

Judaism Knowledge Organiser

Judaism – The religion of the Jewish people

Jewish – A follower of Judaism

Monotheism – belief in one God

Immanent – belief that God is active in the world

Personal – belief that you can have a personal relationship with God.

Covenant – a promise.

Abraham – "our father Abraham," showing he is both the biological father of the Jewish people and the father of the religion of Judaism.

613 **commandments (Mitzvot)**. These are 613 things you should either do or not to, according to Jewish law.

Sabbath (Shabbat) - the day of rest in Judaism

Kosher - Food that follows the strict diet described in **Jewish** law

Tanakh - The Scriptures (Holy books), which is the Hebrew acronym for the three different parts: The Torah, the Nevi'im & the Ketuvim.

Torah – The Torah contains the history of the Jewish people from the start of Creation.

Nevi'im - The Jewish holy scripture called the **Nevi'im** documents the kings of Israel.

Hebrew - The language of the Jewish holy books

Passover (Pesach) - This festival begins on the 15th of the Hebrew Month of Nisan and lasts for either seven or eight days. It celebrates the Exodus, the freeing of the slaves from Egypt, after the ten plagues.

13 Principles of Faith – A list of 13 important beliefs of Judaism, created by a Jewish Rabbi called Maimonides.

Rabbi – A Jewish Leader

Orthodox Jew – a traditional Jew **Reform Jew** - a Jew who has changed or adapted many traditional Jewish beliefs and laws in an effort to adapt Judaism to the modern world.

Secular Jew – Someone with Jewish heritage (born Jewish) but is not religious.

Synagogue – Also called Shul and Temple

CREATION:

Judaism is one of the **oldest monotheistic (One God) religions** and was **founded over 3500 years ago in the Middle East**. However, Jews believe that the **God-Human relationship started at Creation**. This relationship has not been an easy one. "In the Beginning there was nothing" and **God created all life on Earth. God created human beings** who were **good and perfect but they turned away from God** (the light) and towards darkness.

This was the first important event in the God-Human story. In the book of Genesis it says that God created the world in six periods.

- the first day - light was created
- the second day - the sky was created
- the third day - dry land, seas, plants and trees were created
- the fourth day - the Sun, Moon and stars were created
- the fifth day - creatures that live in the sea and creatures that fly were created
- the sixth day - animals that live on the land and finally humans, made in the image of God were created
- by day seven - God finished his work of creation and rested, making the seventh day a special holy day.

ADAM AND EVE:

Adam and Eve (the first humans to know God) turned away from God and found themselves in a world that was no longer a paradise, made perfect just for them. Life was hard and cruel and themselves and their descendants faced many hardships.

As human life expanded over the years humanity's relationship with God was wounded.

Before Noah people worshipped pagan gods, were cruel, greedy and sinful. Humanity had ruined God's creation and His relationship with them.

But there were some faithful people, who became Prophets. A Prophet is a messenger of God, chosen by Him for their good character and their true faith in God.

Noah became a Prophet. He was a good, courageous and honest man. God chose him to take humanity into a new world.

God sent a mighty flood to cover the Earth in water. After months on the Ark the waters subsided and they came upon dry land where God. God made a promise to Noah (humanity) that he would not destroy the Earth again and sent a rainbow as a sign of the promise God made to humanity.

ABRAHAM:

Once again after The Flood, humanity grew and spread out across the lands.

Over time people turned away from God once again and continued in their bad ways, distancing themselves from God. They worshipped power, gold and the pagan gods. They were wicked with each other and committed great sins.

But God's love for humanity was so great that he intervened once again.

When God intervenes in human history we call this 'immanence' and we call God an Immanent God.

Not all men were wicked and not all men turned away from God.

Abraham was monotheistic and believed in the 'one true God'. He was faithful and outspoken against the wickedness of his time.

He called out the Pagan worshippers and destroyed idols. He had a difficult life, but trusted in God. God rewarded him for his Faith.

God chose Abraham to be an example to the world, and to teach others how to live and build a relationship with him - To become God's people.

God and the Jews had a stormy relationship much of the time, and one of the fascinating things about Jewish history is watching God change and develop alongside his people.

Abraham was God's special leader. God chose Abraham because he was loyal, kind hearted and faithful to God. God built a covenant with Abraham. A covenant is a promise. Abraham and his wife Sarah were unable to have children. God promised Abraham a son called Isaac that would be the father of a new nation in a new land. Abraham left to go to that land.

Abraham had a big test of faith. In a dream God told Abraham he must sacrifice his son for God. This was the son that God had blessed him with. Abraham was heartbroken but had such unshakeable faith in a good God that he was about to sacrifice his son. But this was just a test. God swapped Isaac for a ram and Abraham his special relationship with God.

