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# “The Sabbath Rest”

Sunday School Lesson for Labor Day

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Labor Day: First Instituted by the Creator  
Sunday School Lesson on Rest and Sabbath

In the current culture of constant movement and busy-ness, the concept of rest can be tricky for both adults and kids to appreciate. Young children can be reluctant to slow down and potentially “miss something”...Adults may neglect rest as they hustle to take care of work and family obligations. For all ages, it is important to recognize that the concept of a Sabbath pause is a commandment for a reason, and is a God-given institution. This lesson offers a reminder of the importance of rest.

**Lesson focus:** God wants us to pause from time to time in order to re-set our focus on Him. Through Sabbath rest, we recognize our dependence on God and appreciate all He has done for us.

**Passage:** Genesis 2; Exodus 20; Psalm 116; Isaiah 26

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Materials Needed:** Pillows (small); decorative materials; pictures; clothes hangers; Bibles

**Bonus Ideas:** More free resources to help inspire your lesson planning.

- Compare our [Labor Day lesson](#) focused on the importance of work
- Watch our [children’s sermon for Labor Day](#) weekend
- Download our [Keeping Sabbath coloring page](#)
- Compare the [free Labor Day lesson](#) from Children’s Ministry Deals
- Compare the work & rest lesson from [Children’s Ministry Magazine](#)



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# Activity Games to Introduce the Lesson

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**Lesson Opening:** Get everyone prepared for the topic with some “stop and go” themed games... The idea is to start off the concept of rest, or taking a break from things.

- Getting tired...have students participate in a series of tasks, such as running across the room and back, hopping on one foot for a minute, doing push-ups or sit-ups, or more. Encourage students to do these things multiple times, with very little break. Are they tired yet??
- Red light/green light! This is an obvious classic, but a good opportunity to talk about our stop-and-go mentality, and the concept of stopping to rest now and then.
- Bedtime/wake-up: similar to red light/green light concept, but have the students do various quick activities (run in place, do a dance, etc.), and interrupt periodically with “go to sleep!” at which point kids must stop and pretend to “sleep.”
- Have kids describe and mimic a bed time routine, or a wake-up routine.
- Play freeze dance!

Explain to students that today they will be talking about the idea of rest, and why it is so important to us as humans in general as well as people of God’s family.



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# Bible Lesson on Rest for Labor Day Weekend

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Ask students if they know anything about the holiday Labor Day. It might mean many things to American students: a day off school, the “official” end of summer, a day when banks and businesses are closed...but why do we have a holiday all about that?

Briefly describe the origins of [Labor Day](#) as a celebration of people in the work force. Many years ago, people often had to work very long and hard hours, sometimes in dangerous conditions and usually for not much pay. Some people put in efforts to create laws about such things, and we celebrate their dedication and contributions.

Now there are special rules about working so that people have opportunities to take breaks. But explain that taking a day off was not invented by American workers. It was actually instituted by God Himself! Invite students to look at their Bibles, in the very first part of the Scripture:

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*And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. -Genesis 2:2-3*

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Wow. Even God took a day off! Explain to students that God was setting an example for us. He does not really need rest Himself, but He wanted to show that we are to set aside a special day for considering God and the work HE has done for us. The Sabbath is to allow us to pause and recognize a special holy period of time.



This precedent was reiterated in the giving of the Ten Commandments. Taking a Sabbath break is a holy rule:

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*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. -Exodus 20:8-11*

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God blessed the Sabbath and called it “holy”, set apart for an important purpose. Make sure children are aware that the exact day of the week is not as important as the concept itself. Typically, in the United States Sunday is recognized as the Lord’s day, since most churches hold services then, and we celebrate how Jesus was raised on a Sunday. But some people might have to work on Sundays, and pick a different day to honor the Sabbath.

The point is not about how much work you do or don’t do, or which day you decide is special. Those are the kinds of details that the church leaders were so worried about in the times of Jesus, and they criticized Him for not following all of their picky rules. The important thing about the Sabbath is that we honor it by setting aside time for God.

