



Introduction to Judaism



Unit Overview

This unit will introduce students to the key components of the Jewish faith.

Students will encounter the story of Abraham's covenant with God, the importance of the Torah and the Temple in Jewish faith and the 613 mitzvot laws which Jewish people try and follow.



Key Facts

- Judaism traces its roots back to Abraham who lived in modern-day Iraq around 4,000 years ago. The first Jewish people began to use that name in Judah around 2,700 years ago.
- Jewish people believe that God created a covenant, a special promise, with Abraham and his ancestors. The covenant says that if they follow the mitzvot and worship God they will be protected and have a place in heaven.
- The Torah is part of the Tanakh, three collections of holy texts which are the Jewish holy books. It is written in Hebrew and read using a Yad pointer.
- The mitzvot are 613 laws which come from the Tanakh. Jewish people believe they were delivered to Moses from God. They include laws on what to eat and wear and how to worship.
- Shabbat is the day of rest, also called the Sabbath, which Jewish people observe from Friday night to Saturday night. They do not work during this time and meet together for a meal.
- The Temple was built in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago by King Solomon, it was the centre of Jewish worship and contained the Ark of the Covenant. It was destroyed 1,300 years ago but is still very important to Jewish people around the world as a site of pilgrimage and worship.



Key Vocabulary

Covenant - a promise made between Jewish people and God that they will worship and follow God's rules and God will protect them

Hebrew - the language in which Jewish people read the Torah and pray

Mitzvot - the 613 rules found in the Tanakh delivered to Jewish people through Moses.

Shabbat- the day of rest, also called the Sabbath, that runs from Friday evening until Saturday evening when Jewish people do no work

Synagogue - the place of worship for Jewish people

Tanakh - three collections of texts that form the Jewish holy books including the Torah

Temple - the building in Jerusalem that contained the Ark of the Covenant but which was destroyed 1,300 years ago

Torah - the oldest collection of holy Jewish writings, shares the first five books of the Christian Bible.

Yad - the hand-shaped pointer that is used when reading from the Hebrew Torah