MOSES:

Time passed and there was a great famine. The Hebrews were forced to leave the place called Canaan (modern day Israel) and many fled to Egypt. Eventually, Egypt's leader, the pharaoh, enslaved them. The Israelites had to work at hard labour. The Hebrews were treated badly. They called on God to help them. God heard the cry of His people. *"I have indeed seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt, and I have heard its crying out"*.

God called a special man to be His Prophet and save his people. But this Prophet had an important back story. The Prophet was Moses!

The Israelites/ Hebrews had been in Egypt for generations, but now that they had become so numerous, the Pharaoh feared the Israelite slaves would rise up against him. So he ordered a **terrible punishment** - all the first-born male babies of the Israelites were to be killed.

Moses had just been born, he was the first born son and would be killed. His mother put him in a basket and sent him down the river. She left his fate to God.

Moses washed up near the Palace where the Pharaoh's daughter found him. She brought him up as an Egyptian prince. Until one day, he found out who he really was. He fled into the desert after killing an Egyptian and started a new life away from Egypt. But God called him to be a leader and take on the Egyptians.

God appeared to Moses as a burning tree (that was not on fire). He told Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Israelites/ Hebrews go. Pharaoh laughed. Moses warned him that God would send Plagues each worse than the one before.

Pharaoh refused to let God's people go. Until the last Plague fell upon Egypt.

This last plague was the death of the first born son. God would send the Angel of Death to take the first born son of anyone who had no faith in God.

Those with faith were told to sacrifice a lamb and paint its blood on the door. This would be a sign to the Angel of Death to pass over the house and spare the lives of the sons.

This event (where the Angel of Death passed over the Israelites) is remembered today and is called PASSOVER! When Pharaoh's son died in the 10th plague he let the slaves go. Moses knew that Pharaoh would change his mind. He told the slaves to pack quickly for their journey. To bake bread that did not have time to rise (flat bread) and travel quickly. Moses took them to the red sea. God parted the waves.

REMEMBERING THE EXODUS: PASSOVER

Exodus is the name given to the time when the Jews fled Egypt. This is remembered at the Jewish festival of Passover. Jews believe that the whole Jewish story is their own personal story.

The events that happen in the past are important to help us make sense of our present time.

Jews remember the events of the past during festivals.

Children learn the stories of the past and the important lessons about God and their history.

Pesach (also known as Passover) is an eight day spring festival.

Pesach celebrates **freedom** – It reminds Jews that G-d answered their prayers and set them free from the Egyptians.

Pesach reminds Jews of the passing over of the Angel of Death (the 10th Plague) – hence the name ‘Passover’.









On the first night of the Passover festival Jews have a Seder meal which has special food to remember important events from the past.

‘Seder’ means 'order' and the ceremonies are arranged in a specific order. Special plates and cutlery are used which are kept exclusively for Passover. Jews clean their house of any other foods that might contaminate the Seder food.

The Haggadah is a book which tells in fourteen steps the story of the Jewish experience in Egypt and of the Exodus and revelation of G-d.

As the story of each of the ten plagues is read out a drop of wine is spilt to remind Jews that their liberation was tinged with sadness at the suffering of the Egyptians.

Passover or Pesach is a Jewish festival that remembers how God freed them from slavery in Egypt. It is a reminder that G-d answers prayers.

Pesach – Symbolism in the Seder Meal		A reminder of freedom from slavery		
<p>3 x Matzah (Plural matzot)</p>  <p>Unleavened Bread (No yeast to make it rise)</p> <p>These are eaten symbolically three times during the meal. They remind Jews of the hurry the Hebrews left Egypt because they could not trust the Pharaoh not to change his mind about letting them leave.</p>	<p>Salt Water</p> <p>This represents the tears of the Hebrews in Egypt and the tears shed throughout history when freedom has been denied to the Jews. It could also be said to represent the salty water of the red sea, reminding them of G-d's power to part it.</p>	<p>Bitter Herb</p>  <p>This also represents the bitter life of the Hebrews during the time of their enslavement in Egypt. However it also reminds Jews of their freedom and their new life in the promised land.</p>	<p>Horseradish</p>  <p>This represents the bitter life of the Hebrews during the time of their enslavement in Egypt.</p>	<p>Haroset</p>  <p>(Also known as Charoset) it is a paste made of apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine and represents the mortar used by the Hebrews to build the Egyptian palaces. It reminds Jews of the hard manual labour that the Hebrews were forced to do.</p>
<p>Baked Egg</p>  <p>Reminder of the sacrifices that used to take place in the Jewish Temple before it was destroyed. It is also said to represent new life and a new future for the Jewish people.</p>	<p>Parsley</p>  <p>This is a symbol of new life and represents the coming of spring. It reminds Jews of the new life G-d gave to His people. This is dipped in the salt water to remind Jews of the tears shed before they were free.</p>	<p>Lamb Bone</p>  <p>Reminder of the sacrifices that used to take place in the Jewish Temple before it was destroyed. It also represents the sacrifice of the lamb and the blood that was painted on the doors as a sign to the Angel of Death to 'pass over'.</p>	<p>5 x glasses of wine</p>  <p>4 cups to recall the 4 times G-d promised freedom to the Israelites, and to symbolise liberty and joy. 1 cup is set out for prophet Elijah who will reappear to announce the coming of the Messiah and will do so at Pesach.</p>	