When we do this, it allows us to remember that life is not all about us or what we can do in our own power. It should be all about God. And the beautiful thing here is that God promises to give us rest. When we fix our minds and hearts on Him, He will rescue us from difficulty:



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*Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.  
6 The Lord preserves the simple;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.  
7 Return, O my soul, to your rest;  
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. -Psalm 116:5-7*

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*You keep him in perfect peace  
whose mind is stayed on you,  
because he trusts in you.  
4 Trust in the Lord forever,  
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. -Isaiah 26:3-4*

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Ask students if they ever feel busy or anxious. What kinds of things do they do that seem to take up a lot of time? Are there any worries they might have? These are wonderful verses to keep in mind, that reflect how God promises to bring us help and peace. We don't need to worry about always doing the most activities or going to the most places or constantly staying on the go...the Lord will honor it when we take time to put our minds back on Him. In fact, this should happen continuously. Being mindful of God's presence is not just something we do on Sabbath days. We can place ourselves back in His care all the time, throughout the day and every day. He is trustworthy and mighty, and promises to give us rest:

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*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." -Matthew 11:28-30*

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You might want to show kids a picture of an ox (or other beast of burden) with a yoke, just to explain and illustrate the concept. Some might be less familiar with the idea of a burden, so you could illustrate it better another way: have a volunteer come up, and let them try to carry around a big heavy backpack. It's a bit challenging, isn't it?

This is what happens in our lives sometimes when we let things pile up, or get too busy or stressed about things. It's like carrying a load on our backs! Lift the backpack off of the student and put it on your back, explaining that this is what Jesus does. He takes on our cares, and He trades them for an easy and light "burden" through His sacrifice. I don't know many people who would prefer a heavy burden over a light one!

What a wonderful promise for us to find peace in. And that's another great thing to remember: our rest is found in God, and we are dependent on Him for all things. Whatever we do is only in and through His power. We can't do it all alone...but we don't have to!

**Close** with prayer and thank God for giving us rest. Ask for help in allowing that precious Sabbath rest, and for contentment in stillness in God's presence and power.



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# Craft Activity: Pillow decoration!

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Encourage students to take a break and enjoy a rest by helping them make and/or decorate their very own pillows. Depending on your students and resources, you might be able to actually “sew” some small pillows from a kit, or consider putting felt together with cotton and glue. Or you could decorate some pillows using puffy paints, small jewels, etc.

If this is not within feasibility or budget, consider creating a “prayer mobile.” Have students write out one of the verses on rest and draw or color images depicting rest (moon, stars, bed, etc.). Cut these and hang them from a clothes hanger using yarn. Invite kids to hang the mobile in their bedrooms or near their beds.



We hope you enjoy this free resource.

