



# Spring 1 and 2 - What do you need to know about Judaism?

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## How did Judaism begin?

Judaism began when **Abraham** made a **covenant** with **God**.  
Abraham was a good and thoughtful man. **God** spoke to him and asked him to make some promises. In return **God** promised some things to **Abraham** too.  
**Abraham** did as he had promised and soon **God** began to fulfil his side of the promise - **Abraham** was given a son, **Isaac**, which was a surprise as **Abraham** and his wife were old and thought they would never have children.

## God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac!

When **Isaac** was still a boy, **God** told **Abraham** to take him up a mountain and kill him as a sacrifice to prove he would keep his promise to obey and worship **God**. When they reached the top of the mountain, **God** sent an angel to stop the sacrifice and told **Abraham** it was a test to see if he would keep his promise.



## The Exodus- with God's help, Moses rescues the Hebrews from Egypt.

Hundreds of years later, **Abraham's** descendants eventually became slaves in **Egypt** and were known as the **Hebrews**. **God** chose one **Hebrew** man, **Moses**, to lead their rescue. **Moses** told the **Pharaoh** (the ruler of **Egypt**) to let the **Hebrew** people go, but **Pharaoh** refused. **God** sent ten plagues of terrible events to punish the **Egyptians** and force **Pharaoh** to give in. But it was only when he sent the last plague that **Pharaoh** agreed to **Moses'** demands. **God** sent the **Angel of Death** to kill the firstborn sons in every **Egyptian** family. The **Angel** passed over the **Hebrew** families because **Moses** had warned them to paint lambs' blood on their doors as a sign. **Pharaoh** finally let the **Hebrews** go, but in order for them to escape, **God** had to help **Moses** to part the **Red Sea** so they could cross it safely.

## God's covenant with Abraham

God promised Abraham	Abraham promised God
That he would have a son	That he would believe in him
That he would have more descendants than the stars in the sky	That he would obey him
That Abraham's descendants would be God's chosen people	That he would worship him and only him
That he would give Abraham's descendants a special land of their own.	That he would tell his family about him
	That he would take his family on a long journey, guided by God to their special land.

## Pesach (Passover)

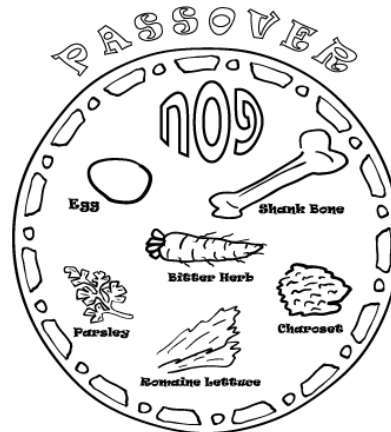
This is an important Jewish festival when the story of the rescue of the **Hebrews** from **Egypt** is remembered.

- Any food items which contain grain that has been allowed to rise is removed from the house. This type of food is called **chametz**. It recalls the fact that the **Hebrews** had to leave **Egypt** in a hurry and did not have time for their bread to rise.
- Special bread called **Matzah** is eaten instead. This is flat, like a cracker.
- A family meal takes place which has some important traditions
- A seder plate containing symbolic food is placed on the table and the food is shared at special moments in the meal.
- The story of the **Exodus** is read aloud.
- Wine is drunk to celebrate freedom, but ten drops are taken out as a reminder of the ten plagues that **God** sent, which made the **Pharaoh** agree to let the **Hebrews** go.

## The Ten Sayings/Ten Commandments

These were given to **Moses** by **God** when he led the **Hebrews** through the desert after their escape from **Egypt**.

