

Havdalah

in the Preschool Classroom

by Lisa Baydush © 2010

This is a detailed description of the 15-minute Havdalah service I lead every Monday morning at the JCC with approximately 40 four-year-old and Kindergarten students and their teachers...

1. Turn off the lights; I sit on the carpet playing a **niggun** on the guitar.
2. Children enter quietly and sit in a large circle. Encourage them to join in on the singing while they take out their Havdalah sets.*
3. When all classes are present, segue from niggun to **Hinei Mah Tov** (folk), introducing it by saying, "How good and pleasant it is that we are all here together!" Encourage students to put arms around one another and sway.
4. When the song ends, lean forward and say, "On Friday night, we light candles and eat challah, and on Saturday night...?" The children chime in eagerly with the lyrics to the next song, "WE DO HAVDALAH!" Sing **Do Havdalah** (Daniel). I adapted the lyrics for the verses.
5. Segue directly into **Havdalah is When We Say Goodbye to Shabbat** (Baydush). I only sing the first verse-chorus-first verse, ending quietly to bring the energy down.
6. At the conclusion of the song, a teacher lights the Havdalah candle as I say to the children, "Close your eyes; imagine that it is Saturday night; Shabbat is ending; look for three stars in the sky; when you see them, raise three fingers in the air." (I made three foil-covered stars and hung them from the ceiling.) Then begin to sing the yai lai's of **Birkot Havdalah** (Friedman).
7. After the first set of yai lai's, tell the children that the first blessing is over the grape juice which reminds us of how sweet Shabbat is (later in the year, ask them what comes first, next, etc.). A teacher holds up the Kiddush cup while I sing, "Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-olam...", quickly inserting the Hebrew, "b'orei p'ri hagafen," so the children have an auditory cue of what the Hebrew is and can join in.
8. Continue with yai lai's and the next two blessings over the spice box and candle in the same pattern. For the spices, tell them that we smell the sweet spices and hope that a little of the sweetness of Shabbat will come with us into our new week. For the candle, tell them to extend their hands towards the light, then to curl their fingers towards themselves, as if to hold onto a little of the light of Shabbat.
9. If students have made their own Havdalah sets, they also hold up the ritual items along with the teacher who holds up the "official" set.
10. I do not sing "Hamavdil" with this age group, as they seemed to get restless at this point, there is no physical item that they can see, touch or smell associated with "separation," and I wanted to bring the service to an end.
11. At the end of the last set of yai lai's, we get very quiet to listen for the sizzle... the louder the sizzle, the better the week will be! A teacher extinguishes the candle in the wine cup in a dramatic way... the children exclaim excitedly when they hear the sizzle.
12. I immediately start singing **A Good Week** (Kruger), and the children join in enthusiastically with this upbeat song, clapping on the yai lai's.
13. At the conclusion of this song, I offer three in-the-air "high-five's" to the students who are sitting to my left, right and across from me. Then I tell them to please line up with their classes at the door while we sing **Shavua Tov** (traditional) together.

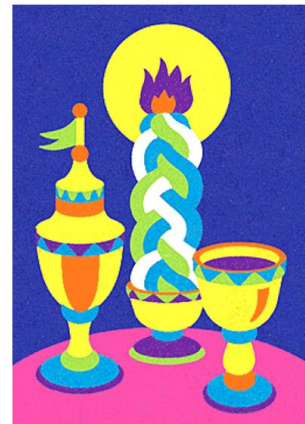
*Students make their own Havdalah sets and bring them each week to our service in a Ziploc bag:

- **Kiddush cups** made of small plastic cups with purple tissue paper at the bottom to represent the grape juice;
- **Spice boxes** made of decorated film containers filled with cinnamon and cloves, with holes poked in the top;
- **Candles** made of braided pipe cleaners glued to a craft stick, with a yellow foil flame.

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🎵 **Niggun**

🎵 **Hinei Mah Tov** (folk)

🎵 **Do Havdalah** (Karen Daniel, adapted by Lisa Baydush)

Chorus:

We do Havdalah, Havdalah, Saturday night we do Havdalah! (2x)

We look for three stars in the evening sky to know it's time for us to say goodbye, Shabbat is ending, a new week begins; let's do Havdalah now with all our friends! (chorus)

We raise a braided candle to the highest height, see how God separates the darkness from the light; We shake the spices, oh, they smell so sweet! Havdalah is my favorite time of week! (chorus)

🎵 **Havdalah is When We Say Goodbye to Shabbat** (Lisa Baydush)

Havdalah is when we say goodbye to Shabbat (2x); Shalom Shabbat, Shalom Shabbat (2x); Havdalah is when we say goodbye to Shabbat (2x).

🎵 **Birkot Havdalah** (Debbie Friedman)

Yai lai's...

Raise the wine cup but do not drink from it. We say a blessing over the wine which reminds us of the sweetness of Shabbat...

 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam borei p'ri hagafen

Yai, lai's...

Hold up the spice box and sniff it. We smell the sweet spices which remind us of the sweetness of Shabbat and we hope for a sweet week ahead...

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי בְשָׂמִים: 
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam borei minei v'samim

Yai, lai's...

Raise the candle for all to see. We extend our hands towards the candle, and as we curl our fingers towards us, we hold onto a little bit of the light and a little bit of Shabbat...

 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ:
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam bo-rei m'orei ha'eish

Yai, lai's...

Extinguish the candle in the wine; listen for the sizzle!

🎵 **Shavua Tov** (David Kruger)

A good week, a sweet week, a week filled with happiness and joy! (2x) Ya lai lai's... (with clapping)

High-fives!

🎵 **Shavua Tov** (traditional)

Shavua Tov (8x); A good week, a week of peace, may gladness reign and joy increase! (2x)