

~ S A B B A T H ~ With Kids

By Jessika Kopp

We started the practice of sabbath two years ago in our family. We start on Friday at noon we celebrate with family night on Friday evening and end Saturday noon.

I'm not going to pretend to be a pro at this or even that I have perfected this engaging and restorative practice.

When I started preparing for our family to really practice sabbath I had to think through what to do with my kids...mama needs to keep her sanity intact and the practice of sabbath I knew was one we were lacking.


I have four children 11,9, 5 and 3....it's a busy place at our house and kids don't rest. So what to do with the them was one of the first things I had to tackle when starting to put this habit into play in our family. You can force them to try and slow down to rest but naturally kids don't rest the way adults do or need to.

So right from the beginning I knew this concept was something I had to model. They had to see me doing and making it a priority to see it as a value. It also became evident that it had to start in my head and with my view and understanding of sabbath.

We talked a bit about the purpose behind sabbath and what God meant for us. I devoured these books trying to grasp Gods intentions of sabbath:

https://www.amazon.ca/Keeping-Sabbath-Wholly-Marva-Dawn/dp/0802804578/%20ref=mp_s_a_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=sabbath&qid=1619672093&sr=8-4

https://www.amazon.ca/Rest-God-Mark-Buchanan/dp/0849918707/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+rest+of+god&qid=1619672180&sr=8-1



I studied sabbath in biblical times and moderns. Sabbath was a break from work but even more so it was this extremely joyful time. People got together and communed, ate and enjoyed fantastic food, and connected and met with God to be refreshed. It was filled with good things. I knew our family needed this. So I decided to get the kids into practicing things that are good as a start. Things that make them feel refreshed. We sat and talked with each kid and asked them simple questions:

Physical Restoration:

What can we do that makes our body's feel amazing?

- The answer we got was they loved the feeling of coming out of the bath and being all clean before family night and taking long walks.

Spiritual Restoration:

What is something you do that makes you feel close to God?

- We got coloring, listening to worship music, praying, watching elevation kids church, using our prayer wall.

Mental Restoration:

What helps give our minds a break and makes them feel awesome?

- We got alone time, going outside, watching a good movie or reading our favorite book, no chores, learning something new and interesting.

Emotional Restoration:

What helps you to be the best person you can be?

- We got listening to audio books about good people, alone time, practicing gratitude.



What's something that makes you happy that you enjoy doing?

-We got ice cream, video games, drawing,
playing with make up, dancing, one-on-one time with Mom and Dad.

So up goes the list so they have something to look at and try when
sabbath comes and I challenge them to try and hit every category.
(The treats we hit during family night)

The toddler—she just goes with the flow 😊. I have a couple of special
toddler boxes I bring out for her only during sabbath that she gets the
pleasure of playing with just for those days and she gives mom a break.
(All non messy and all super fun)

Toddler boxes


Felt dolls

Shapes

Music box

Sticker book

I took all of these things and have said to the kids this is a great place for
them to start with sabbath. It's about being refreshed and letting God
refresh you. It's about doing things we know are good for us and taking
a moment to pause. Their little minds can't fully understand the concept
behind sabbath yet but we can put in habits and ideas for them to join
in with mom (and dad when he's home).



Myself being a #type3 on the enneagram
made my own list of similar practices:

What do I need?


What breathes life into me?

How do I replenish and seek out Godly rest without it being 24 hours of naps and junk food and more “momming”?

Sometimes it will look like slowing down and spending time in the word with quiet. Sometimes it's phone conversations with people who inspire me and breath life into my soul. Sometimes it's turning on the tv for the kids to watch movies while I have a LONG bath. Other times it is taking a guilt free nap. Whatever it is that week for me it involves NOT cooking and giving myself permission to rest.

Family night is the climax of our sabbath. We don't miss family night.
It's a non negotiable.

We are not trying to be religious about the sabbath but obedient.
Understanding that the Lord intended us to rest and enjoy and celebrate the life together. Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and what he puts on my heart for this day. I do not have it all figured out and sometimes I give into my own flesh and skip my much needed sabbath....I pay for it every time. Our whole family is practicing the habit of building of the sabbath, we don't have it figured out but we are learning.



Here are some resources that I like that help with practicing our sabbath:

Awesome make-ahead Sabbath meals to try and involve the kids in:

<https://landofhoneyblog.blogspot.com/2018/04/make-ahead-meals-for-sabbath.html?m=1>

One of the big things that happens for Sabbath is the preparation time. Making sure your house is fresh and cleaned and an atmosphere that inspires relaxation. We use this check list to prepare Thursdays for our Sabbath. Even the toddler gets in on our "Big Clean":

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/878825219/cleaning-checklist-airbnb-vrbo?epik=dj0yJnU9RTVHSGcyU3YyTUxEamU5VS11NVhKQWdVWlhSS3BKaWcmcD0wJm49bjRyT%201otODlhc1luZXFuQXozdThYQSZ0PUFBQUFBR0NLMkh3>