

## JEWISH BELIEFS AND LIFESTYLE

AT1:

*Pupils will:*

- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions represented in Great Britain and their associated beliefs, experiences and practices.*
- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influences of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions upon individuals, communities, societies and cultures.*

AT2:

*Pupils will:*

- *Reflect on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.*
- *Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.*

*Pupils will be enabled to:*

- *Consider their own beliefs about God's character and understand Jewish belief in one good God.*
- *Know and understand Jewish belief about the Torah, how it should be treated and the importance of its teachings and know about the significance of some of the Jewish forefathers.*
- *Realise the significance of the 10 Commandments to Jews and how they put these into practice.*
- *Appreciate what Judaism teaches about following their faith through family life.*

## SESSION 1: Introduction

### 1. Discuss Jewish belief in one good God.

- Explain the 'Shema' (pronounced Sh'mah) – it is one of the most important Jewish prayers. It is one of the first prayers that Jewish children learn. Religious Jews say the Shema three times each day as part of their regular prayers, and it is included in almost every synagogue service.
- The Shema reminds Jews that:
  - ✓ There is only one God.
  - ✓ God is good and loves them and they should love Him.
  - ✓ God's rules apply to every part of a person's life.
  - ✓ Children should be taught about Torah.
- Jewish people believe that they have made a Covenant with God. The Covenant is an agreement that the people will love God and follow His rules and in return God will take care of them. Saying the Shema is a way that Jewish people have of reminding them of their promises to God.
- The second verse of the Shema promises long life and good harvests to those who keep God's rules. The third verse tells Jews to wear clothes with **TZITZIT** at each corner. Tzitzit are tassels made of several threads tied together. The Shema says that when people look at the tassels they will remember their promise to keep god's rules. Some Jewish people follow this rule all the time and wear a sort of vest with tassels at the corners. Jewish people also wear a special prayer shawl called a **TALLIT** when they are praying in the synagogue. A tallit has four corners with tzitzit threaded through them.
- Another way that Jewish people have of reminding themselves about the covenant is to fix a little box called a **MEZUZAH** to each door frame of their homes. Inside the mezuzah is a piece of parchment with the paragraphs of the Shema written on it.
- **Questions**
  - What do you think it means when the Shema says "These words [...] shall be upon your heart"?
  - Where does the Shema tell Jews to talk about God's rules?
  - Why do you think the Shema says that people should repeat the words to their children?
  - Could it be boring to keep talking about the rules?
  - What could you use or do to help you to remember promises that you have made?

### 2. Think of a suitable way to present this information. Use pictures, writing, mind map etc.

## SESSION 2: The Ten Commandments

### 1. Discuss the 10 Commandments - what they mean and their significance to Jews.

- What do the Commandments teach Jews about how they should behave towards one another?
- Do you have rules in your life that you try to live your life by? What are and why do you have them? Which rules do you find hardest and easiest to keep?
- Which other religion tries to follow the 10 Commandments? (Christianity) What is the link between these two religions?

### 2. Draw and write how someone might put one of these rules into practice, in their daily life.

### **SESSION 3: Yom Kippur**

#### **1. Teach pupils about Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement.**

- *Yom Kippur is when Jews repent of their sins and judge their behaviour and make amends with those they need to.*

#### **2. Ask pupils to write about things they repent of, or regret thinking, saying and doing on small bits of paper. Then tear these bits of paper into a communal pot.**

- *Discuss how it makes you feel when you can make amends.*
- *Discuss how hard it is sometimes, to say 'sorry'; or admit you have done or said something wrong.*
- *Discuss how you feel when you have said sorry or you have admitted you have done or said something wrong.*
- *Discuss how it feels when someone says sorry to you.*

#### **3. Present the information about Yom Kippur and how it helps Jews relationships with others and with God. Use writing and pictures.**

### **SESSION 4: The Synagogue and the Torah Scrolls.**

#### **1. Look at the diagram of the inside of a Synagogue and discuss the importance of the various objects and the Torah.**

- *Compare the inside of a synagogue with the inside of other religious buildings they know eg; a Church, a Cathedral, a Mosque a Gurdwara etc.*
- *Discuss why the Torah Scroll is kept in the synagogue. Discuss the significance of the Torah Scroll being paraded and read from in synagogue services.*
- *Look at a miniature Torah Scroll artefact.*
- *Compare the Torah with important books from other religions; eg; the Bible. How are these other important religious books stored, used or looked after? Do these books have the same significance to their followers?*
- *Discuss what they think the Torah means to Jewish people.*

