


# A teacher's guide to Judaism

<b>Religion Name</b>	Judaism
<b>Followers are called</b>	Jews
<b>Founder</b>	Abraham
<b>When founded?</b>	2000 BCE
<b>Special/Holy book/s</b>	<b>The Torah*</b> The first five books also the corpus of Jewish teaching and traditions The Talmud - A huge compendium of rabbinic debate on Jewish teachings <b>The TeNaCh.*</b>
<b>Special/Holy building/s</b>	Synagogue*
<b>Main Symbol</b>	 Star of David

Remember that there are many cultural and traditional variations of the Jewish faith

**\*Please refer to glossary**

## Beliefs about God

Jews believe in the 'oneness of **G-d\***' - they believe that there is only one G-d. This is seen in one of the most important prayers for Jews, the **Shema\*** which begins with "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is one*" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

G-d as One- indivisible and unique, G-d created the world and all things owe their existence to G-d, G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish People. G-d is fair and just and require justice and fairness. The Jewish G-d has a personality and will and is never just a life force or inexorable power.

## Beliefs about the world including creation

Jews believe that there is one G-d who is the creator of the universe and that he is the G-d of the whole world. G-d created the world in 6 days and rested on the seventh day. They believe that G-d made man in his own image. The biblical creation account establishes an ironclad connection between ethical human behaviour and divine action.

## Beliefs about the Afterlife

The idea of life after death does not appear in the Torah and Jews spend little time thinking about this. It is mentioned once in Samuel 28:7-20. All good people, Jews and non-Jews will receive their reward. Jews believe that the coming of the **Messiah\*** will make the world a fairer place.

## Other key beliefs

The importance of **Shabbat\*** (see Festivals section)

Keeping **Kosher / Kashrut\***

The importance of the **Torah\***

Keeping the festivals (see Festivals section)

That all people have the ability to make moral choices (between good and bad)

The importance of Israel

Tikkun olam is a Hebrew phrase that means "repairing the world" which suggests humanity's shared responsibility to heal, repair and transform the world.

## Important stories

Creation

**Abraham\*** and Isaac

Exodus / **Passover\*** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks1-the-jewish-story-of-moses/zmfp382>

### How should we treat others?

The Ten Commandments outline the key principles of loving G-d and loving each other which all Jews try to follow. This involves respecting each other's world views and beliefs.  
Forgiveness of self and others is a core belief.

### Special/Holy Buildings

#### Synagogue \*

Western Wall –the ruin of last remaining wall of the 2nd Temple

### Places of pilgrimage

Visiting Israel is very important to Jewish people and when there they will visit the Western Wall, The Festivals of Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot are known as pilgrimage festivals as in Ancient times the Jews travelled to the Temple in Jerusalem - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-visiting-jerusalem/z76d7nb>

### Special/Holy books

The **Torah\*** (part of **The TeNuCh**)\* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-the-torah/zhs2t39>

### Important people within the tradition

**Noah\***, **Abraham\***, **Moses\***, David, Solomon – all can be found in the Torah and the Old Testament.  
Esther – A important female role model (linking to the festival of Purim)

### Festivals

**Shabbat\*** – weekly day of rest <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-shabbat-day-of-rest/zrkvrj6>

**Pesach / Passover \***– The spring harvest and escape of the Israelites from slavery

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-celebrating-passover/z4kvrj6>

**Rosh Hashanah\*** – The Jewish New Year **Yom Kippur\*** – The Day of Atonement

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-celebrating-rosh-hashanah/zdqc8xs>

### Rites of passage/important life events

Birth – **Brit Milah\***

Coming of age – **Bar / Bat Mitzvah\*** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks2-preparing-for-bat-mitzvah/zvgpy9q>

Marriage – Jewish weddings cannot take place on Shabbat or other festival days and so are often held on a Sunday. The ceremony is usually in the **Synagogue\***, the bride wears white and the couple stand together under a Huppah (a canopy supported by 4 poles). This is decorated with flowers and represents the home that the couple will share.

### Important practices

They pray only to G-d (there is no intermediary)

Reading the **Torah\*** is a very important part of Synagogue services.

The home – Much of the Jewish faith is practised within the Jewish home. Family is very important within the Jewish faith. The home is a focal point as **Shabbat\*** and many festivals are centred on the home and family. Women, especially mothers have an important role within the home because it is they who ensure religious purity and educate children in the ways of G-d.

Within the Jewish faith there are many different ways of practising the faith. Locally (within the Diocese of Salisbury) there are Chabad, Orthodox, Reform, Sephardi and Liberal Jewish groups.

### Other important information

There are secular Jews who would count themselves as Jewish but do not necessarily follow the rites and practices.

