

Year 7 - Religious Education - Knowledge Organiser 2– How do Jews practise their faith?

Belonging to the Jewish Faith

- ✧ The Torah influences the everyday clothing for Jewish men and women.
- ✧ Jewish value is modesty and Orthodox Jews believe that women are expected to dress modestly in simple colours with legs, arms, and collarbones covered.
- ✧ Some Orthodox women after marriage also cover their heads with a scarf, hat or even wigs.
- ✧ A common sign for Jews is the wearing of a **kippah or yamulka** which is a small skullcap on the head to remind Jews that God is always on their minds.
- ✧ Some life cycle events are done at home such as circumcision which is removal of foreskin of male babies to signify their Jewish faith.
- ✧ After death, Jewish people spend seven days of mourning a persons death at home.

Jewish Practises

- ✧ Jewish people gather to worship and other activities in a synagogue. The main feature of a synagogue is the Holy Ark. In front of the ark burns an everlasting light which symbolizes the presences of God.
- ✧ During worship, the Torah scrolls are taken from the Ark to a raised platform where it is read from.
- ✧ When reading the Torah, the material that it is written on cannot be touched so the Rabbis use a **yad** to follow the words on the pages.
- ✧ Synagogues are more than places of worship, they provide different activities including Children Hebrew classes, nursery schools, clubs, and venues for celebrations.

Jewish Festivals

- ✧ Every week Jews observe **Shabbat**, the Jewish holy day, and keep its laws and customs. Shabbat begins at sunset on Friday and lasts until sunset on Saturday.
- ✧ Jews are supposed to pray three times a day; morning, afternoon, and evening.
- ✧ The **synagogue** is the Jewish place of worship, but is also used as a place to study, and often as a community centre as well. The **Torah** is always read on Shabbat.
- ✧ Jews celebrate many festivals which remember important events in their history:
 - **Rosh Hashanah** - God creating the world.
 - **Yom Kippur** - when sacrifices were made for the people's sins.
 - **Pesach** (Passover) - when Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.
- ✧ **Sukkot** is an autumn harvest festival which reminds Jewish people of a time when their Ancestors wandered in the wilderness after the exodus out of Egypt.
- ✧ Some families build a temporary structure to eat meals in for eight days to remind of the temporary shelters that Jews built in the exodus.
- ✧ Another festival is **Shavuot**, wear Jews read from the Torah and It is customary to stay up all night learning Torah on the first night of Shavuot.

Jewish Food

- ✧ Religious beliefs even affect the food they eat and how its prepared. There are special food laws called **Kashrut**.
- ✧ The Kashrut tells Jews what food is allowed or kosher and what is not allowed. In some houses milk and meat must be kept separate and cannot be eaten in the same meal.
- ✧ Orthodox Jews keep the dietary rules very strict, meaning they do not go to certain restaurants or certain food shops.
- ✧ Reformative Jews are adopt more flexible rules and only follow some dietary rules.



- ✧ Jewish boys have a **Bar Mitzvah** on their thirteenth birthday to mark their entrance into adulthood. They read from the Torah in the **synagogue** to show that they are now personally responsible for keeping the commandments.
- ✧ Jewish girls have a **Bat Mitzvah** at the age of 12 or 13 yrs old to enter adulthood just like boys. Completing the same rituals as the boys do.
- ✧ At the Bat or Bar Mitzvahs, adults wish the young boys and young girls a good life of Torah.

Shabbat is the Jewish day of rest that is celebrated on the seventh day (Saturday) of every week. Jews believe that God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh. They are commanded to keep this day as holy to remember God as their creator and to worship Him.

Shabbat means 'ceasing'. This reflects the idea that Jews must stop doing any work for this one day each week. For Orthodox Jews this means that they do not shop, do not drive, do not cook or clean as all these activities are regarded as types of work.



Festivals play a very important role in the life of the Jewish community. One of the most important is the festival of **Pesach** (Passover) which remembers the event in Jewish history when **Moses** led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

Pesach is a spring festival that last eight days. On the first night, Jews have a special **Seder** meal. This includes a number of symbolic items of food and drink that are used to remember the events of the **Exodus**: bitter foods to remind them of the pain of slavery, and sweet foods to celebrate the joy of freedom.