#### **2. Draw a picture of some of the objects found inside a Synagogue and explain what they are for.**

## **SESSION 5: The Torah Scrolls**

### **1. Discuss rules found in the Torah**

- *Read Leviticus 19: 11-18, particularly the last part: “love your neighbour as yourself”. What does this mean? How can you do this? Is this easy or hard? Jewish people believe that you should also do this to someone you don’t like – would that be easy or hard?*
- *Discuss how this rule is also believed by Christians. (Leviticus is also in the Bible.)*

### **2. Create a poster to illustrate how Jews should keep this rule.**

## **SESSION 6: Jewish family life – Shabbat and Kashrut**

### **1. Discuss Shabbat (Holy day – the Sabbath) and how Jewish families prepare for it.**

- *Talk about the significance of the rituals of a Friday night, for Jewish families, and the importance of the Shabbat.*
- *Discuss the rules for Shabbat and the focus on quiet family time. Discuss important family times they have at home and what happens to make them special.*
- *Discuss the Havdalah ceremony (blessing to mark the end of the Sabbath) and how the spice box reminds Jews of the sweetness of Shabbat throughout the coming week.*

### **2. Discuss Kashrut – Jewish food laws.**

- *Discuss what can and can’t be eaten by Jews.*

### **3. What have we learnt about Jewish lifestyle and beliefs?**

- *Discuss everything we know about Jewish beliefs and lifestyle – from religious ceremonies to family activities. What does it tell us about Jews? How does it compare with our own lives and other religions we know about?*

### **4. Present the information about Jewish family life, using picture and words.**



# The 10 Commandments

אנכי ה'

**I am the Lord, your God who took you out from the land of Egypt.**

לא יהיה לך

**You shall have no other gods before me.**

לא תשא

**You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God in vain.**

זכור את יום השבת

**Remember the *Shabbat* day and keep it holy.**

כבוד את אביך ואת אמך

**Honour your Father and your Mother.**

לא תרצח

**You shall not murder.**

לא תנאף

**You shall not commit adultery.**

לא תגנב

**You shall not steal.**

לא תענה

**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.**

לא תחמד

**You shall not want what your neighbour has.**



# **YOM KIPPUR**

Yom Kippur is the most sacred and solemn day in the Jewish calendar.

- It means Day of Atonement
- It's a day to reflect on the past year and ask God's forgiveness for any sins
- Jewish people fast for 25 hours

## **Getting ready for Yom Kippur**

During the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur everyone gets a chance to put things right with other people before asking God's forgiveness. This period is called The Days of Repentance or Days of Awe.

It's a time when Jews can make up for the wrongs of the past year and make a firm commitment to not do the same bad thing or things again.

## **What happens on Yom Kippur?**

The special day of Yom Kippur is marked by Jewish people in a number of ways:

- Many wear white as a symbol of purity
- No food or drink is consumed for 25 hours. (Children under thirteen and people who are ill or pregnant do not have to fast)
- No make-up or perfume is worn
- No sex
- No bathing
- No leather shoes

## **In the synagogue**

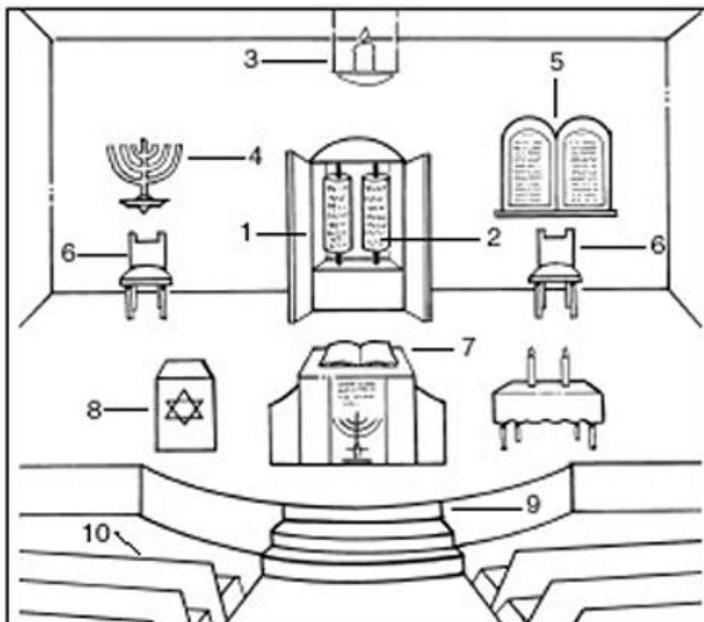
The most important part of Yom Kippur is the time spent in the synagogue. Even Jews who are not particularly religious will want to attend synagogue on Yom Kippur, the only day of the year with five services.

