



Easy Watercolor Challah Covers



Overview:

Children or families will create a tie-dye style challah cover that can be used at JFAM family camp, at home, or both (depending on when it's created). There are many ways to decorate fabric; this specific activity is highlighted because it can be adapted to all ages, dries relatively quickly, cleans up easily, and is inexpensive.

This write-up offers several paint options – pick just one or offer families a choice.

Supplies:

Fabric base:

- One 100% cotton handkerchief per person, such as [these](#), or cotton white bandanas such as [these](#). (Pro tip: paint will adhere better to all-natural fibers than polyester blends.)
- Work surface for each workspace to absorb liquid and excess paint, such as corrugated cardboard or an old towel

Paint options:

- Brushes of various widths
- 1 tray of watercolor paints (this will be the least vibrant, but easiest, option) **or**

- Assorted liquid watercolors
- Assorted acrylic paints

Additional decorative options:

- Pre-write “shabbat” in Hebrew and/or English on the handkerchief in fabric marker or Sharpie
- Offer stencils or traceable guides (placed under the handkerchief) for families to write “shabbat” in Hebrew and/or English

Directions:

Setup:

- Cover tables, if desired.
- Distribute a variety of brushes around the tables
- Distribute water in sturdy jars (pro tip: plastic cups tip easily!)
- Handkerchiefs can be taped down to cardboard or heavy craft paper, if desired.
- Prepare paints, if necessary: **Liquid watercolors** should be diluted by half and distributed in ice trays, plastic paint pallets, or other small, sturdy containers. **Acrylic paints** should be diluted until thin (about 1:3 paint to water) and distributed in a similar way.
- Identify a location for covers to dry

Instructions:

- Share one or more picture books about the shabbat table and/or challah, such as *Koala Challah*, *This is the Challah*, *The Friday Nights of Nana*, or *The Shabbat Princess*. Your local PJ Library professional or early childhood center may be able to loan books.
- Have a sample challah and challah cover to show families. Explain that one of the ways we make the challah feel special on shabbat is to give it its own “outfit.” Give young children a chance to cover and uncover the challah.
- Demonstrate some watercolor techniques on fabric – what happens when you use more water? Less water? A thin brush? A thick brush?
- Invite children to decorate their own cover any way they want. This is an open-ended exploration of paint and color.

Extension/Follow Up

- Invite children to continue painting on individual pieces of paper, or on one large piece of paper or fabric sheet that multiple children paint on together
- Email families with information about how to do the *motzi* at home and/or invite them to a pre-dinner zoom for songs and shabbat blessings.

Additional Jewish content

- [Article from Chabad](#) about why it's a tradition to cover the challah
- [Bimbam video](#) “Learn to bless the challah”