

What does it mean to be Jewish?



This Religious Education unit follows on from previous studies of the Judaism in KS1. This unit will deepen the children's understanding of Jewish stories and traditions. They will learn about the importance of historical Jewish stories as well as modern Jewish life, and how these are linked. The children will also learn about the similarities and differences between Judaism and the other Abrahamic religions (Christianity and Islam)

Key Knowledge

Jewish people are very similar to Christians and Muslims in many ways, they celebrate their holy day (the Shabbat) on Friday/Saturday every week.

Jewish people read from their holy book (or scroll) the Torah. The Torah tells many stories, starting from the Creation, Adam and Eve, the stories of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, the Exodus and the 40 years of wandering before reaching the promised land.

Jewish people celebrate various festivals throughout the year, including Rosh Hashannah (the Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (the day of atonement), Passover, etc.

Jewish people have many traditions, many based on the stories of the Torah.

Jewish people pray in a Synagogue (a meeting place). Where prayers are normally lead by a Rabbi (teacher).

Jewish children celebrate their rite of passage (Bar/Bat Mitzvah) at the age of 13, when they help the Rabbi lead the service, and read from the Torah.

Many Jewish people follow dietary laws, known as Kashrut or Kosher.



Links with other religions

Together with Christianity and Islam, Judaism is one of the 3 Abrahamic religions that believe in one God, rather than many in the world.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have many similarities, they are also known as the Abrahamic religions, as all three can trace a common ancestry to Abraham/Ibrahim.

The Jewish holy book, the Torah, is known by Christians as the Old Testament of the bible. Many of the stories are also told in the Muslim tradition.

Jewish and Muslim dietary laws are similar, and both religions have times of fasting (Yom Kippur and Ramadan).

Key Vocabulary

Shabbat—The Jewish holy day, celebrated each week on Friday evening / Saturday.

Synagogue—The name of the meeting place where Jewish people pray.

Patriarch / Matriarch—Male and female ancestors.

Kashrut/Kosher—The name given to the dietary laws followed by many Jewish people.

Torah—The Jewish holy book. Many synagogues have 1 or more historical copies of the Torah, written on a scroll.

Shofar—An ancient wind instrument made from a ram's horn. Traditionally blown during some Jewish festivals.

Ten Commandments—Rules believed to have been given to the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai, after having fled from slavery in ancient Egypt.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah—A rite of passage celebrated by Jewish people at the age of 13. It is regarded as the beginning of adulthood.



Personal Reflection

What does it mean to be Jewish?

How are Jewish people's lives similar/different to your own?

Can you identify with the characters from Jewish stories? Did they all make good choices all the time?

How do Jewish people try to lead good lives? What can you take from the laws and traditions that Jewish people remember?