- There are five services in the synagogue.
- The day is spent in continuous prayer for forgiveness.
- The sound of the shofar (ram's horn) marks the end of the holy day.



## Inside a Synagogue

- The Jewish house of worship is called a **Synagogue**.
- Many Reform synagogues (and some others) are also called temples.
- In addition to being a place where Jews gather to worship, the synagogue also serves as a community and education centre.
- The main services each week are Friday night (especially at Reform Temples) and Saturday morning, although many synagogues have services every morning and evening.
- The **rabbi** is the religious leader and teacher of a congregation and usually speaks about the weekly Torah portion during Sabbath services.
- Services are usually led by a **cantor** who leads the singing or chanting of prayers and reads from the **Torah scroll**. However, anyone who is familiar with the prayers and the melodies may lead a service or read from the Torah.
- In the center of the **bimah** (raised platform) at the front of the sanctuary is the **aron kodesh** (holy ark), holding the **Torah scrolls**.
- Each Torah is handwritten in Hebrew on parchment (animal skin).
- Above the **aron** is the **ner tamid** (eternal light) representing the constant presence of God and reminding us of the **menorah**, the seven-branched candle holder that illuminated the Temple in Jerusalem.
- There is also a podium, from which the rabbi speaks, and a table, at which the cantor sings and the **Torah** is read.



- |    |                                   |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | = Aron kodesh                     |
| 2  | = Torah scrolls                   |
| 3  | = Ner tamid                       |
| 4  | = Menorah                         |
| 5  | = The 10 Commandments             |
| 6  | = Chairs for the rabbi and cantor |
| 7  | = Table for the cantor            |
| 8  | = Podium for the rabbi            |
| 9  | = Bimah                           |
| 10 | = Seats for the congregation      |

## **Leviticus 19:11-18**

**11** “Do not steal.

“Do not lie.

“Do not deceive one another.

**12** “Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

**13** “Do not defraud or rob your neighbour.

“Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

**14** “Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

**15** “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly.

**16** “Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour’s life. I am the LORD.

**17** “Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

**18** “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD.

## What is Shabbat?

**Because Shabbat is a day of rest, it is traditional not to perform any work on this day. Work has been defined broadly over the centuries so as to prohibit a wide range of activities among people who are very observant.**

For example, the Biblical prohibition on the creation of fire on Shabbat has come to be defined among the Orthodox and the very observant to extend to a prohibition on turning on light switches or electrical appliances. Other activities from which it is traditional to refrain on Shabbat include carrying, plowing, reaping, baking, dyeing wool, sewing, slaughtering animals, driving a car, or anything that involves the creation, production, or transformation of an object.

Shabbat is a central part of the Jewish family and Jewish life. It is a time for families and friends to gather for meals, prayer, and relaxation together. Because all Jewish holidays begin in the evening, Shabbat begins at nightfall on Friday evening and ends approximately 24 hours later, or nightfall on Saturday. Friday night allows for people to gather for the Friday night meal, a meal that often includes singing and sometimes dancing.

The traditions associated with Shabbat range from the lighting of the candles just before sunset on Friday, to the blessings over the wine and bread on Friday evening, to the third meal or Shalosh Seudot, to the observance of Havdalah on Saturday night as the Shabbat departs. One of the most important customs is the setting of the Shabbat table, usually adorned with a white tablecloth, two Challahs, usually covered with a beautiful Challah Cover covering, a Kiddush Cup and Shabbat Candlesticks, symbolizing our welcoming of the royalty of Shabbat.

Themes: As mentioned above, the main theme of Shabbat is rest and relaxation along with spiritual rejuvenation. Equally important is the idea that Shabbat is different from all other days of the week. Shabbat is the day where one is supposed to refrain from doing the things that they normally do on all other days and to do things that are different. While this undoubtedly includes work, this also can include other actions, such as worrying about your job or thinking about an argument you may have had with a neighbour.

Symbols: There are many symbols that are associated with Shabbat - not the least of which are the lighting of the candles, the Kiddush Cup, Handwashing, Challah and Havdalah. These are the basic symbols that represent Shabbat and really help provide a spiritual connection to all Jews around the world.

Candle lighting -- Shabbat is generally considered to begin with the lighting of the candles followed with the prayer over the candles.

