

# Year 7 - Religious Education - Knowledge Organiser 1 - What do Jews believe?

## The Bare Essentials of Judaism

- ✧ 3500 years old, began in the Middle East.
- ✧ Founded by **Abraham** and **Moses**.
- ✧ Jews believe that there is only one God.
- ✧ Jews believe that the Jewish People are specially chosen by God.
- ✧ Jews believe that **Israel** is the land promised to them by God.
- ✧ Jews worship in **Synagogues**, their spiritual leaders are called **Rabbis**.
- ✧ The Jewish Holy book is the Hebrew Bible, or **Tenakh**, especially the first 5 books, called the **Torah**.
- ✧ 12 million followers, most in Israel and the USA.
- ✧ 6 million Jews were died in the **Holocaust** in an attempt by the Nazis to wipe out Judaism.
- ✧ There are many different groups within Judaism. **Orthodox Jews** are very traditional, whilst **Reform Jews** have changed what they do to fit in with modern life.

## Key Beliefs

- ✧ The Jewish relationship with God is a **covenant** relationship. In return for the many good deeds that God has done and continues to do for the Jewish People...
  - The Jews keep God's laws (based on commandments found in the **Torah**)
  - The Jews seek to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives.
- ✧ There is only one God, and Jews should only worship God. A special prayer called the **Shema** expresses this belief in one God.
- ✧ God is omnipresent (God is everywhere, all the time), God is omnipotent (God can do anything at all), God is omniscient (God knows everything). God is eternal (beyond time):
- ✧ God promised the Jews through a covenant the land of Canaan called the "Promised Land".
- ✧ Hebrews believed in giving sacrifices and gifts of crops to cover up their sins as humans.
- ✧ Jews believe in a Messiah which is a spiritual leader that God would send who would bring a perfect world for Jews.

## Hebrew Bible: (Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim)

- ✧ The Hebrew Bible or the Tenakh is divided up into three sections. First is the first 5 books of the Bible called the Torah.
- ✧ The second section of the Tenakh is called the **Nevi'im (Prophets)** and contains stories about the history of the Israelites once they reached the Promise Land and includes stories of the **prophets** or an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God. These prophets give warnings of historical events and predictions of things to come.
- ✧ The third sections of the Tenakh is called the **Ketuvim (Writings)** are full of stories, poetry and songs. These writings have a poetic quality that may help to lift people to a higher spiritual plane.

Jews believe that they are people who have been chosen by God to show His glory and goodness to the world. This started when God made a **covenant** (an agreement) with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. A **Brit Milah** (circumcision) is performed on all boys on the eighth day after they are born as a sign of this ongoing special relationship between God and the Jewish people.

God's side of the covenant was to promise to be their (Israel's) God, and to give them a land to call their own. To this day, Jews regard the land of Israel as the promised land.



In return, the Jewish people are required to obey God's commandments and to dedicate their lives to worship only God. There are 613 written commandments recorded in the **Torah**, the Jewish Law. This is called the **Mitzvot** and affect everything that Jewish people do from walking in the morning to eating, relationships and others areas of life.

There is a difference between the beliefs of Progressive Jews who modernized Judaism and Orthodox Jews who follow the strict traditions of Judaism. Orthodox Jews believe in the laws more strictly according to the **Talmud**.

## Belief of God's Judgement & nature of people

- ✧ Jews believe that God weighs up a person's good deeds against their bad deeds and decides what their year will be like annually.
- ✧ Jewish people believe God will judge people and that they will enter a place called Sheol where people will be either be rewarded or punished by God.
- ✧ Jews believe that human nature there is both power to do good and power to do bad.
- ✧ Jews believe that there is evil in the world because god gave people free will to choose right or wrong.



## Jewish beliefs in action

- ✧ Jewish believe in giving charity through the belief of justice or righteousness called Tzedaka. This is to make the world a fairer place.
- ✧ Jews believe that it is human beings responsibility to take care of the world and rule over it righteously meaning with care and respect for all things.