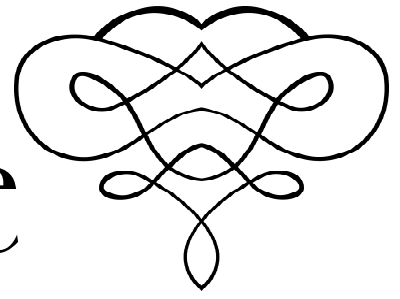


An All-Ages Sabbath Game



to Play in Your Congregation

Dorothy Henderson (Education in the Faith)
based on Sabbath reflections by Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters

Who can play?

- School age children, teens, young adults, middle adults, older adults.

How will you play?

- You will need Bibles, a copy of the click clack (insert) and instructions (pp. 2) for each small group, scissors, a “Let’s talk about it” page for each group (pp. 3-4).

What is the Sabbath Game?

- The Sabbath Game helps intergenerational groups in your church explore what Sabbath means to them. Use the game this way—divide into small intergenerational groups. Give each group Bibles, a copy of the click clack, scissors, a “Let’s talk about it” page.

- Steps:
1. Cut out and fold the click clack.
 2. Using the click clack, take turns choosing a definition of Sabbath that seems best for each person. (Your group may end up with several definitions.)
 3. Use the “Let’s talk about it” sheet to do two things:
 - look up a Bible passage
 - use the “Let’s talk about it” questions to explore whether this is the “true” meaning of Sabbath

Where will you play?

- You can play anywhere you like.

When will you play?

- You can play anytime you like—at an annual meeting, potluck meal, Sunday school time, coffee time, a regular meeting time.

Instructions to make a Click Clack

(You will need one copy for each group)

- Cut out square. Place writing side down.
- Fold corner towards centre of square. (“Sabbath is...” and Sabbath words will face up.)
- Turn over. Fold corners toward centre of square. (Sabbath words will be face up.)
- To make paper game easier to play, fold in half one way, then fold in half the other way.
- Slip thumb and forefinger of each hand under the flaps of paper with “Sabbath is...” words on them.
- Practice closing and opening the paper game one way and then the other.

To play

- Choose either the word “Sabbath” or “Game.” Open and close for each letter of the word you choose (e.g. S-a-b-b-a-t-h).
- Choose an inside number. Open and close for each number you choose (e.g. 1-2-3)
- Choose a definition. Open up and read a little more about this definition.
- Use the “Let’s talk about it” page to follow up on whether this might be the “real” definition of Sabbath.

The word “Sabbath” from the Hebrew verb, shabbath, means to cease, rest, be completed. As participants play this game, they will discover that all the meanings on the click clack are “true.” Sabbath changes from time to time in our lives. The eight meanings on the click clack are, by no means, all of the facets of Sabbath. You may wish to make your own “custom made” click clack by adding some of these additional meanings:

- Sabbath is...covenantal work stoppage. Sabbath reminds us to pause from our ever-increasing productivity and the anxiety which often accompanies it and reflect on God’s higher purposes for us and our world. (Isa. 58:13-14)
- Sabbath is...a communal activity. The Israelite community was called, as a group, to rest and enjoy God. The whole community did it together. (Deut. 15:1-15)
- Sabbath is...a family time. If you have seen the musical movie *Fiddler on the Roof* you will recall the family preparation for the Sabbath. Sabbath is family-centred. (Deut. 16:7-8, 11)
- Sabbath is...a sacred anticipation of the world’s redemption. We look forward, with hope, to God’s ultimate completion of the earth at the end of time. (Heb. 4: 9-11)
- Sabbath is...a time for saving up, storing up. (1 Cor.16:1-2)
- Sabbath is...a time to remind us to love our neighbours as ourselves. (Deut. 15:1-15)

The Bible gives us a kaleidoscope of meanings for Sabbath.

Let's talk about it

Did you pick #1 (Sabbath is....rest)?

- Read Genesis 2:1-4a. What does this tell you about rest?
- Talk about a time when you neglected to rest. What happened?
- What is your favourite way to rest?

Did you pick #2 (Sabbath is...delight in God)?

- Read Isaiah 58:13-14. What does this passage say about delight in God?
- Talk about a time when God seemed particularly delightful to you.
- If you wanted to rediscover delight in God, what would you do?

Did you pick #3 (Sabbath is...a rest for the land)?

- Read Leviticus 25:4. What does this passage say about rest for the land?
- Have you noticed ways that farmers in Canada let their land “rest”?
- Do you believe it is more important to let land rest in the Middle East than in Canada?

Did you pick #4 (Sabbath is...restoring strength to the poor and weak)?

- Read Amos 8:4-5a and Isaiah 1:13-17. Why is God angry in these passages?
- Talk about ways your congregation can restore strength to the poor and weak.
- What can be done about restoring strength to the millions of poor and weak in the world?

Did you pick #5 (Sabbath is...a time of self denial)?

- Read Leviticus 23:26-32. Once a year—the 10th day of the 7th month—the Israelites had a day of self-denial, a day of Atonement. Why do you think they did this?
- Atonement—making ourselves at one with God—is something which must be done over and over in our lives. How do we do this?
- Name one thing you will do this week to bring yourself closer to God.

Did you pick #6 (Sabbath is...the first day of the week)?

