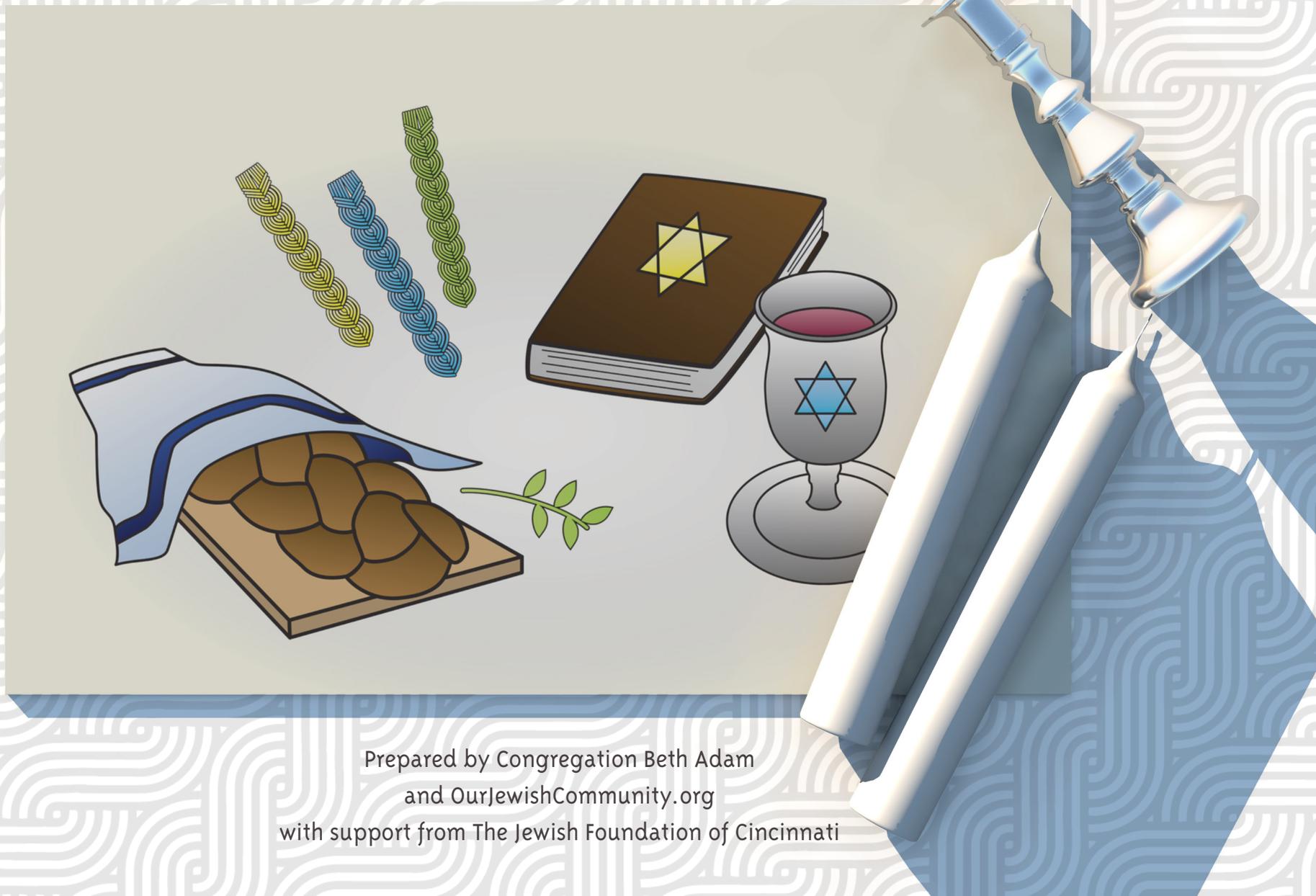


Shabbat Resource Guide



Prepared by Congregation Beth Adam
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Letter to Parents

Shabbat is the most frequent of Jewish holidays—arriving each week. For most of us, rather than being a “religious holiday,” Shabbat marks the start of the weekend with its unique pace and set of responsibilities. Our lives are defined by the rhythm of the secular calendar—the five-day workweek and the two-day weekend—though, in truth, even this is changing. People are working longer and differently than they have in years past.

For some, both historically and today, Shabbat remains a “religious” observance. Religiously, Shabbat may be marked with Sabbath prayers at home, a special meal, attending services, or restricting one’s behaviors. The restrictive behaviors may include things like abstaining from all work, from driving, or even from using money and electricity. But for most of us, fully disengaging in this manner no longer speaks to who we are or how we live our lives. In fact, trying to do this can create more stress and anxiety for some. But, more importantly, these behaviors no longer reflect our values or our understanding of what it means to be Jewish.

This guide is intended to explore ways that the concepts and values one can find in Shabbat can have a positive impact on our lives today. Rather than replicating what our ancestors did, this resource guide will explore ways we could reshape Shabbat to meet our needs and the demands of our time. Realize, too, that Shabbat doesn’t have to be fixed to a particular day at a particular time. It is about the ability to step out of one’s regular routine and focus and calibrate one’s life.

It is always important to remember there is no one way to observe any Jewish holiday. So too it is with Shabbat! The suggestions, ideas, and activities discussed in this resource guide are a jumping-off place to help you develop a Shabbat practice that is meaningful to you. Whether you want to observe Shabbat every week or just every once in a while—or on a Tuesday—feel free to create.

Robert B. Barr, Rabbi

Isaama Stoll, Rabbinic Intern



Shabbat at a Glance: A Textual Analysis

Shabbat is one of the oldest Jewish holidays. Shabbat is a day of rest—a special time set aside from the rest of the week. In today’s busy world, even our weekends are full of activities. We rarely get time to just step back from everything and spend time with our family. Celebrating Shabbat gives us the opportunity to take a little time away from all the stuff we have to do and just relax and rejuvenate ourselves.

The Torah offers a bunch of reasons why we celebrate Shabbat. Some look to the Jewish creation myth, a story that says that God created the world in six days and took the seventh day as a day of rest. Whether or not they believe in God, many people suggest that this story shows us the importance of taking a break from our busy lives to rest and appreciate all the work we do the rest of the week. It should be noted that the myth of the six days of creation and a seventh day of rest probably reflects a rhythm that already existed when the myth was written. Rather than creating the Sabbath, the biblical legend justified a preexisting pattern.

Another reason the Torah offers for why we celebrate Shabbat is connected to the story of Passover. The myth of Passover teaches that the Jewish people were once slaves under Pharaoh in Egypt and were then set free. Some people understand Shabbat as a day to celebrate our freedom. Slaves and people who are not free do not get a day of rest. When we celebrate Shabbat, we remember those who are not free and celebrate our freedom to relax.

Other ancient Jewish texts, like the writings of the prophets, explain that celebrating Shabbat is a practice that makes Jews special and different from other people (Ezekiel 20:12). When we celebrate Shabbat, we celebrate our Jewishness. We are happy to be part of such a cool people with so many great holidays, traditions, and values.