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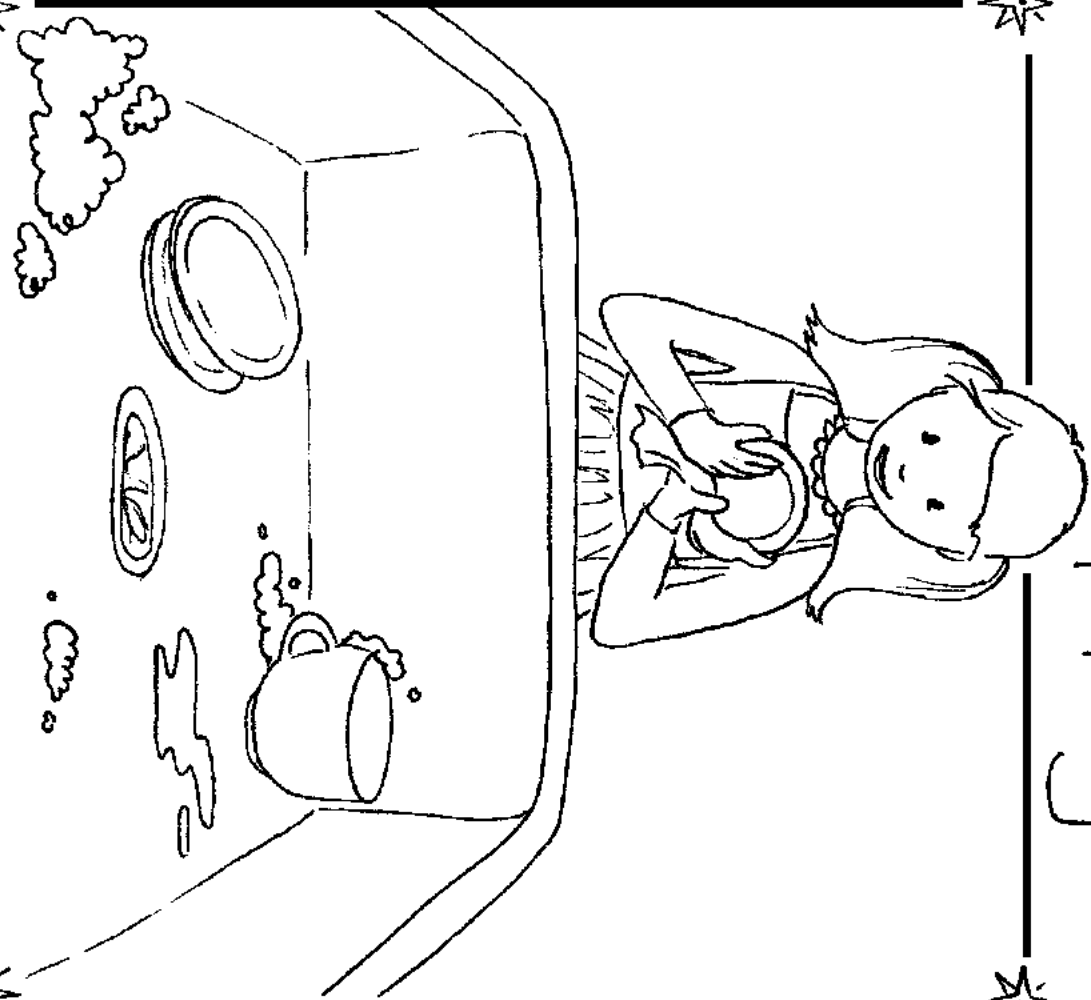
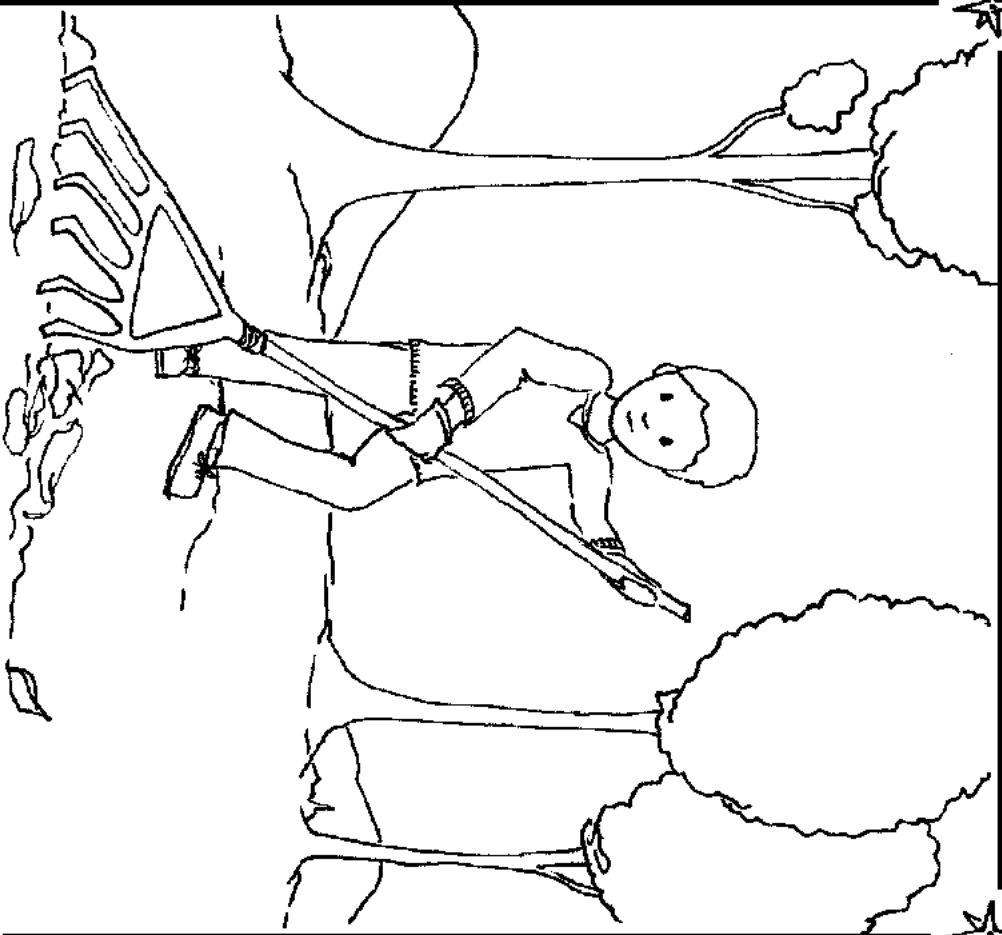


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Whatever you do, do everything



for the glory of God. 1 cor 10:31



**Whatever you do,  
work at it with all your  
heart, as working for  
the Lord, not for men.  
Colossians 3:23**