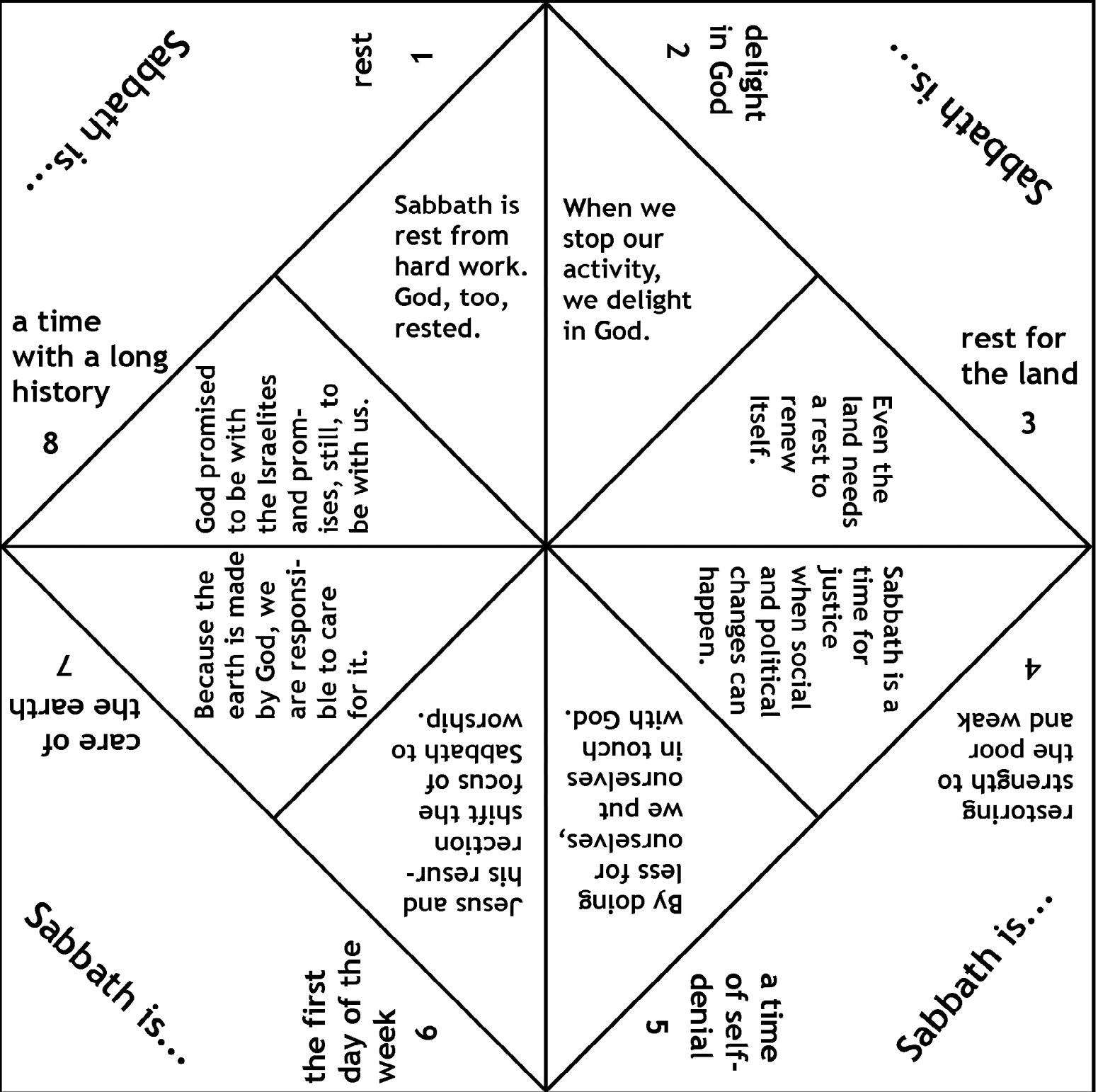
- Read Mark 2: 23-28. What does Jesus say about the Sabbath?
- Judy refuses to shop on Sunday. One Sunday she visited a sick neighbour. There was no food in the house. Should Judy go shopping or wait until Monday?
- In what way is the Sabbath connected to Jesus' resurrection?

Did you pick #7 (Sabbath is...care of the earth)?

- Read Exodus 20: 8-10. How can resting help care for the earth?
- Helping to take care of the earth is sometimes called “stewardship.” Why do we use this word? What does a steward do?
- Make a list of things you do to care for the earth. What does your congregation do?

Did you pick #8 (Sabbath is...something with a long history)?

- Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15. What are the people to remember on the Sabbath?
- Why did (do) God’s people need rituals and practices that set them apart?
- If you wanted to remind yourself of the history of the Israelites, how would you go about doing this?



Sabbath is...

5
a time
of self-
denial

By doing
less for
ourselves,
we put
ourselves
in touch
with God.

Jesus and
his resur-
rection
shift the
focus of
Sabbath to
worship.

Because the
earth is made
by God, we
are responsi-
ble to care
for it.

7
the earth
care of

4
restoring
strength to
the poor
and weak

Sabbath is a
time for
justice
when social
and political
changes can
happen.

3
rest for
the land

Even the
land needs
a rest to
renew
itself.

2
delight
in God

1
rest

Sabbath is
rest from
hard work.
God, too,
rested.

God promised
to be with
the Israelites
and prom-
ises, still, to
be with us.

8
a time
with a long
history

Sabbath is...