### Key term glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Abraham</b>	Widely regarded as the father of Christians, Jews and Muslims. He was the first person to teach that there is only one G-d. His story is told in the biblical book of Genesis.
<b>Bar / Bat Mitzvah</b>	At the age of 12 for a girl and a boy 13 they are considered old enough to take on the responsibility of following the commandments for himself. On the Saturday morning on the Shabbat after their 12 <sup>th</sup> / 13 <sup>th</sup> birthday they are called to read from the Torah in the Synagogue. A girl becomes Bat Mitzvah and a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah.
<b>Brit Milah</b>	At 8 days old Jewish baby boys are circumcised. Brit Milah means the covenant of circumcision. This is an important part of Jewish identity and tradition and is a time of family celebration.
<b>Commandment</b>	A law or instruction believed to have been given by G-d.
<b>G-d</b>	The custom of substituting the word "God" with G-d in English is based on the traditional practice in Jewish law of giving God's Hebrew name a high degree of respect and reverence. Furthermore, when written or printed, it is forbidden to destroy or erase the name of God (and many of the stand-in names used to refer to God).
<b>Keeping Kosher / Kashrut</b>	This is the Jewish dietary code. Food that is permitted to eat is Kosher (fit/proper) and anything not allowed is called Treif. Kosher meat must come from an herbivorous animal that chews the cud and has cloven hooves. To be Kosher, an animal must be slaughtered using the traditional laws as laid down in the Torah. Another important part of Kashrut it to completely separate milk and meat (when preparing and eating). Some Jewish homes may have two fridges, sinks, sets of crockery and cutlery as a result. Jews must allow three hours between eating milk and meat products to ensure that they are not mixed during digestion.
<b>Kippah</b>	This means "dome", as the kippah is worn on the head like a dome. Any male entering a Synagogue is required to have their head covered.
<b>Messiah</b>	The anointed one
<b>Mezuzah</b>	A small box that is placed on the right doorpost of Jewish homes. Inside the box is a parchment scroll with verses from the Torah inscribed on it, including the <i>Shema</i> prayer. The concept of a mezuzah comes from the Torah, where we read, "And you shall inscribe them on the doorposts ( <i>mezuzot</i> ) of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:9, 11:20)
<b>Mitzvah</b>	A commandment or a good deed. The plural is <u>Mitzvot</u>
<b>Moses</b>	The man chosen by G-d to save the Jews from slavery and take them to the promised land.
<b>Noah</b>	A Hebrew patriarch who saved humanity by building an ark when there was a great flood.
<b>Pesach / Passover</b>	Passover festival celebrates the spring harvest and the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Before Pesach, houses are cleaned and during the festival food and drink containing leaven (yeast) are not consumed. A Seder service is held on the first two evenings of Pesach in the home. Seder means 'order'. Various rituals are performed to recreate and retell the dramatic parts of the story of the Exodus. The family sits around the table where in the middle is the Seder plate which is divided up into sections each holding a different type of food representing part of the Exodus story.

<b>Rabbi</b>	Means 'my teacher' - an individual with high levels of Jewish learning able to make rulings.
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	The festival of the Jewish New Year celebrates the creation of the world. It is also a time to review the past year, reflect and pray. It is also called the Day of Judgement. The Shofar (a ram's horn) is blown at the Synagogue to remind people of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of Isaac his soon. Sweet foods are eaten on this day, especially apples dipped in honey, symbolising the hope for a sweet new year.
<b>Shabbat</b>	The day of rest in Jewish custom starting at sunset on Friday evening and lasting until sunset on Saturday evening. It is a time when some Jewish people will go to synagogue, spend time with their family and have a digital detox. It is celebrated every week in the home. Shabbat can be seen as "an island of calm in a sea of chaos." Jewish people will recognise this as time to celebrate rather than a time to feel restricted.
<b>Shekinah</b>	The dwelling. The idea of G-d as a particularly intense presence
<b>Shema</b>	The Shema (Deut. 6: 4-9, 11: 13-21, Num. 15:7-41) is the most ancient Jewish prayer that can be found in the Torah. It affirms that there is only one G-d. The Shema says that G-d is personal and demands love from Jews with every aspect of their being. It also says that Jews should follow his instructions and allow this love to be seen. Many Jews will say the Shema every morning and evening as it is a very important prayer.
<b>She'ol</b>	A place of darkness to which all the dead go, both the righteous and the unrighteous, regardless of the moral choices made in life, a place of stillness and darkness cut off from life and separated from G-d.
<b>Synagogue</b>	A Synagogue is the Jewish place of worship and a social centre. Jews will gather in the Synagogue; to pray as a community, to study, to celebrate different rites of passage and festivals and to assemble as a Jewish community
<b>Tallit:</b>	The prayer shawl worn by men/boys over the age of 13 when praying in morning services the Synagogue
<b>The TeNaCh</b>	The acronym used for the Hebrew Bible, based on its three parts - Torah (תורה, Instruction), Nevi'im (נביאים, Prophets), and Ketuvim (כתובים, Writings).
<b>Torah</b>	Law; teaching. The word Torah can be used in a narrow sense to mean the first five books of the Hebrew bible (the first five books of Moses). It contains 613 commandments (Mitzvot) covering all aspects of life, the most important are the Ten Commandments. The Torah is handwritten and covered with an embroidered cover (mantle) over which is a breastplate to remind Jews of the High Priest in the Temple. A Yad (pointer) is used to keep your place in the scroll to avoid touching it whenever possible.
<b>Yetzer HaTov/Yetzer Hara</b>	The good/evil inclination within all of us. Which one wins is up to the individual
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	The Day of Atonement which occurs 10 days after Rosh Hashanah. It is the most solemn day of the year. For most adult Jews, health permitting, it involves spending the whole day at the synagogue praying in reflection and repentance. No food or water is taken for 26 hours. In the days leading up to Yom Kippur, Jews are expected to do all they can to settle grievances and seek forgiveness both from those who they have wronged and from G-d.

#### **Useful websites:**

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/teaching-resources>

<https://www.natre.org.uk/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/primary/zd7p47h> - with links to KS1 and KS2 clips for RE, including Islam

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