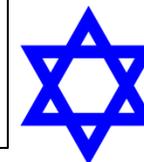




# Spring 1 and 2 - What do you need to know about Judaism?

Enlarge to A3  
when printing



## 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.

## 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 God only      | Do not murder                                |
| Do not worship anyone else   | Do not be unfaithful to your husband or wife |
| Speak about God with respect | Do not steal                                 |
| Rest on the Sabbath day      | Do not lie                                   |
| Respect your parents         | Do not be jealous of what other people have  |

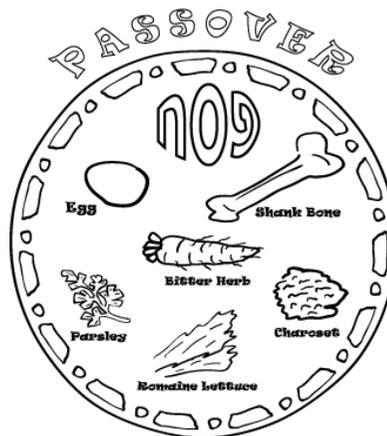
## God's covenant with Abraham

| 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.



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



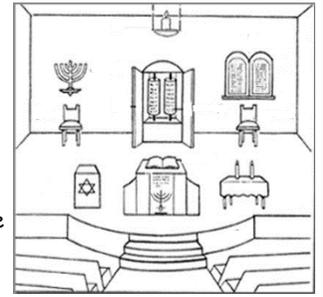
| Key words         |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Abraham           | The first Jew, whom made a covenant with God  |
| commandment       | An order or rule from God   |
| Covenant          | A two sided promise   |
| Exodus            | The time when Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt   |
| 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.