Throughout history, Jews have celebrated Shabbat in many different ways. Some Jews celebrate Shabbat at home, lighting candles and enjoying a special meal as a family. Other Jews gather together in synagogue to sing, pray, and reflect on the past week. Others spend the day doing fun relaxing activities they do not get to do throughout the week. There are many ways to celebrate this special day.

Questions and Answers

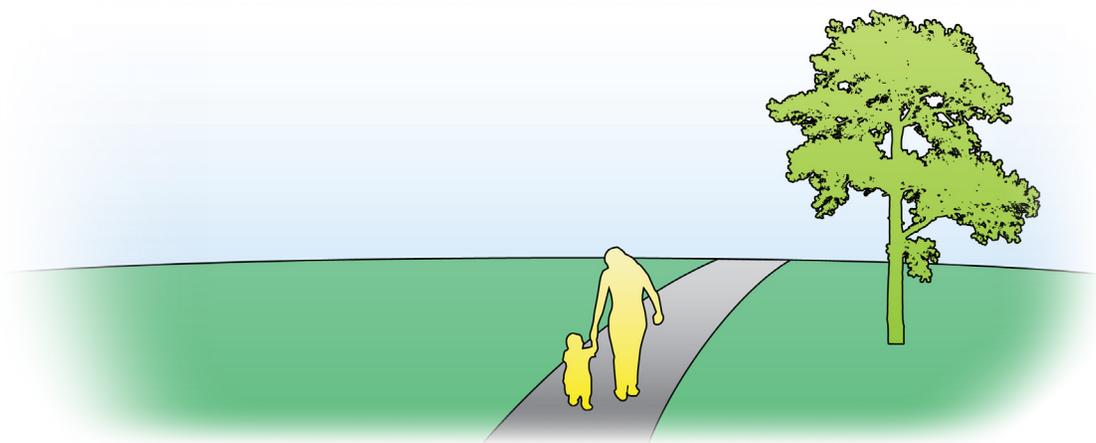
When does Shabbat start?

Shabbat is said to begin at sundown on Friday night. Many people choose to begin Shabbat by lighting candles and saying a blessing that marks the beginning of this holiday. Traditionally, two candles are lit, but in modern times some families like to have more than two candles so that everyone can light one.

How long is Shabbat?

Shabbat traditionally lasts 25 hours, from before sunset on Friday night to after sunset on Saturday night. But the length of time you celebrate is less important than the quality of the time. The goal is to set some time apart from the rest of the week—to rest, to reflect, to spend quality time with family, and to take a step back from our busy lives.

For some, having a dinner with family can be their Shabbat experience. For some, such a dinner will take place at home, while for others going out for a special Shabbat dinner is far more relaxing. Some may find that doing a special activity on Saturday is meaningful—whether this is going to a park or the zoo or seeing a movie. And if Saturday doesn't work in your lives—don't worry. Many adults have to work on Friday nights and Saturdays. If this is the case in your family, try to find some other time when you can relax and spend time together.





Questions and Answers (cont.)

How can there be a holiday every week?

Shabbat is different than other holidays. Other holidays celebrate one special event or one special value. Unlike those holidays, Shabbat does not celebrate one thing. While other holidays have lots of preparation or big presents and parties, Shabbat is a much more relaxed holiday. Shabbat allows us to make time, even if only a very short while, every week to stop and be with the people we love.

Where does Shabbat come from?

Shabbat is an ancient Jewish tradition that Jews have been practicing for thousands of years. We find many accounts of Shabbat in the Torah. There we learn that Shabbat is a day set apart from the others as a day of rest. In fact, the Torah describes Shabbat not only as a day of rest for people but also as a day for their pets and farm animals to rest (Exodus 23:12).

Why do some people still “observe” all the laws?

Different people celebrate Shabbat differently because they approach Judaism differently. There is no one right way to be Jewish, so there is no one right way to celebrate Shabbat.

Some Jews believe they are commanded to follow the “rules” set out by the rabbis. They may choose not to do any work on Shabbat and may even avoid things like driving, shopping, or watching TV. Some Jews find observing Shabbat meaningful as a personal choice, but not something they feel obligated to do. They may select some things to observe, or not to observe anything at all.



Questions and Answers (cont.)

Do we have to do Shabbat the way our ancestors did?

No, we do not have to celebrate Shabbat in the same way our ancestors did. Judaism is like a big chain of traditions that gets passed down from one generation to the next. One of the cool things about the chain is that each generation changes the traditions a bit in ways that make sense for their own lives. We get to inherit this cool holiday from our ancestors, but we are supposed to make it our own and celebrate it in ways that make sense to our modern lives in today's world.

For example, while our ancestors often lived in neighborhoods with many other Jews, today many Jews do not. Rather than going to a synagogue or gathering our whole family in one place for Shabbat, we may join a community on the Internet or call our relatives who live far away.

What does Shabbat mean today?

Shabbat is about finding moments to break away from our busy routines and just relax. Shabbat is about resisting the temptation to be constantly busy; it allows us to break away from the hectic stress of our lives in whatever ways we choose.

Shabbat also can be a time to refocus our attention from our regular routines to other activities—activities that we don't always have the time to do. Given that our weeks can be very full and we often rush from place to place, Shabbat may be a time we slow down and spend more time doing things we value and enjoy.

Key Shabbat Terms

Shabbat versus Shabbos

Both the words *Shabbat* and *Shabbos* refer to the same day, the Jewish day of rest from sundown Friday night to sundown on Saturday. Why two names for one holiday? Jews from different parts of the world pronounce words differently. People from Europe used to say, "Shabbos," while Jews from Spain, Africa, and the Middle East said, "Shabbat." Today people from all sorts of backgrounds say both. When people greet each other on Shabbat, they wish each other a "Good Shabbos" or a "Shabbat Shalom," a Shabbat of peace.

Kiddush

Kiddush is a blessing we say over a glass of wine or grape juice. The kiddush blessing allows us to give thanks for the day of rest, and the many things we are grateful for in our lives. We lift our glasses and enjoy this sweet drink to make our Shabbat celebration even sweeter!

שבת



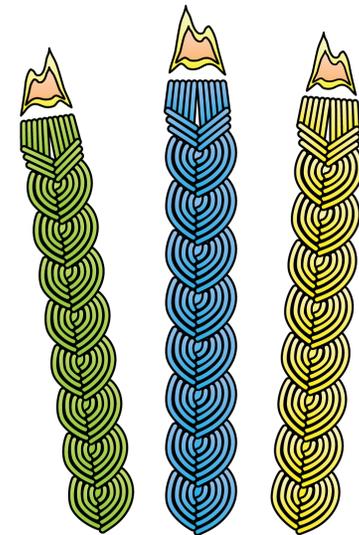
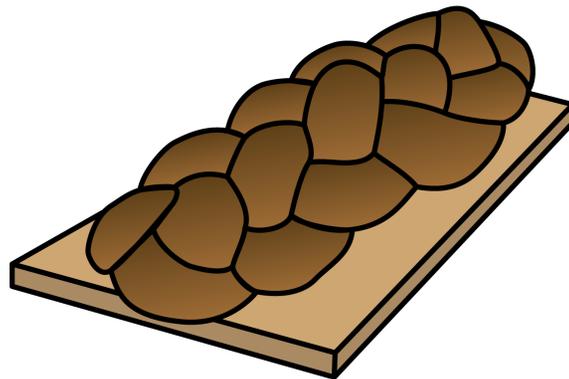
Key Shabbat Terms (cont.)

