

# JUDAISM



# Judaism – Year 8

## Overview

Judaism is one of the world's major religions. Judaism began nearly 4000 years ago in a place called the Middle East. This is a large area on the border of Asia, Africa and Europe. Jews believe in only one God (it is a monotheistic religion). They have a special agreement with God called a covenant (promise). Jews promise to obey God's laws to say thank you to him for looking after them. Historically Jews have been known as Hebrews and Israelites. In the UK there are approximately 290,000 followers of Judaism and across the world approximately 14, 606,000.



## Beginnings

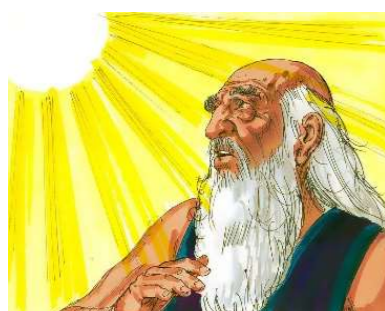
**Abraham** Jews believe a man called Abraham was the the first person to make a covenant with God. Abraham was a **Hebrew**. Jews believe God named Abraham's grandson Israel. After this, the Hebrews became known as the **Israelites**. Abraham is considered the **father** of the Jewish people and the Israelites are his descendants.

God makes a covenant (promise) with Abraham.

1. Abram will be blessed: he will have many **descendants**.
2. He and his descendants will have a **land** of their own.
3. Abram's name will be great. He will be the father of many nations.
4. God will be faithful to all Abram's descendants, and be their God.

The **sign** that God has made this covenant and these promises is that:

1. Abram's name (Man of Greatness) is changed to **Abraham** (Father of many nations).
2. The sign, for Abraham's descendants to remember this covenant by, is the sign of **circumcision**.



**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS For Kids**

- 1 Love God more than you love anything else.
- 2 Don't make anything in your life more important than God.
- 3 Always say God's name with love and respect.
- 4 Honor the Lord by resting on the seventh day of the week.
- 5 Love and respect your mom and dad.
- 6 Never hurt anyone.
- 7 Always be faithful to your husband or wife.
- 8 Don't take anything that isn't yours.
- 9 Always tell the truth.
- 10 Be happy with what you have. Don't wish for other people's things.

The Jewish holy book is called the **Torah**. The Torah is written in Hebrew. It is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Torah has **613** commandments which are called **mitzvah**. They are the rules that Jews try to follow. The most important ones are the **Ten Commandments**. It is kept in a safe place called an **ark** in the Jewish temple. and when people read from the Torah, they use a special pointer stick called a **yad** to follow the words.

The Torah is so special that people are not allowed to touch it. When people read from the Torah, they use a special pointer stick called a **yad** to follow the words.

**Jewish artefacts**



The mezuzah is a small case found on the doorposts of Jewish homes. It is a reminder of the oneness and presence of God. It is touched or kissed as you walk pass as an expression of love and devotion for God. It contains the Shema prayer.

The tallit is a prayer shawl worn by Jewish men during worship. The fringes at the end of the tallit are a reminder of the 613 commandments or mitzvot.

Kippur: Jewish law requires men to cover their heads as a sign of respect and reverence for G-d when praying, studying Torah, saying a blessing or entering a **synagogue**.

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith is the menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum used in the



Temple.

## Moses

## What made Moses the greatest Jewish prophet?

Much time after Abraham, a man named Moses saved the Jewish people from persecution in Egypt when he led them to safety across the Red Sea. After this, the Jews lived in the desert where God gave Moses a set of rules which they should live by, including the Ten Commandments. Moses is the most important Jewish **prophet**.



### WHAT MADE MOSES THE GREATEST JEWISH PROPHET?

- Maimonides calls Moses "**the father of all the prophets**" (Moshe Rabbenu) in his 13 Principles of Faith.
- God chose Moses to free the Hebrews out of Egypt
- Moses was given **God's power** to perform miracles: 10 plagues, parting of the Red Sea, gave the Hebrews water and manna in the desert.
- Moses was given **the Commandments** by God, which are the basis of Jewish religion
- Moses **spoke with God "face to face...as a man speaks with his friend"**. Moses' intimacy with God was unique.
- Moses **led the Jewish people to the Promised Land**, fulfilling the promises made by God to Abraham.