TORAH:

Jews believe that their history and relationship with God is documented in the Torah. **What does the Torah Contain?** The Torah contains the history of the Jewish people from the start of Creation. It contains events from their history but also guidance on how they should live their lives. When Moses took the Hebrews out of Egypt they lived in the wilderness for 40 years before they returned to the land given to them by God.

The Hebrew's struggled with religious life. God sent laws through Moses. 10 of these are known as the ten commandments. Some of the 10 commandments are; do not murder, love your God, do not steal, do not commit adultery.

SHABBAT (Sabbath):

One of the 10 commandments is to keep the Sabbath holy. This means taking a day out of the week to concentrate on spiritual matters and relationship with God. Jews spend time with family and do not do ANY work on Shabbat. Shabbat starts on Friday evening and then finishes Saturday evening. There is a special Shabbat service and special Shabbat meal. Jews cannot use any electrical items. It is a time to devote to God and family.

NEVI'IM:

After the Hebrews were rescued by God through Moses and had spent time in the wilderness, they arrived at the 'Holy Land' which is modern day Israel. Jerusalem (a city in Israel/Palestine) was set up and became the centre of Judaism.

The Jews set up the kingdom of Israel and had many Kings some good and some bad who rule Israel.

The Jewish holy scripture called the **Nevi'im** documents the kings of Israel.

God works through the prophets and good kings to keep the Jewish people on track in their faith. The bad kings cause problems for the people because they do not follow God's words, they split the kingdom and cause division. Watch the following clip. Don't worry about all the names but it gives a good representation of the problems the kings of Israel cause.

(Key word: Idolatry – worshipping other gods)

700 BCE

Jews have a turbulent time from 700 BCE.

They are constantly invaded and have to rebuild their temples and their lives over and over again. (King Solomon built a magnificent temple to replace the one lost long ago, but this temple gets destroyed (partially)).

Jews work hard and listen to the prophets and try to restore their relationship with God but they struggle.

Prophet Isiah tells the Jews about a Messiah (a saviour) who will be Jewish that will come to save the Jewish people and restore what was lost by Adam and Eve.

The holy temple that has again been destroyed will be rebuilt and the Jewish – God relationship will be restored.

There will be no invasions, there will just be harmony.

The Messiah will bring about a new age where Jews will have ultimate freedom and happiness with God.

JUDAISM and CHRISTIANITY:

The Jews wait for the Messiah. There are many predictions about the Messiah, where he will be born, that he will be Jewish, what he will do.

OCE: Jesus is born. He is born where the prophets predicted the messiah would be born, he did many of the things the Jews said he would do and he was born to Jewish parents.

Some Jews at the time believed that Jesus was the Messiah and followed him. These Jews called Jesus 'Christ' and eventually broke away from Judaism and became Christians.

Other Jews did not accept Jesus was the Messiah because he didn't bring about the changes that they were expecting. Some Jewish leaders worked with the Romans who occupied Israel at the time and had Jesus killed.

From this time there was much tension between Christians and Jews. These tensions can be seen in our recent European history and are part of the reason for antisemitism (a hatred of Jews) that led to atrocities like the Holocaust.

JUDAISM TODAY:

Jews over time moved out of Israel and travel all over the world. Jews travelled a lot due to the persecution they suffered. Manchester has the second largest Jewish community in the UK.

Jews practice their faith differently depending on where they are from and what their family traditions are.

Those Jews who follow the laws of the Torah strictly are known as Orthodox Jews. They wear traditional clothes and always cover their hair. There are many groups of Orthodox Jews.

There are a group of Jews known as secular Jews. These are Jews who are not religious but are Jewish by birth.

They often celebrate Jewish festivals. There are also reformed Jews - These are modern Jews that have interpreted Jewish laws and culture to fit in with their modern lives and do not follow all the rules and laws as strictly but are still religious.