Challah

Challah is a special loaf of braided bread we eat on Shabbat. When we eat this bread, we offer a special blessing honoring the work of our hands and celebrating how grateful we are to have food on our plates.

Havdalah

Havdalah is a special ceremony that marks the end of Shabbat. Havdalah honors the separation between Shabbat and the rest of the week. It marks the end of our period of rest and a return to the business of our lives. We begin Havdalah by lighting a candle that is braided like a challah. During this quick ceremony, we smell sweet spices and taste a sip of wine or grape juice. Our hope is that the smell of the spices will stay with us, allowing us to take a bit of the joy, peace, and sweetness of Shabbat with us throughout the week.



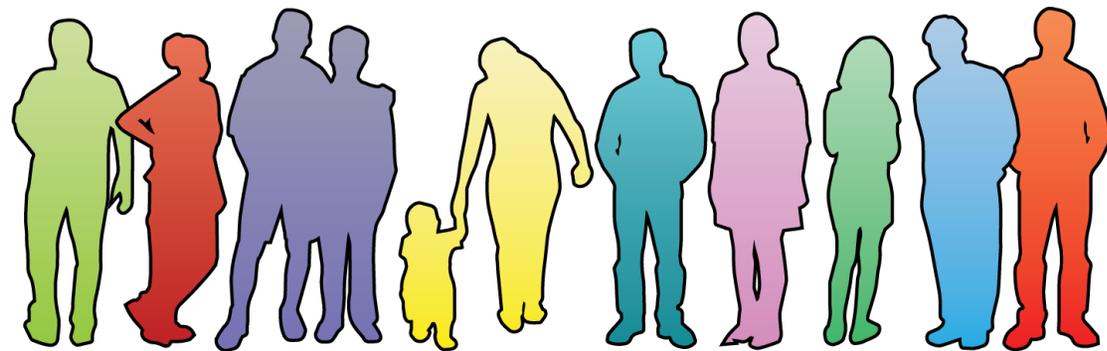
Themes of Shabbat

Family

While many people get to see their family members every day, it is hard to find time to hang out as a family. During the week, we often see each other in passing while we rush between work, school, and all of our activities. Celebrating Shabbat as a family means taking a little time to catch up with one another and enjoy each other's company.

Community and Friends

Shabbat is not just a time for families to get together; it is also a great time to get together as a community. We can gather with our friends in the synagogue to sing and celebrate together. We can have friends over for dinner, go for a walk with our neighbors, and enjoy spending time with folks we may not get to play with every day. We also can turn to our friends to share our feelings about the things that happened to us in the past week. Our friends and our whole community can support us and help us relax after a long week.





Themes of Shabbat (cont.)

Keeping it Simple

Sometimes holidays (even Shabbat) can feel overwhelming. As an example, preparing Shabbat dinner can be difficult—whether because of work or family responsibilities. If this is the case, rather than feeling more stressed in an effort to prepare the meal, take a different approach. Do something that is easier—go out to dinner, bring dinner in, or make something nice and simple.

If the holiday overwhelms and puts more stress on you and the family, that's not good or the point of Shabbat.

Rejuvenation

Taking time to rest can be physically and spiritually rejuvenating. Sometimes when we truly stop and breathe, we can forget about the things that make us stressed and see the world in a new way. Shabbat gives us an opportunity to clear our minds and reset after a long week. In fact, taking some time off may even give us new energy and excitement for the week to come. We can celebrate Shabbat by doing the things that help rejuvenate us, which does not always have to mean spending time with others. On Shabbat we also can take some quiet time to relax alone.



Shabbat Activities

As a Family

1. Talk about what happened during the week and what you hope will happen in the week ahead.
2. Go around the table and share the funniest thing you each saw or heard this week.
3. Watch a movie together and then talk about it.
4. Bake a special treat together.
5. Do a group activity together:
 - Do a puzzle.
 - Take a walk.
 - Look at the sky at night.
 - Play a game together.
6. Go on a group adventure:
 - Visit the park or playground
 - Go to the zoo or observatory

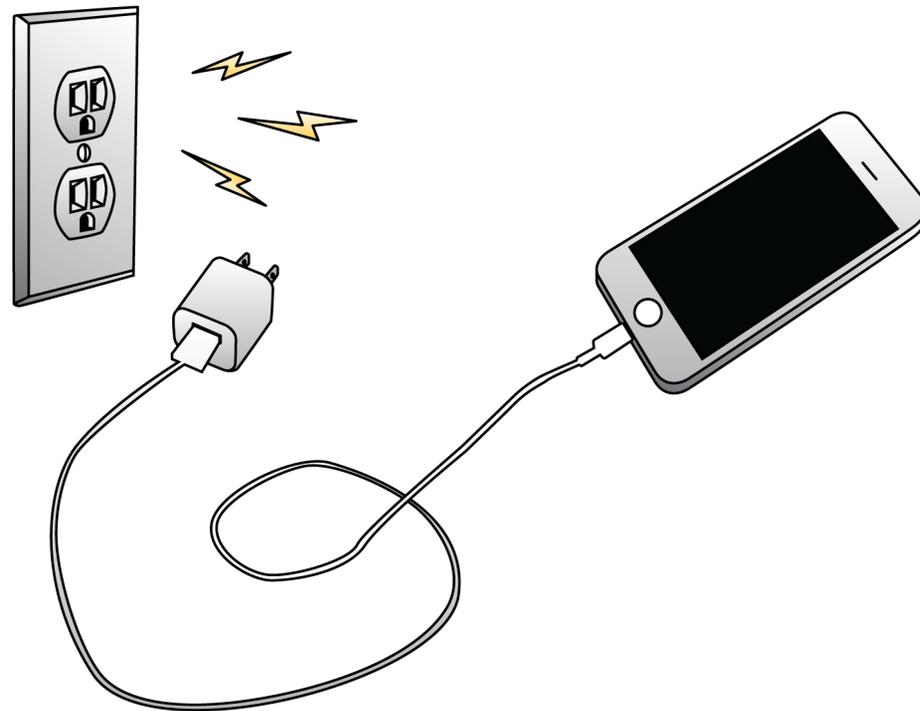
By Yourself

1. Write in a journal.
2. Read a book.
3. Draw or paint a picture for someone you love.
4. Listen to music.

Shabbat Activities (cont.)

