

GOD FIRST AT HOME

THE TRUE REST



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

The True Rest

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GROUP ACTIVITY

THE TRUE REST

(Based on Ellen G. White's book "*Child Guidance*," pages 527-537, Chapter 79: "Sabbath—The Day of Delight.")

Purpose: To develop values and actions related to the Sabbath keeping, based on God's revealed will.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Facilitator and secretary:** Each group must choose a leader, who will conduct the discussion, and a secretary, who will report the conclusions.
2. **Read the inspired texts:** Before any other work, each group must read all the assigned texts (one paragraph per participant).
3. The **Group Activity** is provided at the end of the text in the "Growing Together" section.
4. **Answers are based on the texts:** The group must find the answer(s) based primarily on the inspired text provided, and not only from opinions, unless there is an open question, with specific instruction to discuss personal opinions.
5. **Group opinion:** In case of open questions (no right or wrong answers), the group should discuss which opinion(s) would better express the thought of the group (not only that of the leader).
6. **Timeliness:** The group should spend no more than five (5) minutes on each question, and secretaries must take no more than one (1) minute to answer publicly.
7. **Paragraph zero:** Be aware that some pages may begin with paragraph zero (0), which is the continuation of the last paragraph of the previous page.

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Prevalent Disregard for the Sabbath—I have been shown that very many of the parents who profess to believe the solemn message for this time have not trained their children for God. They have not restrained themselves and have been irritated with anyone who attempted to restrain them. They have not by living faith daily bound their children upon the altar of the Lord. Many of these youth have been allowed to transgress the Fourth Commandment, by seeking their own pleasure upon God's holy day. They have felt no compunctions of conscience in going about the streets on the Sabbath for their own amusement. Many go where they please, and do what they please; and their parents are so fearful of displeasing them that, imitating the management of Eli, they lay no commands upon them. —p. 527.1

These youth finally lose all respect for the Sabbath and have no relish for religious meetings or for sacred and eternal things.—p. 527.2

Heed First Word of the Fourth Commandment— “Remember” is placed at the very first of the Fourth Commandment. Parents, you need to remember the Sabbath day yourselves to keep it holy. And if you do this, you are giving the proper instruction to your children; they will reverence God's holy day.... Christian education is needed in your homes. All through the week keep the Lord's holy Sabbath in view, for that day is to be devoted to the service of God. It is a day when the hands are to rest from worldly employment, when the soul's needs are to receive especial attention.—p. 527.3

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When the Sabbath is thus remembered, the temporal will not be allowed to encroach upon the spiritual. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed, we shall be too weary to engage in His service.—p. 528.1

Make Friday the Preparation Day—On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness, and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked, and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule, you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun, let all secular work be laid aside, and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment.—p. 528.2

In many families [on Sabbath] boots and shoes are blacked and brushed, and stitches are taken, all because these little odds and ends were not done on Friday. They did not “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” —p. 528.3

On Friday the clothing of the children is to be looked after. During the week they should be all laid out by their own hands under the direction of the mother, so that they can dress quietly, without any confusion or rushing about and hasty speeches.—p. 528.4

There is another work that should receive attention on the preparation day. On this day all differences between brethren, whether in the family or in the church, should be put away.—p. 528.5

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The Sabbath Opens With the Family at Worship—Before the setting of the sun, let the members of the family assemble to read God’s Word, to sing and pray. There is need of reform here, for many have been remiss. We need to confess to God and to one another. We should begin anew to make special arrangements that every member of the family may be prepared to honor the day which God has blessed and sanctified.—p. 529.1

Sabbath Hours Not Ours but God’s—God has given us the whole of six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and center our thoughts upon God and heaven.—p. 529.2

When the Sabbath commences, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord’s. We should not do ourselves, nor suffer our children to do, any manner of our own work for a livelihood or anything, which could have been done on the six working days. Friday is the day of preparation. Time can then be devoted to making the necessary preparation for the Sabbath and to thinking and conversing about it. Nothing which will in the sight of Heaven be regarded as a violation of the holy Sabbath should be left unsaid or undone, to be said or done upon the Sabbath. God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes. The Fourth Commandment is virtually transgressed by conversing upon worldly things or by engaging in light and trifling conversation. Talking upon anything or everything which may come into the mind is speaking our own words. Every deviation from right brings us into bondage and condemnation.—p. 529.3

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Sabbath Time Too Precious to Sleep Away—None should permit themselves, through the week, to become so absorbed in their temporal interests, and so exhausted by their efforts for worldly gain, that on the Sabbath they have no strength or energy to give to the service of God. We are robbing the Lord when we unfit ourselves to worship Him upon His holy day. And we are robbing ourselves as well; for we need the warmth and glow of association, as well as the strength to be gained from the wisdom and experience of other Christians.—p. 530.1

Let not the precious hours of the Sabbath be wasted in bed. On Sabbath morning the family should be astir early. If they rise late, there is confusion and bustle in preparing for breakfast and Sabbath school. There is hurrying, jostling, and impatience. Thus unholy feelings come into the home. The Sabbath, thus desecrated, becomes a weariness, and its coming is dreaded rather than loved.—p. 530.2

