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Chapter 2: Judaism

Introduction

We begin our study in specific religious traditions with Judaism. Judaism is the religion of Jesus. Because of their previous studies in Catholic Christianity, high school students have some familiarity with Judaism. This background along with some familiarity of the Hebrew Bible is a natural jumping off point for a more focused study in Judaism.

The essence of Judaism is God, Torah, and Israel. (Israel refers to both a people and a nation.) These three components interact in a dynamic way to make Judaism a truly living religion. God gave the Torah to Israel. The Torah instructs Israel on the nature of God, the human condition, and how to live a holy life. Both changing geography and changing times place Jews in situations not mentioned in the Torah. These new situations gave rise to the need to interpret the Torah anew, keeping in mind that the interpretations must always reflect on how God would act.

As a historical religion, Judaism remembers its history and the God who acts within it through personal observances, communal festivals, and rites of passage. For example, the Pesach, or Passover ritual, memorializes the saving power of God to not only liberate the Hebrew people from Egyptian slavery, but to give all Jews true freedom through a covenant with God.

Resources for Chapter 2

Books

- The Bible, the Jews, and the Death of Jesus: A Collection of Catholic Documents.* Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing, 2004.
- Catholics Remember the Holocaust.* Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing, 1998.
- Catholic Teaching on the Shoah.* Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing, 2001.
- De Lange, N. R. M. *An Introduction to Judaism.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Encyclopedia Judaica.* 2nd ed. 22 vols. New York: MacMillan, 2006.
- Finkelstein, Louis. *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.
- Fishbane, Michael A. *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.
- Hammer, Reuven. *Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service.* New York: Schocken Books, 1994.
- Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man.* Boston: Shambhala, 2003.
- Jacobs, Louis. *The Book of Jewish Practice.* West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1987.
- JPS Hebrew-English TANAKH: Student Edition.* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2000.

- Neusner, Jacob. *An Introduction to Judaism: A Textbook and Reader*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.
- . *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2004.
- Pope John Paul II. *On Jews and Judaism*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing, 1987.
- Scholem, Gershom Gerhard. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. New York: Schocken Books, 1995.
- Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Essential Talmud*. 30th Anniversary Edition. New York: Basic Books, 2006.
- Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History*. New York: William Morrow, 1991.
- Waskow, Arthur Ocean. *Seasons of Our Joy: A Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.
- Werblowsky, R. J. Zwi, and Geoffrey Wigoder. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Audio-visual Resources

- Heritage: Civilization and the Jews*. DVD/VHS. (Home Vision Entertainment, 1984, 540 minutes)
- The Holocaust: A Teenager's Experience*. DVD/VHS. (United Learning, 1991, 30 minutes) Includes teacher's guide.
- Jerusalem: Within These Walls*. VHS. (National Geographic Video, 1987, 60 minutes)
- Jewish Holidays Video Guide*. VHS. (Sisu Home Entertainment, 1994, 90 minutes)
- Judaism*. Essentials of Faith Series. DVD/VHS. (Films Media Group, 2006, 24 minutes)
- Judaism*. Religions of the World Video Series. DVD/VHS. (Schlessinger Media, 1996, 50 minutes)
- Judaism: The Chosen People*. The Long Search Video Series. DVD/VHS. (Ambrose Video Publishing, 2001, 60 minutes) Study Guide available for separate purchase.
- A Passover Seder: A Video for the Family*. DVD/VHS. (Warner Vision, 1994, 180 minutes) Made with Holocaust survivor Elie Weisel.
- Schindler's List*. DVD/VHS. (Universal Studios, 1993, 196 minutes) An Academy Award-winning film by Steven Spielberg, based on a true story about a Gentile businessman who saves 1,300 Jews from Nazi atrocities. Since this film is rated R, teachers can preview the film to find segments that are appropriate for students. A Study Guide is available for purchase as an e-document from www.amazon.com.
- A Stranger Among Us*. DVD/VHS. (Walt Disney Video, 1992, 109 minutes) Commercially released film about a crime within a Hasidic community in New York.
- Walking God's Paths: Christians and Jews in Candid Conversation*. DVD/VHS. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing, 2004, 90 minutes)

Internet Resources

Boston College Center for Jewish Learning— www.bc.edu/research/cjl

Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews— www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_relations-jews.htm

Hebrew College Online— www.shamash.org

Jewish-Christian Relations (multi-lingual)— www.jcrelations.net

www.MyJewishLearning.com

Sacred Heart University Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding— www.sacredheart.edu/pages/122_center_for_christian_jewish_understanding.cfm

A Living Religion (pages 27–29)