Unplug Challenge

Some people find it meaningful to spend some time unplugged on Shabbat. Turning off our phones and devices can help us separate from the busy distractions that fill our days. See what happens without phones or screens. At first you may feel bored or lost without your devices, but unplugging also may help you enjoy your Shabbat rest and connect with your family in a different way. If you feel like this is not right for you, that is okay. But if you feel like taking a challenge, power down for a couple hours. You may be pleasantly surprised.





Fun Family Discussion Topics

Questions about Shabbat

1. What are your favorite ways to relax?
2. Why is it an important value to take some time each week to break our routines and relax?
3. How do you relax?

Having a hard time getting the conversation started?

Try some of these fun imaginative scenarios.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why? What would you do there? What would you eat? What would you see?
2. If you had to leave your home quickly and you could only take three objects with you, what would you take?

Shabbat Readings

Here are some readings you can say if you light candles and/or share juice or wine and challah.

Candle Lighting

On this Shabbat, we create our moment in time. We pause to reflect upon our yesterdays and tomorrows, to renew our ties with our families and friends, to restore our energies, to refresh our spirits.

As the sun descends and shadows lengthen, the direction of the day gives way to the stillness of night. It is time now for us to see not with our eyes, but with our hearts and minds. As the day gives way to evening, it is time for us to welcome the Shabbat.

The candles stand before us waiting to be lit. We recall our ancestors as we too seek to dispel the darkness and banish the cold, to bring glowing softness, warmth, and safety into our homes.

May the dancing flames of these candles kindle warmth within our hearts, wisdom in our minds, passion in our souls.

Baruch ha-or ba-olam—Blessed is the light within the world

Baruch ha-or ba-adam—Blessed is the light within each person

Baruch ha-or ba-shabbat—Blessed is the light of the Sabbath

Shabbat Readings (cont.)

Wine/Juice

We lift this cup together
As a tribute to our past, as a blessing for our future
May the allure of its untold flavors
Beckon us forever to keep uncovering
New branches, new roots, that hold us together

Tonight, as we welcome the Shabbat,
May we find time to spend
In our own quiet company
And listen to the calling of our hearts.

B'ruchim he-chayim ba-olam—Blessed is the life within the world

B'ruchim he-chayim ba-adam—Blessed is the life within us

Tonight, we say, L'Chaim!

Challah

As the fingers of the challah intertwine, so do we join hands
in our common humanity, sharing the fruits of our labors. We
cherish that which has been created through human effort.
For it is through the work of our hands, the strength of the
human spirit, the vision of our minds, that our dreams are
woven into the tapestry of time.

We celebrate the accomplishments of yesterday and today,
anticipating the possibilities of tomorrow.

May the sharing of this challah strengthen our bonds with
others who walk upon this earth.

Baruch a-mal ka-pei-nu—Blessed is the work of our hands

Baruch cha-zon ha-adam—Blessed is the vision of our minds

Baruch le-chem ha-aretz—Blessed is the bread of the earth

Shabbat Term Word Search

K	P	C	T	S	O	Q	E	S	J	Z	M
S	K	T	A	B	B	A	H	S	U	L	O
I	A	F	U	H	S	U	D	D	I	K	D
N	Q	A	Y	A	V	C	H	B	C	W	E
W	O	M	Y	V	I	S	A	F	E	D	E
O	C	I	I	D	H	E	L	J	A	S	R
L	Y	L	L	A	O	B	L	F	D	E	F
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Z	R	B	U	A	N	E	H	W	H	I	Z
M	O	L	A	H	S	G	C	K	A	P	E
S	R	Y	E	D	T	C	M	O	D	S	S
U	U	A	I	U	J	L	N	T	S	E	R

CHALLAH
HAVDALAH
REST
SHALOM

FAMILY
JUICE
SHABBAT
SPICES

FREEDOM
KIDDUSH
SHABBOS



Shabbat Crafts and Coloring Pages

Make Your Own Shabbat Readings Book

We have shared some of our favorite Shabbat readings with you, but there is so much more to say about the experience of Shabbat. You can write your own reading for lighting the candles and sharing juice or wine and challah. You can write your own readings for whatever special activities you and your family will do this Shabbat. After you write your readings, illustrate them and put them together into a little book. Reading from your own book of Shabbat readings and sharing your readings with family and friends can be a fun way to connect to Shabbat.

Make Your Own Kiddush Cup

To design your own kiddush cup, all you need is a hard plastic cup. If you are feeling fancy, you could even use plastic wine glasses or plastic champagne flutes. Decorate your plastic cup with puffy paint, permanent markers, stickers, or any other decorating material you can find.

Make Your Own Challah Cover

Some families like to cover their challah with a beautiful decorative cloth called a challah cover. You can design your own. You will need a piece of heavy cotton or light canvas fabric cut into a challah-sized rectangle (approximately 16 in. × 21 in.). You can find fabric squares at a craft store or wash an old sheet and cut it to size. Of course, kids should never cut fabric without an adult's permission and help.

Once you have your fabric square, use fabric paint or fabric markers to design your challah cover. You can decorate your cover with pictures of your favorite things about Shabbat or whatever other creative things you think of.



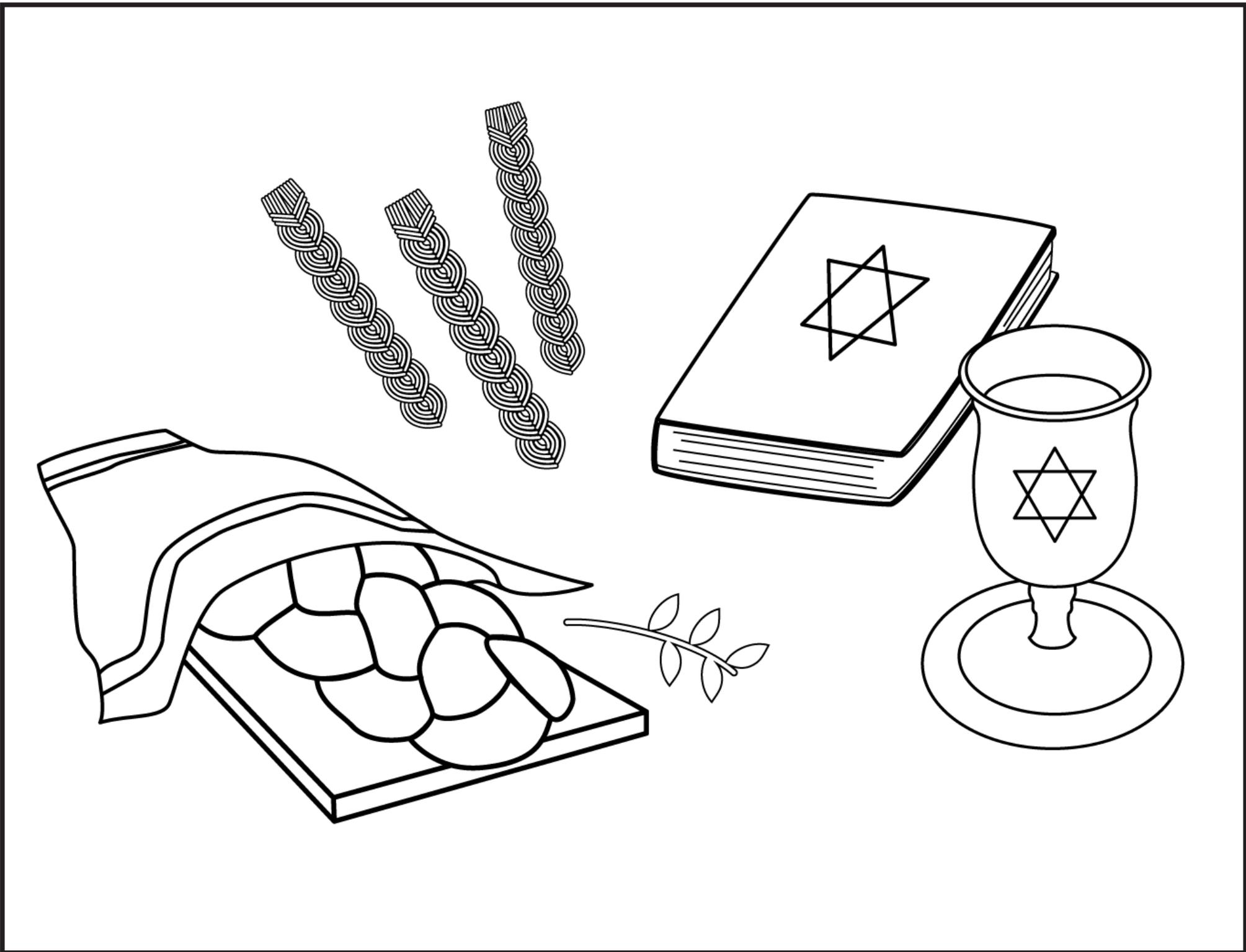
Shabbat Crafts and Coloring Pages (cont.)