Kiddush -- The Kiddush (sanctification) or the prayer over the wine is then recited. The person reciting the Kiddush then takes a sip and then distributes wine to everyone at the table. The wine is placed in a Kiddush cup and usually distributed through smaller cups. The person reciting the Kiddush will pour a small amount from the larger cup into smaller cups and pass the small cups around so that all persons at the table may partake.

Handwashing -- At this point, persons will go and wash their hands Netilat Yadayim (Handwashing), which is intended to endow the meal with spirituality. Many people use special Handwashing Bowls, some of which have two sides to them to make the pouring of the water easier.

Challah -- usually two Challahs are placed on Challah Boards upon the table. These Challahs are covered with either white Challah Covers or more decorative or ornamental covers. A special Challah Knife is used to cut the Challah and a piece of the Challah is distributed to everyone at the table.

Havdalah - At the conclusion of Shabbat is the Havdalah service, usually right after sundown on Saturday night. During this ceremony, people gather to say good-bye to Shabbat by lighting a special braided, multi-wicked candle, drinking wine and smelling sweet spices from spice boxes.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you work and do all your tasks. But the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord your God. You shall do no manner of work... For in six days, Jewish Beliefs and Lifestyle

God made heaven, earth and sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, God blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:8-11)

Biblical law forbids us to work on Shabbat. While the Torah does not define which labors are forbidden, the rabbis took it upon themselves to do so in the Mishna. There are thirty-nine forbidden forms of work. As noted above, these include, plowing, reaping, slaughtering an animal, baking, carrying, dyeing wool, weaving, etc. The last of these is that we are forbidden to carry an object from a person's private dwelling to another. However, we are allowed to carry things within our own dwelling. (As a result, in many communities, Jews would not be allowed to push their babies in baby carriages to go to Synagogue because they are carrying a baby from their private dwelling to that of another. The Rabbis have found a way around this by "enclosing" the neighborhood by tying an "Eruv" around the boundaries of the neighborhood - -therefore, one is technically within a dwelling and therefore allowed to carry things.).

Additionally, one must avoid doing anything on Shabbat that could lead to work - i.e. carrying money. As a result, anything that can be used, money, a hammer, etc., also cannot be handled. These items are referred to as "Muk-tze."

History: We are commanded to observe Shabbat by the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments and this is repeated throughout the Bible. In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, we are reminded of the Ten Commandments that Shabbat is a day of rest for masters and servants and as a day commemorating our release from bondage in Egypt. Exodus 31:16-17 states that "the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath throughout the generations for a perpetual covenant . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested. The observance of Shabbat is predicated on two main ideas: the first is that God created the heavens and earth in six days and rested on the seventh. As a result, our observance of Shabbat recognizes God as the creator of all things. Second, Shabbat commemorates the exodus out of Egypt where we were slaves. God gave us the freedom from bondage and we became independent people. Shabbat is a way to reconfirm this freedom.

Miscellaneous: While Shabbat is one of the holiest days of the year, even the strictest of Shabbat laws falls to the side when a person's life is in danger. The principle - "Pikkuah Nefesh" - or the saving of one's life overrides all observances of Shabbat. That is why doctors are allowed to work on Shabbat.

We light candles to mark the onset of Shabbat, every Friday evening, symbolizing our welcoming into the home the expansive warmth and light that accompany Shabbat and the holidays.

Tradition dictates that candles be lit roughly eighteen minute before sunset, which is the time that, according to Jewish law, the new day actually begins. By lighting the candles ahead of the sunset and the new day, we borrow time from the work week and extend the time of Shabbat.

It is traditional to light the candles, cover your eyes, and then recite the blessing (Baruch Atoh Adonai Eloheinu Melech HaOlam Asher Kidshanu B'Mitzvotav V'Tzivanu L'Hadlik Ner Shel Shabbat)

It is customary to light at least a pair of candles. Many people light more than two (either with multiple candlesticks or a candelabrum), some following the custom of lighting one candle for each family member and others finding another symbolism in a given number, such as seven (a Kabbalist custom).

Although the mother of a family or the women present customarily light the candles, it is a household requirement. A man living alone or away from home should light the candles and say the blessing over them. Similarly, in the absence of a woman or when a woman is too ill to do so, the men present are required to do so.

The candles should be lit in the dining room where the Shabbat dinner will take place in order to honor the Shabbat by brightening the festive meal.

