *ha malkah*, the Sabbath Queen. The *malkah* lends stability, guaranteeing the mood. She lends permanence to the observance of Shabbat.

However, both interpretations are necessary. *Malkah*, without the tenderness and passion of the *Kallah*, could mean a harsh, emotionless day, all laws and prohibitions. Just as *zachor*, remembering with love and anticipation; and *shamor*, keeping the letter of the law, fuse to create one transcendent Sabbath; so do *kallah* and *malkah* fuse, representing both inward feeling and outward observance.

When the Shabbat, first begins to enter, she is referred to as "the bride". When she enters under the bridal canopy, she becomes "married" to the Jewish people, who are compared to a king, and she is called the "Shabbat Queen".(12)