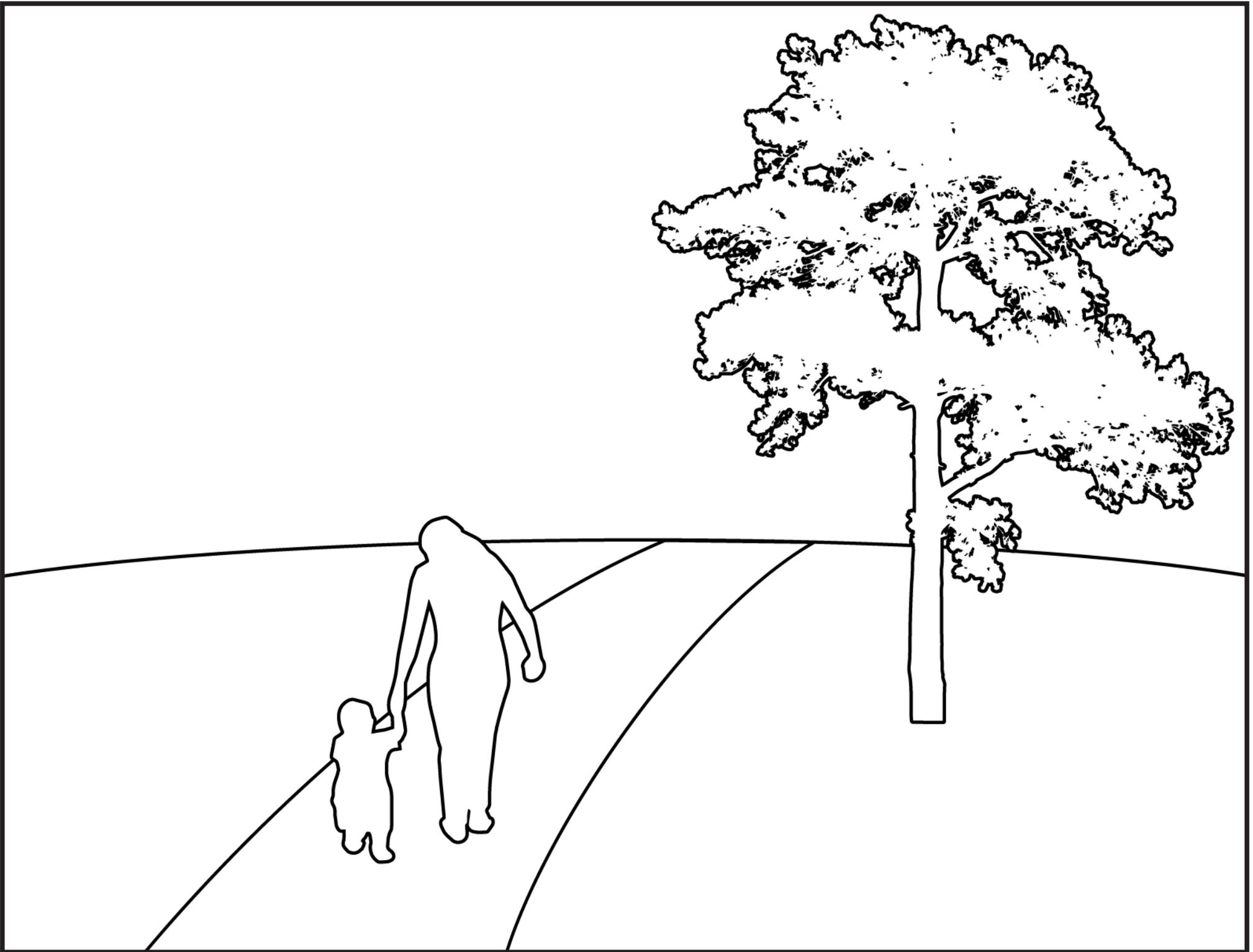
Make Your Own Shabbat Candles

To make your own candles, you will need sheets of beeswax and a long cotton wick. You can get one long wick and cut it or use small wicks, but each candle needs about one-half inch of wick. Cut your beeswax into squares (approximately 5 in. × 5 in.). Warm your beeswax by running a hair dryer over it for a few minutes. Cut your wick so that it is the size of your square with an extra inch left over to light. Place your wick on the edge of the wax and push down gently. Roll the wax around the wick very tightly, pressing down lightly. Once the wax is rolled tight, you have your very own Shabbat candle.