Overview - Havdalah, which translates as "separation," is the ceremony by which Shabbat ends on Saturday evening. Through the Havdalah ceremony, we make the separation between Shabbat and the rest of the week with blessings over wine, spices, and light: wine to signify the sanctity of the day, fragrant spices to signify the hope for a week filled with sweetness, and light to signify the hope for a Jewish Beliefs and Lifestyle

week of brightness and joy.

**Tradition** - It is customary for everyone present gathers around to light the Havdalah candle, often a braided, multi-wicked candle (although two ordinary candles with touching flames will suffice). After an introductory blessing, the Havdalah ceremony consists of a blessing over wine, a symbol of the waning holiness of Shabbat, a blessing over aromatic spices, and a blessing over the light of the flames. Customarily, those present hold their fingers to the reflected light of the candle -- some say to make use of the light, which would be prohibited on Shabbat, while others explain this custom as a demonstration of clean fingers signifying that no work has been performed on Shabbat. Havdalah then concludes with a blessing over the differentiation between the holiness of the Shabbat and the beginning of the work week. It is traditional for someone present to drink most of the wine and then extinguish the candle by pouring the remaining wine over it into a dish. It is also an old custom to dip fingers into the wine dish and then touch the eyelids and inner pockets to invoke a blessing for the week.

**Symbols** - The most important symbols of the Havdalah ceremony are the braided Havdalah candle and the spice box, which holds the sweet smelling spices that help us to retain the memory of the sweetness of Shabbat. A traditional Havdalah set includes a Kiddush Cup, a Braided Candle, a Spice Box, and a container or plate (Havdalah Plate) to hold all of these items. The Spice Box can be a container of any kind and should be filled with fragrant spices. Although Jewish law does dictate which type of spice should be used, it is traditional to use a spice that gives off a sweet smell, such as cloves. Spice Boxes are usually very ornate in design. One of the reasons given for the sweet smell of the spice is that it is used to offset the sadness that one feels as Shabbat departs. The Braided Candle, often multi-colored, with three wicks that come together at the top, fulfills the Havdalah blessing, which refers to God as the creator of the "illuminations" of fire (Meorei Ha'Eish) using the plural form.

**Halakhah** -The meaning behind Havdalah is to distinguish, separate, differentiate, between Shabbat and the other six days of the week, marking off the holiness and the joy that make Shabbat special among the days of the week.

**History** - The origin of the Havdalah ceremony has been attributed to the men of the Great Assembly in the fourth or fifth century B.C.E.

**Miscellaneous** - One superstition calls for the person who holds the candle up for the Havdalah service to hold it up as high as he or she can because the height of the candle is supposed to signify how tall the holder's partner will be. Another custom is to fill the Havdalah cup to the point of overflowing, in the hope that the week to come will bring an abundance of goodness and to show that we feel at ease materially, not skimping on the wine out of concern for its economic value.



## **KASHRUT**

Kashrut is the body of Jewish law dealing with what foods we can and cannot eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten. "Kashrut" comes from the Hebrew Kaf-Shin-Reish, meaning fit, proper or correct. It is the same root as the more commonly known word "kosher," which describes food that meets these standards. The word "kosher" can also be used, and often is used, to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

Contrary to popular misconception, rabbis or other religious officials do not "bless" food to make it kosher. There are blessings that observant Jews recite over food before eating it, but these blessings have nothing to do with making the food kosher. Food can be kosher without a rabbi or priest ever becoming involved with it: the vegetables from your garden are undoubtedly kosher (as long as they don't have any bugs, which are not kosher!).

There is no such thing as "kosher-style" food. Kosher is not a style of cooking.

Food that is not kosher is commonly referred to as treif (lit. torn, from the commandment not to eat animals that have been torn by other animals).

### **Why Do We Observe the Laws of Kashrut?**

Many modern Jews think that the laws of kashrut are simply primitive health regulations that have become obsolete with modern methods of food preparation. However, health is not the only reason for Jewish dietary laws. Many of the laws of kashrut have no known connection with health.

The short answer to why Jews observe these laws is: because the Torah says so. The Torah does not specify any reason for these laws, and for a Torah-observant, traditional Jew, there is no need for any other reason. Some have suggested that the laws of kashrut fall into the category of "chukkim," laws for which there is no reason. We show our obedience to God by following these laws even though we do not know the reason. Others, however, have tried to ascertain God's reason for imposing these laws.

### **General Rules**

Although the details of kashrut are extensive, the laws all derive from a few fairly simple, straightforward rules:

1. Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals.
2. Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
3. All blood must be drained from meat and poultry or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
4. Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
5. Fruits and vegetables are permitted, but must be inspected for bugs (which cannot be eaten)
6. Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy. (According to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat).
7. Utensils (including pots and pans and other cooking surfaces) that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.
8. Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.
9. There are a few other rules that are not universal.