Attend Public Worship With Children—Fathers and mothers should make it a rule that their children attend public worship on the Sabbath, and should enforce the rule by their own example. It is our duty to command our children and our household after us, as did Abraham. By example as well as precept we should impress upon them the importance of religious teaching. All who have taken the baptismal vow have solemnly consecrated themselves to the service of God; they are under covenant obligation to place themselves and their children where they may obtain all possible incentives and encouragement in the Christian life.—p. 530.3

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But while we worship God, we are not to consider this a drudgery. The Sabbath of the Lord is to be made a blessing to us and to our children. They are to look upon the Sabbath as a day of delight, a day which God has sanctified; and they will so consider it if they are properly instructed.—p. 531.1

Wear Comely Garments for the House of Worship—Many need instruction as to how they should appear in the assembly for worship on the Sabbath. They are not to enter the presence of God in the common clothing worn during the week. All should have a special Sabbath suit, to be worn when attending service in God's house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The children of God should be pure within and without.—p. 531.2

Explain Sabbath Sermon to the Children—Ministers are engaged in a sacred, solemn work, but upon those who hear rests just as sacred a responsibility. They are to hear with a determination to follow the instruction that all must practice who gain eternal life. Each hearer should strive to understand each presentation of Bible truth as God’s message to him, to be received by faith and put into practice in the daily life. Parents should explain to their children the words spoken from the pulpit, that they also may understand and have that knowledge which if put into practice brings abundant grace and peace.—p. 531.3

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Provide Special Treat for Mealtime—We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten, in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. Overeating befogs the brain. The most precious words may be heard and not appreciated, because the mind is confused by an improper diet. By overeating on the Sabbath, many have done more than they think to dishonor God.—p. 532.1

While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather let the food prepared the day before be heated. And let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive. Provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day.—p. 532.2

The Rest of the Day Is Precious—The Sabbath school and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours. Much of this time parents should spend with their children.—p. 532.3

Plan Suitable Reading and Conversation—The Sabbath—oh!—make it the sweetest, the most blessed day of the week....—p. 532.4

Parents can and should give attention to their children, reading to them the most attractive portions of Bible history, educating them to reverence the Sabbath day, keeping it according to the commandment. This cannot be done if the parents feel no burden to interest their children. But they can make the Sabbath a delight if they will take the proper course. The children can be interested in good reading or in conversation about the salvation of their souls. But they will have to be educated and trained. The natural heart does not love to think of God, of heaven, or of heavenly things. There must be a continual pressing back of the current of worldliness and inclination to evil and a letting in of heavenly light.—p. 532.5

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Not Indifferent to Children's Activities—I have found that on the Sabbath day many are indifferent and do not know where their children are or what they are doing.—p. 533.1

Parents, above everything take care of your children upon the Sabbath. Do not suffer them to violate God's holy day by playing in the house or out-of-doors. You may just as well break the Sabbath yourselves as to let your children do it, and when you suffer your children to wander about and suffer them to play upon the Sabbath, God looks upon you as Sabbath-breakers.—p. 533.2

Out-of-doors With the Children—The parents may take their children outdoors to view God in nature. They can be pointed to the blooming flowers and the opening buds, the lofty trees and beautiful spires of grass, and taught that God made all these in six days and rested on the seventh day and hallowed it. Thus the parents may bind up their lessons of instruction to their children, so that when these children look upon the things of nature, they will call to mind the great Creator of them all. Their thoughts will be carried up to nature's God—back to the creation of our world, when the foundation of the Sabbath was laid, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Such are the lessons to be impressed on the minds of our children.—p. 533.3

We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out-of-doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls.—p. 533.4

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Other Lessons From Nature—Object Lessons—Teach the children to see Christ in nature. Take them out into the open air, under the noble trees, into the garden; and in all the wonderful works of creation teach them to see an expression of His love. Teach them that He made the laws which govern all living things, that He has made laws for us, and that these laws are for our happiness and joy. Do not weary them with long prayers and tedious exhortations, but through nature's object lessons teach them obedience to the law of God.—p. 534.1

Give True Concept of God's Character—How can children receive a more correct knowledge of God, and their minds be better impressed, than in spending a portion of their time out-of-doors, not in play, but in company with their parents? Let their young minds be associated with God in the beautiful scenery of nature; let their attention be called to the tokens of His love to man in His created works, and they will be attracted and interested. They will not be

in danger of associating the character of God with everything that is stern and severe; but as they view the beautiful things which He has created for the happiness of man, they will be led to regard Him as a tender, loving Father. They will see that His prohibitions and injunctions are not made merely to show His power and authority, but that He has the happiness of His children in view. As the character of God puts on the aspect of love, benevolence, beauty, and attraction, they are drawn to love Him. You can direct their minds to the lovely birds making the air musical with their happy songs, to the spires of grass and the gloriously tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air. All these proclaim the love and skill of the heavenly Artist and show forth the glory of God.—p. 534.2

