

Sabbath: A Day of Freedom



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Exod. 16:16–26; 20:8–11; Lev. 21:1–11, 20; 25:1–11; Deut. 5:12–15; 15:1–11; Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11; 13:10–17; 14:1–16; John 5:1–18; 9:1–34

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Understand the scriptural basis for true Sabbath keeping.
- ▶ Discover activities which constitute proper Sabbath-keeping.
- ▶ Grasp an understanding of the benefits of keeping the Sabbath holy.

Preparing to Lead

Consider an athlete who must train constantly to ensure that they are in the best shape for competition. The more he/she trains, the better he/she becomes; but there comes a time when they must rest. Rest affords the body, a chance to repair and strengthen itself in between training sessions and allows the athlete to recover,

both physically and psychologically.

Since its institution in the Garden of Eden, the Sabbath has always been a day of rest. While there have been varying beliefs on how one should keep the Sabbath holy, the Bible is clear about what true Sabbath-keeping entails.

Getting Started

A. Bring a few balls to class. During the lesson keep passing them around among class members. After 5-10 minutes of passing the balls around, *ask*: “Are you tired or bored of passing the ball around? Is passing the ball around proving to be a distraction from the lesson? Can you relate constantly passing the ball around to the six-day work week? If passing the ball around was tiring or monotonous, would you have preferred to at least put it down for a while? How can we relate this activity to the Sabbath and the other days of the week?”

B. Distribute the Reproducible Activity and pencils or pens. Ask class members to make two lists. The first will be a list of things that participants think are unsuitable activities for the Sabbath. The second list will be the opposite activities that are suitable for the Sabbath. Discuss the importance of identifying the unsuitable activities and the importance of understanding and appreciating the suitable activities for the Sabbath. Next discuss how one can avoid finding themselves taking part in the unsuitable activities and why it may be hard sometimes to avoid these unsuitable activities on the Sabbath.

Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, balls, pens

Delving Into the Word

A. Life can be busy and we can get so preoccupied with its struggles and demands that we forget the importance of spending quality time with God. *Ask:* “Did Christ keep the Sabbath differently from everyone else?” Read Mark 2:27; Luke 4:16–19; 24:1–8; 23:50–56. *Ask:* “Did the disciples keep the Sabbath the way God intended it to be kept?” Read Luke 23:56; Acts 13:44. Many times we only see the Sabbath as a day that “we can’t do certain things.” *Ask:* “How did different Bible characters view the Sabbath?” Read Isa. 58:13; Ezek. 20:12, 20.

God created everything in six days. When He was done and saw that it was good, He created the Sabbath day, blessed and sanctified it, and rested. Was God tired? By no means! He is God. Rather God rested as an example to us to show us the importance of rest and to give us a chance to reflect on His mercies. *Ask:* “How can we use the Sabbath to appreciate the goodness of God throughout the week?” Read Exod. 31:13; 31:17; Deut. 7:8, 9.

B. Ask: “Are there simple fundamental principles about the Sabbath that we should understand in order to appreciate the holiness of the Sabbath day?”

In pairs, find texts to answer the following questions: “Why do we keep the seventh day as a Sabbath? Why do we keep it in the way we do? What are the special blessings we can expect to receive from keeping the Sabbath holy? What sort of activities should we allow ourselves to engage in on the Sabbath?”

In the Bible, the Pharisees had extreme definitions of what constituted “work” which could violate the Sabbath. Read Matt. 12:1–8; Mark 23–28; Luke 6:1–5. Make a list of some of the practices that the Pharisees considered to be work. *Ask:* “Why did the Pharisees establish and institute these beliefs? Are we guilty of making the Sabbath seem burdensome?” Read Gen. 2:2,3; Exod. 14:4; 16:26–28; Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6. *Ask:* “What was the difference between Jesus’ understanding of the Sabbath and the Pharisees’ understanding of the Sabbath?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why does “Remember the Sabbath day” contrast to “Thou shalt not” in the commandments?
2. Why was the Sabbath the only day that was blessed and sanctified?
3. How can we avoid making the Sabbath burdensome as the scribes and Phar-

isees did in the Bible?

4. What does God command about a day of worship?
5. How can we be more creative in our approach to Sabbath-keeping?
6. What will Sabbath be like in eternity?

Closing the Activity

Use the following points to summarize the importance of the Sabbath and its usefulness in our lives:

1. Rest and rejuvenation
2. An opportunity to spend time with God
3. An opportunity to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior and emulate His character

4. A chance for us to obey and revere Jesus
5. An opportunity to fellowship with each other.
Say a prayer to close.

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