Believe in one <b>God</b> only	Do not murder
Do not worship anyone else	Do not be unfaithful to your husband or wife
Speak about <b>God</b> with respect	Do not steal
Rest on the <b>Sabbath</b> day	Do not lie
Respect your parents	Do not be jealous of what other people have



All the food on a seder plate is a reminder of something that happened in the story:  
 Bitter herbs (e.g. horseradish and lettuce) = the bitterness of life as a slave  
 Charoset (sweet apple, nut and raisin mixture) = the paste or mortar that the slaves used to build the pyramids  
 Shank bone = from a lamb - a reminder of the sacrifice of a lamb made by the **Hebrews** before they escaped. They painted the blood on their doors.  
 Roasted egg = A reminder of the sacrifices the **Hebrews** used to make to **God**.  
 Parsley dipped in salt water = the fresh start of freedom and the tears of the slaves.  
 Egg = linked with the idea of mourning (grief or sadness).

## Shabbat (Sabbath)

- Lasts from sunset on Friday until just after sunset on Saturday every week.
- Remembers that God created the world in 6 days then rested on the seventh day and links to one of the Ten Commandments.
- Starts with a special meal which begins with the lighting of candles, prayers and blessings.
- No work of any kind is allowed - this includes writing, switching on electrical items, carrying things and driving. All the preparations for Shabbat must be completed before it begins.
- A time to rest, spend with family and worship God.
- Jewish people will go to the synagogue to worship together.
- Ends with the Havdalah ceremony which involves a special plaited candle, sweet spices, wine and saying prayers, Jewish people say goodbye to the sweetness and specialness of Shabbat and return to their everyday lives.



Havdalah Candle



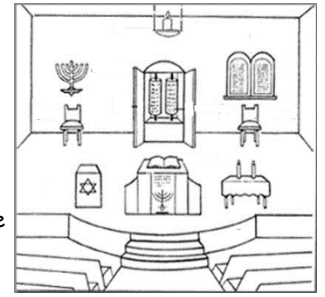
Key words	
Abraham	The first Jew, whom made a covenant with God
commandment	An order or rule from God
Covenant	A two sided promise
Exodus	The time when Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt
Jewish	The name for someone who belongs to the religion of Judaism
Moses	The man chosen by God to rescue the Hebrews and lead them out of slavery in Egypt and to whom God gave the Ten Commandments
Passover (Pesach)	The festival when Jews remember how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt
Rabbi	A Jewish religious teacher or leader
Synagogue	A Jewish place of worship
Torah	The main Jewish holy book



belief	people
believe	prayer
Heaven	religion
holy	religious
miracle	worship

## Synagogue

- Jewish place of worship
- Built so that it faces Jerusalem, the Jewish holy city
- Usually contains the following:
- The Ark - a cupboard where the Torah scrolls are kept - these are the Jewish holy books.
- The Bimah - a platform from where the Torah is read to the people
- The Ner Tamid - an everlasting light that hangs over the Ark
- The Ten Sayings (Ten Commandments) are displayed on the wall
- A menorah - a candlestick with seven branches, a reminder of the Temple where Jews used to worship
- The Star of David - a symbol which represents Judaism
- Seats for the people to sit in, facing the Ark. In a traditional (Orthodox) synagogue, there will be separate seating areas for men and women, but in a Reform synagogue, men and women will sit together
- What happens in a synagogue?
- Men will cover their heads and wear a prayer shawl called a tallit. Sometimes women do this as well
- The service is lead by a rabbi (religious teacher) and chazzan (prayer leader)
- There will be a reading from the Torah scrolls, which are taken out of the Ark in a ceremony
- The people will pray and listen to the rabbi give a talk



## Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Bar Mitzvah means 'Son of the Law'
- Bat Mitzvah means 'Daughter of the Law'
- This takes place usually when a boy is 13 and a girl is 12
- It marks the time when the boy or girl is considered mature enough to take responsibility for their own choices, behaviour and religious beliefs. From now on, they are an adult in the eyes of their religion.
- It is usually celebrated with a public service when the boy or girl will read from the Torah in the Hebrew language. This mostly happens in the synagogue but in some traditional (Orthodox) communities, the girls will have a more private ceremony as they are not allowed to lead the service in the synagogue. They will practise and study for this with the rabbi for a long time beforehand!
- It is a time of celebration for the family and often there is a party afterwards. One tradition is for the boy or girl to be showered with sweets to represent the idea that they will be showered with blessings.

