

Rhythms, Cycles and Seasons

Objectives

- Students will understand there are rhythms and cycles to life.
- Students will discover there are also healthy rhythms and cycles to our spiritual lives.
- Students will appreciate that Christ is our Sabbath rest.

Activity

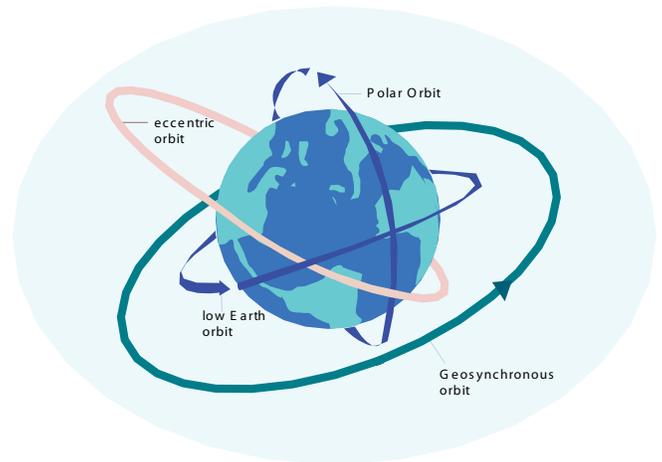
I. What is your favorite rhythm and style of music? Why?

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|------------------|----------------|
| a. Rock and roll | e. Rap |
| b. Salsa | f. Polka |
| c. Big band | g. Classical |
| d. Waltz | h. Other _____ |

II. Pick one of the following rhythms in your life to describe (these are the things you do regularly that create your routine, add stability and familiarity to living life);

- Daily rhythm
- Weekly rhythm
- Annual rhythm

Our Solar System has its own rhythms, cycles and seasons. There are predictable orbits of planets around the sun, moons orbiting planets, and spinning planets all going on at different speeds and cycles creating seasons.



Scripture

Let's explore another set of rhythms, cycles, and seasons—spiritual ones. The signature act of Yahweh's grace in the lives of Israel was delivering them from bondage in Egypt and leading them to the Promised Land. It is significant that this was all done first, out of His love and commitment to His people. Once He led them out of 400 years of slavery He took on the task of molding them into a “chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation.” He gave them new rhythms, cycles, and seasons designed to help them live spiritually in tune with Him and His mission. Let's explore some of these rhythms, cycles, and seasons.

Daily rhythm:

- Ex. 16:1-5, 12-15
- Num. 28:1-4

Daily reminders of God's presence:

- Ex. 13:21-22, 14:19f., 40:34f.
- Ex. 25:1-9
- Ex. 30:1, 34-35

Weekly rhythms:

- Ex. 20:8-11, 23:12f., 35:1f., Lev. 23:3.
- Num. 28:9f.

How do you imagine these rhythms, cycles, and seasons affected God's people collectively or individually?

III. The early Greek Fathers used a unique word to describe the interaction of the Trinity—perichoresis (peri—around, chorea—dance), thus “to dance around,” or the Divine Dance. This imagery is rich with interaction, three dancers, one dance, graceful, elegant, powerful. The neat thing about this Divine Dance is that it is not a dance to simply observe. God invites us to join the dance.

As we observe the spiritual dance of God and His people in the wilderness we can hear the seven-step rhythm and the idea of rest.



- Every 7th day is a Sabbath day of rest.
- The 7th month (Tishri) has special spiritual significance full of Law/Gospel.
- Each year had 7 God-given festivals.
- Every 7th year was to be a year-long Sabbath rest.
- The year after the seven sevens was the 50th year—Jubilee Year, 2 years of Sabbath rest!

Application

What might be the role and purpose of the Sabbath?

How can the Sabbath rhythm influence and guide your dance with the Lord and His creation?

How do you observe the Sabbath rhythm and purpose being abused or ignored?

What do you perceive to be the effects of this interruption in the dance?

What do you imagine Jesus was thinking when he said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”? (Mark 2:27)

Note in Hebrews 4:9-10 the writer understands the ultimate Sabbath rest is Christ and guaranteed in Him.

“That’s True Value!”

Objectives

- Students will discuss and discern what others want them to believe is their worth.
- Students will discover or rediscover what their true worth is.
- Students will appreciate the role the Sabbath has in understanding and remembering their worth.