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Parents, why not make use of the precious lessons which God has given us in the book of nature, to give our children a correct idea of His character? Those who sacrifice simplicity to fashion and shut themselves away from the beauties of nature cannot be spiritually minded. They cannot understand the skill and power of God as revealed in His created works; therefore their hearts do not quicken and throb with new love and interest, and they are not filled with awe and reverence as they see God in nature.—p. 535.1

A Day to Live the Life of Eden—The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate. Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured, with His own glory....—p. 535.2

The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God's plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children. But the results of sin, having changed the conditions of life, to a great degree prevent this association. Often the father hardly sees the faces of his children throughout the week. He is almost wholly deprived of opportunity for companionship or instruction. But God's love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another.—p. 535.3

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Make the Sabbath a Delight—All who love God should do what they can to make the Sabbath a delight, holy and honorable. They cannot do this by seeking their own pleasure in sinful,

forbidden amusements. Yet they can do much to exalt the Sabbath in their families and make it the most interesting day of the week. We should devote time to interesting our children. A change will have a happy influence upon them. We can walk out with them in the open air; we can sit with them in the groves and in the bright sunshine, and give their restless minds something to feed upon by conversing with them upon the works of God, and can inspire them with love and reverence by calling their attention to the beautiful objects in nature.—p. 536.1

The Sabbath should be made so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy. In no better way can parents exalt and honor the Sabbath than by devising means to impart proper instruction to their families and interesting them in spiritual things, giving them correct views of the character of God and what He requires of us in order to perfect Christian characters and attain to eternal life. Parents, make the Sabbath a delight, that your children may look forward to it and have a welcome in their hearts for it.—p. 536.2

A Fitting Climax in Prayer and Song—As the sun goes down, let the voice of prayer and the hymn of praise mark the close of the sacred hours, and invite God's presence through the cares of the week of labor.—p. 536.3

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Thus parents can make the Sabbath, as it should be, the most joyful day of the week. They can lead their children to regard it as a delight, the day of days, the holy of the Lord, honorable. —p. 537.1

[More information about Sabbath keeping can be found in: 1TT 290, 3TT 16 and 129, 3SM 256.]

Growing Together

- 1. Katty Newborn has just been baptized and asks you how to keep the Sabbath.
 - a) What criteria should we use to decide which specific conduct is appropriate for the Sabbath, and which is not?

- b) Based on —p. 528.2 and 5, how would you help her? Is it legalism to keep the Sabbath as prescribed?

- 2. There is a time established for the whole family to gather together to welcome the Sabbath (—p. 529.1).

- a) In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges a Christian family faces when they decide to gather the entire family together at that specific time?

- b) What solution(s) would your group suggest?

3. Harry cannot stop thinking about profane issues during the Sabbath. What suggestions would you give him, based on —p. 529.3?

4. **CASE STUDY:** John Restless is extremely tired on Sabbaths because of his new job’s tight schedule. He believes that the Lord will not judge him if he misses the Sabbath School, because God understands his struggles. Based on —p. 530.1, what does this behavior indicate about his spiritual life? If you were a leader of the church, what could you do to help him?

5. **CASE STUDY:** Johanna faces a huge struggle as her husband is not a believer and loves to watch TV on Sabbaths, his free day. She knows how harmful her husband’s behavior can be to her teenage children’s spiritual life. Keeping in mind —p. 528.2, what would you suggest that she do?

CHILDREN, SABBATH AND THE CHURCH:

6. **CASE STUDY:** Mary Leight is often late for the Sabbath School because she is reluctant to wake up her children early on Sabbath. “After all, they already wake up so

early every day,” she says.

a) Based on —p. 530.2, what do you believe are the consequences of her behavior?

b) What suggestions would you give her?

7. Louise Attire needs to find a way to convince her teenage children to wear a special clothing for church service on Sabbath (see —p. 531.2).

a) Why do you believe that a special Sabbath dress code is important?

b) What suggestions would you give to Louise?

8. **CASE STUDY:** CASE STUDY: Mario Parenthood was baptized three years ago, when his older daughter was already 12. Now that she is 15, she has decided that she will no longer attend Sabbath School or Divine Service on Sabbaths. Based on Exodus 20:10 and —p. 530.3, what would you do in a similar situation? Would threats be an option?

CHILDREN AND SABBATH AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES (P. 532-537):

9. About children playing during Sabbath hours (—p. 533.2):

a) How would you respond to a person who believes that God’s prohibition for Sabbath afternoon activities is too harsh?

b) What do you believe was God’s loving intentions with this command?

10. Frank Candid believes that he must constantly remind his children that God forbids them to play during Sabbath hours.

a) What could be the consequences of such behavior over his children?

b) What can he do to make the Sabbath the most exciting day of the week for his children and at the same time, not allow them to play, as required by God?

See—pp. 533-534; —p. 536-1.

11. Why do you believe that God considers parents as transgressors of the Sabbath when they allow their children to play, or when they don't know where their children are on that day (—p. 533.1-2)? What do you believe were God's intentions with this warning?—p. 532.3; —pp. 533, 534.

Notes:



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