## Food and Festivals

### Food

In Jewish homes, food must be prepared in accordance with God's laws to make it *kosher* or 'fit' to eat.

- Meat and milk products should not be eaten at the same time, stored in the same place and prepared with different utensils.
- Meat must be drained of blood because the blood is seen as the life of the animal and is too sacred to be eaten. Animals are slaughtered by a special method which is designed both to kill with the least amount of pain and to drain the blood.
- When it comes to the variety of meat that can be eaten - only animals that chew the cud and have cloven hooves may be eaten.
- Only sea creatures that have fins and scales may be eaten.
- No birds of prey can be eaten.

*The rules about eating are found in Leviticus 11: 1-23.*

As with many other religions, special types of food are eaten at different religious festivals. During these festivals, many other traditions are also carried out.

### Passover

*Passover* or *Pesach* is an eight-day spring festival which begins with the house being cleaned to remove all traces of *leaven* (anything containing yeast or grain). This reminds Jews of the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate in their last meal before leaving Egypt. During the Passover week, only unleavened bread is eaten.

On the first Friday evening, the family share a meal called the *Sedar meal*, which includes foods that symbolise the story of the Jews' escape from slavery in Egypt:

- Roasted egg - to symbolise a new life after Egypt
- Bitter herbs - to symbolise the bitter times as slaves
- Matzah (unleavened bread) - to symbolise the fact that there was no time in the escape from Egypt, to let the bread rise
- Lamb bone - to symbolise the sacrifice on the last night
- Salt water - to symbolise the tears of the slaves
- Charoset (a mix of apples, cinnamon, nuts and wine) - to symbolise the mortar used when the slaves were making bricks
- Parsley (a spring vegetable / herb) - to symbolise the sign of new life

During Passover, a book called the *Hagadah* is used to tell the story of the Israelites escape from Egypt, as the foods are eaten. The youngest child in the family initiates the story by asking a series of questions. The first is, 'why is this night different from all other nights?'. The important themes of the festival include 'suffering' and 'freedom'.

## Hanukkah

*Hanukkah* is a special festival which is also called the '*Festival of Lights*' or '*Dedication*'. It takes place during November and December and it lasts for eight days. *Potato latkes* are eaten during the festival. These are small cakes made from onion and potato which are seasoned, made into spoon-sized cakes and deep fried.

Hanukkah celebrates the time when a Syrian king called *Antiochus* took control of the Temple of Jerusalem and desecrated it by sacrificing pig flesh on the altar. He ordered the Jews to forsake their own God and worship him.

A small group of Jews called the *Maccabees*, hid in the hills and continued to study the Torah. They took up arms against Antiochus' superior forces, retook the Temple and rededicated it to God.

Inside the Temple, they found that there was only enough oil to burn the *Ner Tamid* (eternal light) for one day. By some miracle, the light kept burning, until new oil was found, eight days later.

This miracle is remembered by the lighting of candles on each day of Hanukkah. A *Shamash* or servant candle is used to light the others: one on the first night, two on the second night and so on, until all eight are lit.

Themes of light, loyalty, faithfulness and heroism are central to the festival.



## Bar and Bat Mitzvah

The age of adulthood in Judaism is recognised as the time when a child can understand and obey the Ten Commandments. A boy is then called **Bar Mitzvah** or 'son of the law', and a girl is called **Bat Mitzvah** or daughter of the law.

It is an important time for boys and girls and special ceremony takes place for boys after their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and girls after their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.

There is a lengthy preparation for the service, during which the child learns sections from the Torah in Hebrew. During the ceremony, the child reads from the Torah scrolls.

After the ceremony, the child is considered to be an adult within the faith and can take part in services and can wear the symbolic clothing of Judaism.

After the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, there is often a big party and the child receives presents from their family and friends. The objects below, might be appropriate as gifts for the Bar Mitzvah.

**Kippah** - this is a head covering worn during prayers and Torah study as a sign of respect in the presence of God. Some men wear them all the time.

**Tefillin** - small leather boxes containing scriptures. They are tied to the forehead and upper arm for morning prayers on weekdays.

**Tallit** - a prayer shawl. It is a four-cornered garment with fringes toed into 613 knots, representing the 613 laws of the Torah.

**Siddur** - a daily prayer book. Siddur means 'order'.