## The Ten Plagues



### Sukkot - Jewish Harvest Festival

#### What is the festival about?

**Sukkot** (also known as **Feast of Tabernacles**) is a Jewish festival. In this event, people celebrate the gathering of the crops, and remember the time in the past when small shelters were made by the Jews when they were in the wilderness and had no homes.



#### How it is celebrated:

The original harvest theme of the festival is underlined by the four symbols: 1. The 'fruit of the goodly tree' ('etrog') which is citrus and looks rather like a lemon. 2. The branch of the date palm ('lulav'). 3. A bough of a leafy tree, with twigs of myrtle ('hadas'). 4. Sprigs of willow ('aravah'). These four 'species' are brought to the synagogue and bound together. Worshippers then walk around the building carrying and waving them. This shows that God rules over all and that God's goodness is everywhere. This action is repeated when they go in the sukkah and at all synagogue services during the festival.

### The Jewish Sabbath.....the biggest little holiday

Shabbat (the Sabbath) is the most important time of the week for Jews. It begins on Friday evenings and ends at sunset on Saturdays. During Shabbat, Jews remember that God created the world and on the seventh day he rested. Jews believe God's day of rest was a Saturday.

The services in the synagogue are led by a religious leader called a **rabbi**, which means 'Teacher' in Hebrew.

On the Shabbat no work must be done, no electrical equipment used, no driving the car. It is an important time for Jewish people to spend with their families, so therefore would have a family meal, such as *Kiddush*. The mother begins the Shabbat celebrations by lighting the Shabbat candles.

Shabbat is a family time of prayer, reflection and a special meal which is observed during Shabbat. In the Torah it says: '*Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.*'

#### Key questions....

1. Who was the founder of Judaism?
2. When did Judaism begin?
3. What is meant by covenant?
4. What was the covenant between God and Abraham?
5. Why is Moses an important Jewish prophet?
6. What does the festival of Sukkot remember?
7. How is Sukkot celebrated?
8. Do you think Passover is the most important Jewish festival? Think of reasons to support your viewpoint.
9. Why do you think the youngest child asks 4 questions during the Passover seder meal?
10. How is Shabbat is celebrated in the home and Synagogue?



### Passover

**Passover** (or **Pesach** in Hebrew) is one of the most important festivals in the Jewish year. The spring celebrations last for seven or eight days, depending on where you live. In Exodus God told the Israelites that they were to celebrate their freedom from slavery in Egypt by holding an annual festival. On the evening before Passover starts, Jews have a special service called a **Seder** (Order). This takes place over a meal with family and friends at home. During the meal, the story of Exodus is told from a book called the **Haggadah**. Everyone at the Seder has a cushion to lean on. This reminds them that they are now free people and no longer slaves. They also sing lots of songs. There are many foods on the table that have symbolic meaning - Four small glasses of wine remind Jews of the four times God promised freedom to the Israelites; **Matzah** (bread that is flat because it has not risen) reminder of the hurry the Israelites were in to leave Egypt.



### Bar and Bat Mitzvah

When a Jewish boy turns 13 years old he has a **Bar Mitzvah** (Son of the Commandment). When a Jewish girl turns 12 years old she has a **Bat Mitzvah** (Daughter of the Commandment). In this ceremony, the girl or boy promises to keep God's commandments.

Jews believe that after the ceremony, the child becomes an adult in God's eyes and they have a big party to celebrate. Sometimes, after his Bar Mitzvah, a Jewish man will wear a cap called a **kippah**. This cap reminds him about God's commandments.

#### Key Vocabulary:

Judaism Abraham Covenant Moses Sukkot Freedom  
 Passover Pesach Shabbat Sabbath Queen Sabbath Festival  
 Celebration Commandment Mitzvot Bar Mitzvah Bat Mitzvah