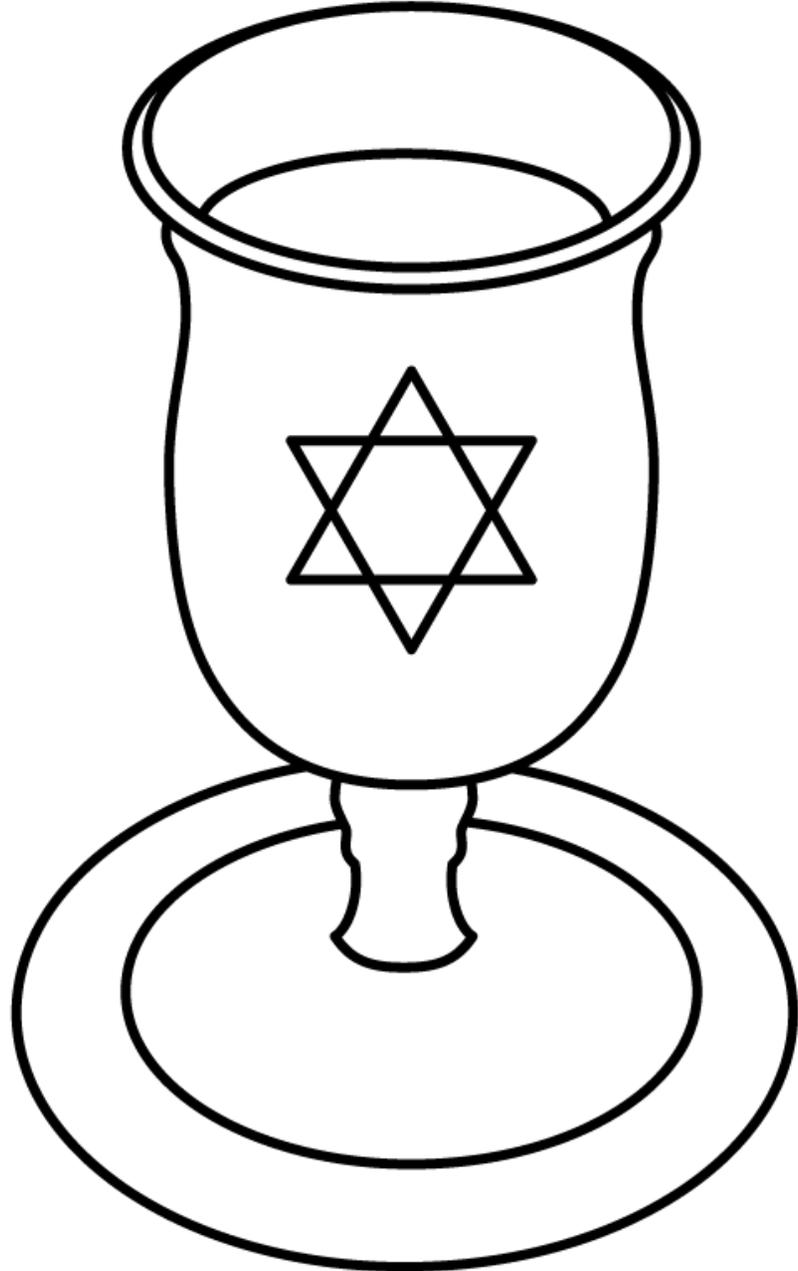
Make Your Own Havdalah Candles

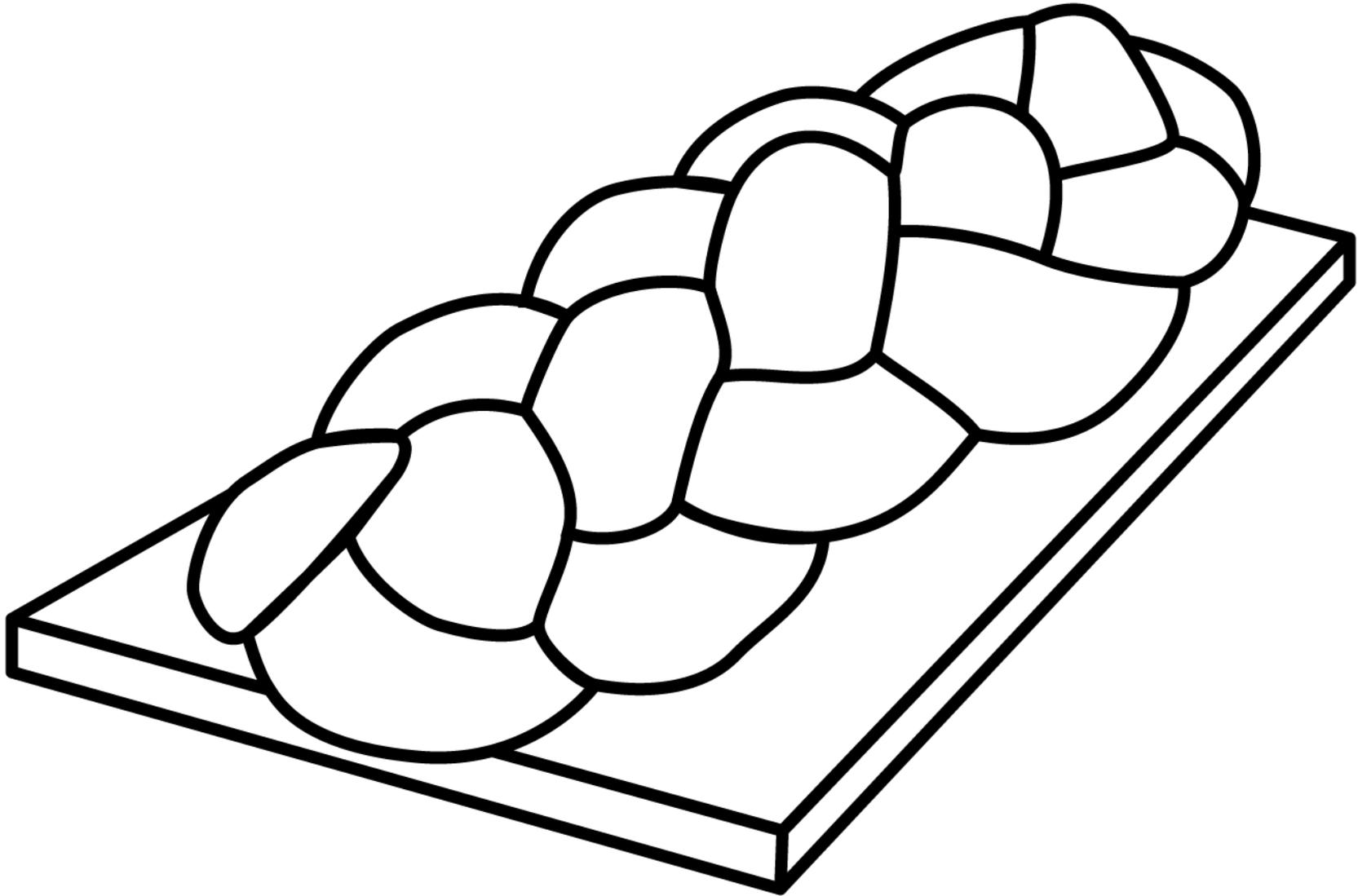
If you want to make Havdalah candles, you begin by making three (or more) Shabbat candles according to the previous instructions. If the beeswax gets hard while you are making the three candles, you will need to warm it again once all three candles are made. Then braid the candles together—overlapping them and pressing down with each layer so the pieces of beeswax melt together. You can even play around with braiding candles that are different colors. Then you will have a bright, multicolored Havdalah candle!

