

Sabbath activities for families who need rest, not another checklist

Eight pages: five cut-apart sheets holding all forty cards, a how-to-use page, and a family selection card.

INSIDE THIS PDF

- 40 cut-apart cards, 8 per sheet with trim guides
- Prep time, who it suits, and an adaptation on every card
- Five suits: begin, tired, outdoors, make, mercy
- A family selection card for choosing two or three

Print, cut, and deal out two or three

The deck is a menu, not an itinerary. Nobody has to play every card, and no week has to look like the last one.

1

Print single-sided on any paper

Card stock lasts longer, but ordinary paper works. The dashed guides on each sheet show where to cut.

2

Cut the sheets into eight cards

Each sheet holds one suit. Keep the suits together with a clip, or shuffle them all into one pile.

3

Deal two or three, then stop

Ask what energy you actually have, who needs an accommodation, and what preparation you can remove.

4

Let a child choose one

Give each person a nomination. A family may open with bread, take a nap, walk at sunset, and call that a complete Sabbath.

Every card names its preparation, who it suits, and one way to adapt it, so a tired adult never has to invent the accommodation under pressure.

MARK THE BEGINNING

01/40

Light one candle

Light a candle together and pray one sentence: “God, this time belongs to you. Thank you for bringing us here.”

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Use a battery candle or a lamp if an open flame is not safe.

MARK THE BEGINNING

02/40

Break bread together

Share bread or a favorite simple snack, and let each person name one good thing from the week.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Any food everyone can eat works; nobody has to speak to take part.

MARK THE BEGINNING

03/40

Put the work away

Place phones, laptops, and homework in one basket for an agreed stretch of time, then close the lid together.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Keep one phone out for care needs and say so plainly.

MARK THE BEGINNING

04/40

Sing one song

Sing a hymn or play one worship song the family already knows, and let people join, hum, or simply listen.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Lower the volume or offer headphones for sound sensitivity.

MARK THE BEGINNING

05/40

Read the rest story

Read Genesis 2:1–3 or Mark 2:23–28 aloud, then sit quietly for a few breaths before anyone comments.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 5+

Adapt: Use a picture Bible or a short retelling for younger children.

MARK THE BEGINNING

06/40

Name what stays undone

Each person names one task they are allowed to leave unfinished until the rest is over. No fixing, no advice.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 6+

Adapt: Write the tasks on paper if saying them aloud feels exposing.

MARK THE BEGINNING

07/40

Bless each person by name

Say to each person, “May the Lord bless you and keep you,” using their name. Include the adults.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Offer a hand on the shoulder, a wave, or words only — their choice.

MARK THE BEGINNING

08/40

Walk the threshold

Take one slow lap around the block or the garden to mark the change of pace before you settle in.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Stand at an open door or window if walking is not possible today.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

09/40

Blanket pile and books

Pile cushions and blankets on the floor and read picture books aloud until somebody stops asking for more.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Audiobooks count. Listening from another room counts too.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

10/40

Listen to a Bible story

Play one short audio Bible story or psalm and let everyone listen with eyes open, closed, or busy hands.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Drawing, fidgeting, and lying down are all real listening.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

11/40

Long bath or foot soak

Run an unhurried bath or a bowl of warm water for feet, with no schedule attached to getting out.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: A warm washcloth on hands and face gives the same signal.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

12/40

Nap without apologizing

Someone sleeps. Everyone else keeps the house quiet on purpose. Rest is the activity, not a failure to plan one.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Quiet parallel rest works when a full nap is not realistic.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

13/40

Build with quiet music

Put on instrumental music and build with blocks, bricks, or magnets with no picture to copy and nothing to finish.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 2+

Adapt: One adult can read nearby while a child builds; parallel counts.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

14/40

Rewatch a loved film

Watch a film everyone already loves, then share one favorite moment each while the credits run.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Leaving partway through is allowed and needs no explanation.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

15/40

Eat the easy meal

Serve planned leftovers, sandwiches, or cereal on the good plates. Cooking is not the measure of a hospitable table.

PREP NIGHT BEFORE

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Accept a delivered or gifted meal without making it a project.

WHEN EVERYONE IS TIRED

16/40

Sit outside with a drink

Carry warm or cold drinks to a step, balcony, or window seat and sit with no agenda for as long as it lasts.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: An open window and a blanket do the same work in bad weather.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

17/40

Take a noticing walk

Walk slowly and let each person choose the pace. Name one thing you noticed when you get home — no lesson attached.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Wheels, strollers, and very short loops all work.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

18/40

Watch the clouds move

Lie down or lean back for ten minutes and watch the sky change. Say nothing unless you want to.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: A window and a comfortable chair are enough.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

19/40

Listen for five sounds

Stay still and count five different sounds around you, then thank God for one of them out loud.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 3+

Adapt: For deaf or hard-of-hearing family members, find five moving things.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

20/40

Visit water or a garden

Go to a pond, river, shoreline, or accessible garden and stay long enough to stop checking the time.