Activity

Juggling—Can anyone juggle? Give someone an object to try juggling.

Group juggle—In a circle introduce an object suitable for juggling. Toss it across the circle to another person and ask them to toss to someone else, and so on until it comes back to you. Introduce a 2nd object. Toss to a different person. Introduce a 3rd object, a 4th, and so on until the group is obviously struggling to keep them all in the air.

Ask: How are some peoples’ lives like trying to juggle? How are some families or groups like juggling as a group? What makes it this way?

The worth of a person can be misunderstood as how much one person can “juggle” or how busy a person is.

What is a human being worth? What criteria do others use?

- One’s life insurance policy upon death
- Value as determined at www.humanforsale.com (How much are you worth?)
- Value of your chemical components on the market
- Your annual income
- Your debt
- Your appearance (largely portrayed by magazine covers, TV commercials, Web adds, etc.)
- Your grades or GPA
- The activities you are involved in (sports, music, drama, clubs, youth group, etc.)
- What else can be used to establish a sense of worth?

This can get out of hand as you try to satisfy all of these criteria and establish your worth!

If time, read “The Touch of the Master’s Hand” by Myra Brooks Welsh (Found at <http://www.abou-tonehandtyping.com/storiesfolder/master.html>).

The “Sabbath Scale of Worth”

Look up:	Ex. 3:5 -	Num. 7:1 -
	Deut. 7:6 -	Gen. 2:2-3 -

God set apart, he sanctified, He “holy-fied” time first, long before a place or people.

Why do you think He did it this way?

A deep, basic rhythmic beat in LIFE’s dance. It is the beat of our worth. At creation a 1/6 beat, the rhythm of LIFE to which we are created to enjoy this cosmic dance.

Read Gen. 1:26 -

The first full day of being human in the divine dance is “cease,” do nothing, just being in God. The first beat of this cosmic dance of LIFE is doing nothing. How is one suppose to determine his or her worth?!

It is determined for us, in another, in God! You and I don't have to do anything to be worthy, because our worth is not in us, it is in Him.

How can this 1/6 beat of ceasing/doing help us in the divine dance of LIFE in the midst of all the other things telling us what is valuable or makes us worthy?

True Value!

Isaiah 43:1-5: "But now, this is what the LORD says—"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior... Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.... Do not be afraid, for I am with you."

How easy it is for us to forget during the 6 days of the dance. So the gift, the blessing of the Sabbath, is the 1/6 rhythmic reminder that our value and worth is Him, not us.

Sabbath for a Forgetful People

Objectives

- Students will discover two reasons for remembering the Sabbath.
- Students will appreciate the gift of the Sabbath as a tool for remembering the grace of God.
- Students will list and apply ways in which the Sabbath practice can enhance remembering and observing God's grace.

Activity

Close your eyes and list as many details as you can from the trip here. If you left home and came straight here what did you notice? Any cars you remember passing? Interesting signs? Interesting people?

Memory is an interesting thing. It is closely related to forgetting. Some things stay with us easily, many things require effort to remember, such as history, math or literature lessons in school. And some things are so quickly forgotten that we don't even notice.

It is the same for our spiritual "memories." Some things are remembered, many are quickly forgotten.

Scripture

Read Exodus 20:8-11

Verse 8 gives us the command.

Verses 9-11 explain a little why.

Why does God give Israel this command? It is drawing upon Gen. 2:2-3.

What are God's people suppose to remember? Why?

Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Another listing of the 10 Commandments, but slightly different.

Verse 12 gives us the command.

Verse 15 explains a little more why.

What are God's people to observe here? What is the deal with no longer being slaves?

How is that different than being freed and the work week?

"Remember" and "Observe"

Remember God created all things and He rested.

Remember God created people on the 6th day and they also rested on the 7th day, before ever doing anything.

Observe the Sabbath by remembering you were slaves and God made you free.

Observe by celebrating the fact that you can now regularly rest from your work because of God's grace.

The Sabbath is a gift from God to help His forgetful people remember He created us and all things and observe this by remembering and celebrating our free lives in Christ.

Read Lev. 23:3. One way we remember and observe is by meeting together in a sacred assembly, celebrating all the goodness of our gracious God.

Apply

List the ways you already remember and observe the Sabbath.

What are some things you can do to enhance this celebration? Please explain how these are an enhancement to remembering and observing.