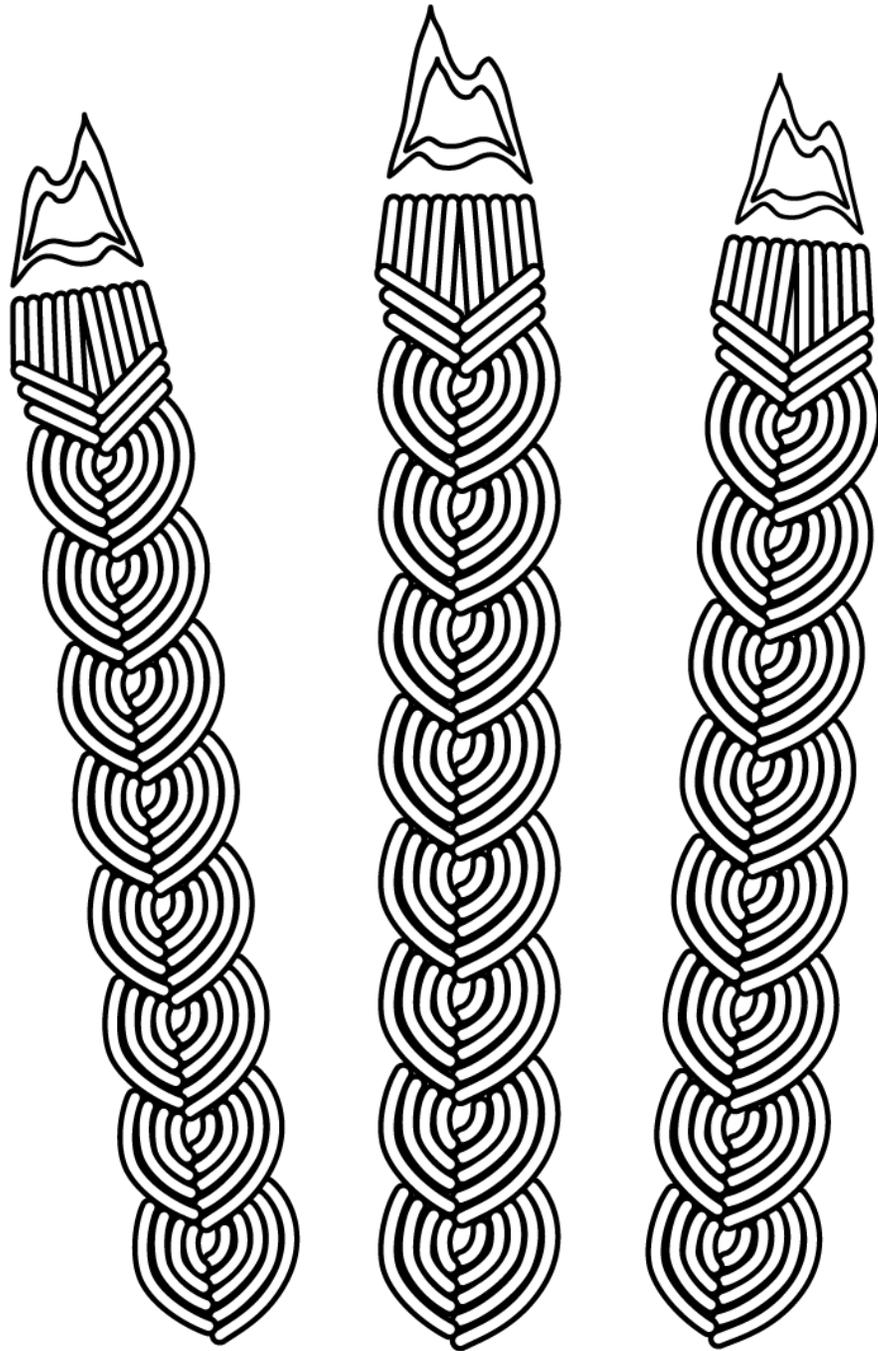


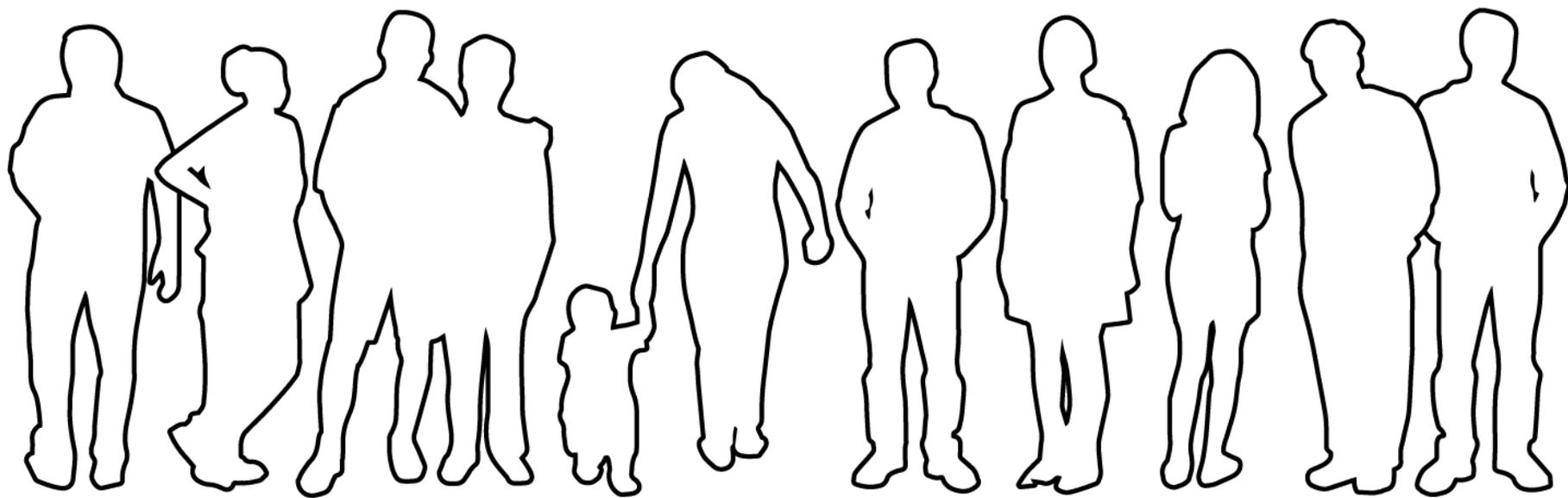


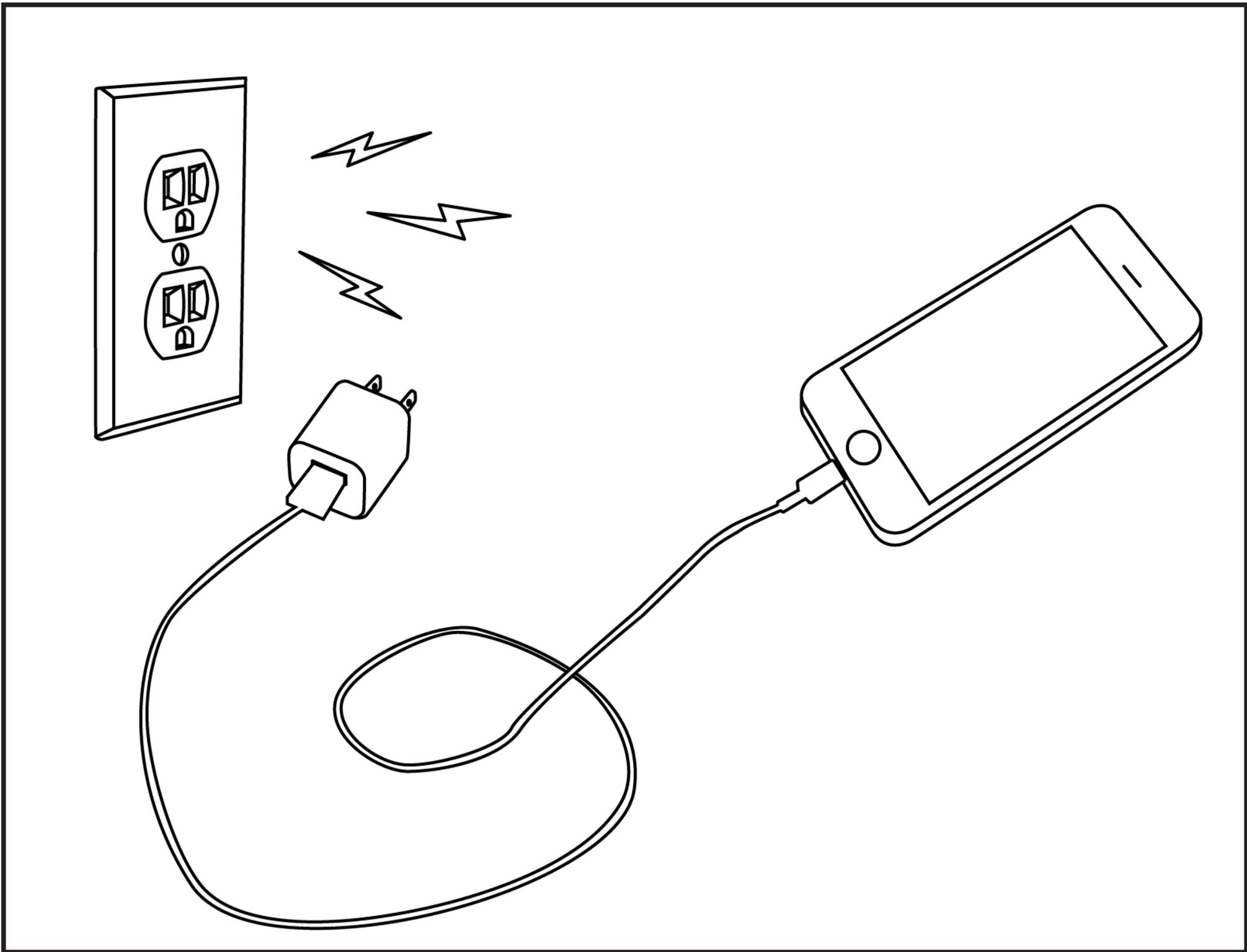