PREP 15 MINUTES

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Check accessibility before you leave so nobody is stranded.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

21/40

Sketch one plant badly

Everyone draws the same leaf, weed, or flower for five minutes. Skill is not the point and nobody grades it.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: Photograph it instead, or trace the outline with a finger.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

22/40

Find the moon

Step outside or open a curtain after dark, find the moon or one star, and read Psalm 8:3–4 aloud.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: A photo of the night sky works on a clouded evening.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

23/40

Tend one growing thing

Water, prune, or plant a single herb or houseplant together, slowly enough that a child can do most of it.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 3+

Adapt: Wiping leaves is a real job for anybody sitting down.

OUTSIDE AND ALL WEATHER

24/40

Short mercy walk

Take a bag and gloves and clear litter from one street or one corner of a park. Stop while it still feels good.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 5+

Adapt: Set a ten-minute limit so it stays rest, not a work shift.

MAKE AND TALK

25/40

Draw a Bible scene

Read one short story, then everyone draws the moment they remember most and shows it without explaining it.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 3+

Adapt: Collage, LEGO, or acting the scene are all valid answers.

MAKE AND TALK

26/40

Shape bread badly

Make simple bread or biscuits with forgiving expectations and let the children handle the dough properly.

PREP NIGHT BEFORE

FOR AGES 3+

Adapt: Store-bought dough is still shared bread. Skip on low-energy weeks.

MAKE AND TALK

27/40

Tell childhood stories

Adults tell one true story from when they were the age of the youngest person in the room.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Keep stories light; nobody has to disclose a hard memory.

MAKE AND TALK

28/40

Write a blessing for someone away

Write or draw a short blessing for a person who is not here, then decide together how to send it.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: A voice message counts, and so does a single sentence.

MAKE AND TALK

29/40

Make kitchen music

Use instruments, pans, or hands to play through one song together. Loud is allowed; in tune is not required.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Offer ear defenders, or let someone conduct instead of play.

MAKE AND TALK

30/40

Leave a puzzle out

Start a jigsaw on a side table and let people drift past it all afternoon without anyone finishing it.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: Large-piece puzzles keep younger and older hands in the same game.

MAKE AND TALK

31/40

Look through old photos

Scroll or leaf through pictures from one year and name gifts you had forgotten you were given.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Skip years that carry grief unless someone asks for them.

MAKE AND TALK

32/40

Play something cooperative

Choose a game where the family plays together rather than against each other, and let the youngest set the pace.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: Teams let a tired player share a hand instead of dropping out.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

33/40

Go to worship, add nothing

Attend your gathering and deliberately schedule no errands on either side of it.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: A livestream or a recorded service is still shared worship.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

34/40

Call someone who is alone

Ring or voice-message one person who may not have spoken to anyone today. Keep it short and warm.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 6+

Adapt: A child can add a hello without carrying the conversation.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

35/40

Deliver a simple meal

Drop off food that was arranged in advance, leave it at the door if that is easier, and do not stay for thanks.

PREP NIGHT BEFORE

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Ask first. Unexpected visits are not always a kindness.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

36/40

Write to a carer or teacher

Write cards to someone who quietly holds your week together, and name one specific thing they did.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: Drawing and dictating both count as writing.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

37/40

Pray your street slowly

Walk or picture your road and pray one sentence for each home you pass, without needing to know their business.

PREP NO PREP

FOR AGES 5+

Adapt: Pray from a window seat with a map or from memory.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

38/40

Visit where you are wanted

Visit someone who has said a visit is welcome, and leave before the visit becomes work for them.

PREP 15 MINUTES

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Confirm on the day; cancel freely if anyone is unwell.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

39/40

Give from the mercy jar

Empty a family jar or set aside a small amount together, and let a child help choose where it goes.

PREP 5 MINUTES

FOR AGES 4+

Adapt: Time or goods can replace money in any week that is tight.

WORSHIP AND MERCY

40/40

Receive help without repaying

Accept a meal, a lift, or an offer of help, say thank you once, and resist the urge to balance the ledger.

PREP NO PREP

FOR ANY AGE

Adapt: Say plainly what would actually help when someone asks.

Choose with a four-question filter

Before choosing, ask four questions: What energy do we actually have? Who needs accommodation? What will deepen worship, delight, connection, mercy, or rest? What preparation can we remove? Let each person nominate one card, then keep only what fits. A family may open with bread, take a nap, walk at sunset, and call that a complete Sabbath.

THE ENERGY WE ACTUALLY HAVE THIS WEEK

WHO NEEDS AN ADAPTATION, AND WHAT IT IS

TWO CARDS WE ARE CHOOSING

ONE THING WE ARE RELEASING

Close with one question: "Where did you notice rest, love, beauty, or God?" Passing is allowed. Thank God for what was received and name what remains unfinished. Avoid a family scorecard. A difficult day can still teach you which expectations need to be released.

THE FIVE SUITS

- Mark the beginning (8)
- When everyone is tired (8)
- Outside and all weather (8)
- Make and talk (8)
- Worship and mercy (8)