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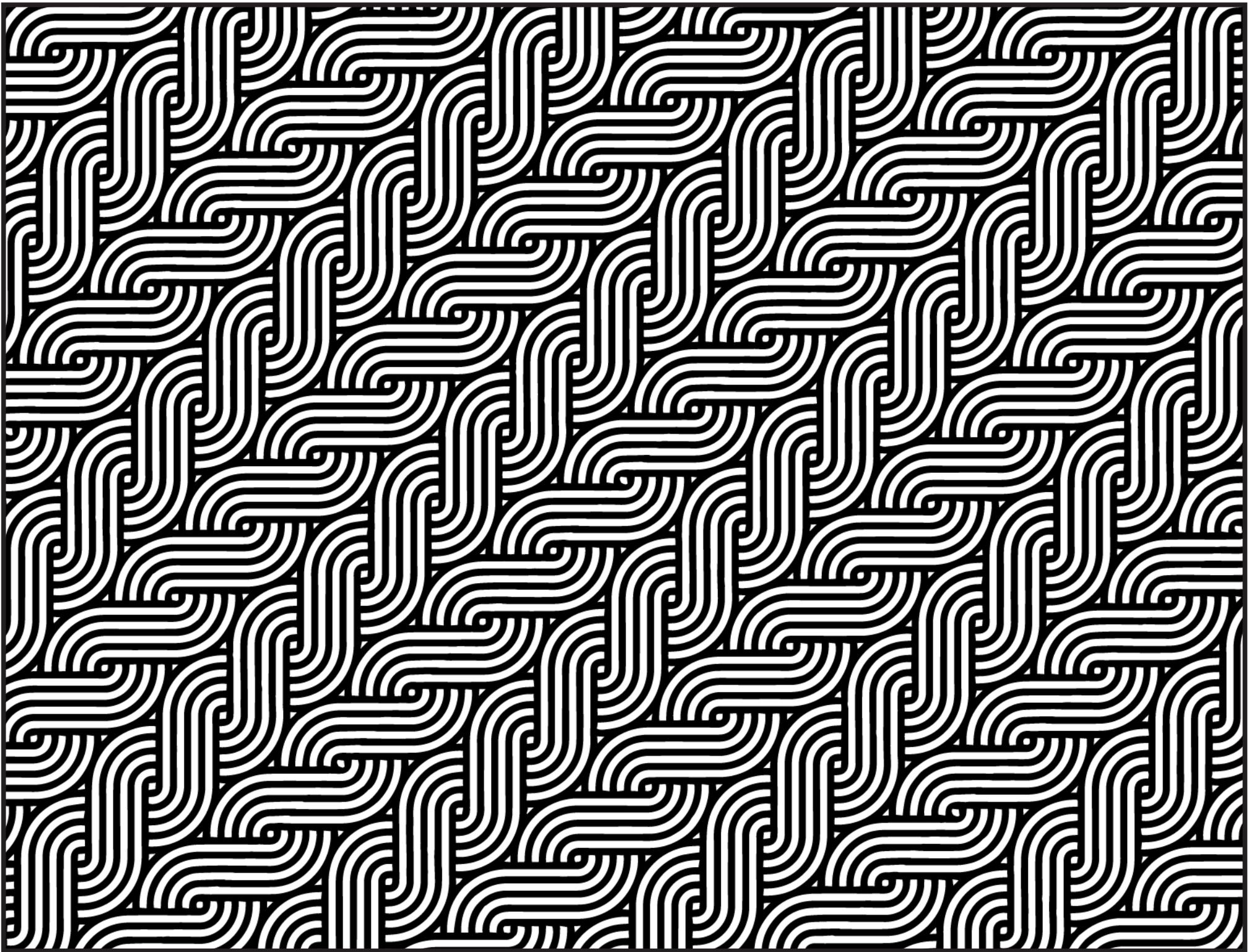












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