Using the Text

- Give students ten to fifteen minutes to read this first section, “A Living Religion.” This material can help students build on their understanding of Judaism as the religion of Jesus and of the Hebrew Bible. This is excellent preparation for gaining new insights into Judaism as a living religion.
- A confusion many people have about Jews is the difference between Jewishness as an ethnic group and as a religion. The opening paragraphs in the text address this confusion in order to make clear that this chapter addresses the religious tradition of Judaism.
- Call on individual students to ask what they would like to learn from Judaism. Take notes and write their suggestions on the board. Record this information for review at the end of the chapter to see how many of their interests were addressed. If some were not, they could be made topics for research projects.
- Unfortunately there are still prejudices and misunderstandings about Judaism and Jews, and high school students are not immune. It is important to take quality class time to create a safe environment for students to articulate any prejudices they might have and for teachers to address them before continuing on in the chapter. If students have had any previous diversity education, this is the time to review it.

Extending the Text

- Even if students don’t raise this issue, be proactive and address the potential charge of religious “hypocrisy.” Point out that people do seem to be happiest when they live their lives in conformity with a freely embraced religious tradition—“when they walk the walk” and “talk the talk.”
- Direct student attention now to the sidebar feature on page 29 that features dates in the history of Judaism. Let them know that BCE stands for “Before the Common Era,” though it was once commonly understood to stand for “Before the Christian Era” or “Before Christ.” Most theologians and religious historians believe that the approximate birth date of Yeshua of Nazareth (Jesus) was in the fall, sometime between 7 and 4 BCE, although we have seen estimates as late as 4 CE and as early as the second century BCE. CE stands for “Common Era,” and it is expected to eventually replace AD. The latter is an abbreviation for “*Anno Domini*” in Latin or “the year of our Lord” in English. The latter refers to the approximate birth year of Yeshua of Nazareth (a.k.a. Jesus Christ). CE and AD have the same value, so 2008 CE = 2008 AD. Of course, one can always interpret the letter “C” in CE and BCE as referring to “Christian” or “Christ’s.” The *Abbreviations Dictionary* does this.
- Point out—as the timeline indicates—that the history of Judaism spans more than four thousand years and touches many nations. As students undoubtedly know, it is also a religion that has endured and survived many waves of persecution.

1. A Brief History of Judaism (pages 30–44)

Biblical Period and Rabbinic Period and Medieval Period and Modern Period

Objective

In this section the students will:

- be introduced to the history of Judaism and its impact on western civilization;
- become familiar with the major events of the Rabbinic Period, a stretch of almost 1,000 years that precedes and follows the birth and death of Jesus;
- learn the meaning of key vocabulary terms—Hellenization, Dead Sea Scrolls, Diaspora, rabbis, the Torah, and Talmud;
- be able to describe the Emperor Constantine and the impact of his Christian reign;
- identify cultural adaptations and compromises that the Jews had to make to survive in difficult or even hostile settings;
- familiarize themselves with vocabulary terms such as monotheistic, Holy of Holies, and Hassidim.

Preview

The history of Judaism begins in the desert, moves to a land “flowing with milk and honey” and continues with a “destroy, disperse, return, and rebuild” cycle. The land is sacred to the Jews, for God gave it to them. From the holy city, the radiant city of Jerusalem, God’s goodness has been reflected to all the nations. Yahweh, Jews believe, has remained faithful—even permitting the unlikely establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Helping students to get a broad-brush picture of Jewish history is important. In the Rabbinic Period, the Jews were overrun by foreign powers and dispersed throughout the world. Once the Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 CE, synagogues—Jewish centers of learning and prayer—were established around the world. The Talmud, a collection of commentaries on the Hebrew code of laws, emerged in the second century CE.

Using the Text

- Display a wall map of the biblical world. Call on a variety of students to locate and point out key cities, regions and travel routes on the map, including:
 - the route that Abraham and Sarah would have traveled from Ur to Canaan during he time of the patriarchs
 - the likely route to Egypt from Canaan during the days of famine for the family of Joseph
 - the way traveled by Moses and the Hebrews as they escaped from Egypt and traveled to Mount Sinai
 - the likely path taken by the Hebrews re-entering Canaan
 - the area of King David’s United Kingdom and its capital, Jerusalem
 - the borders of the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah
 - the northern Kingdom of Israel under the Assyrians in 722 BCE
 - the southern Kingdom of Judah, including Jerusalem, which was destroyed as the Hebrews were taken in slavery to Babylon in 586 BCE

- the devastated Holy City of Jerusalem and its Temple, to which the exiled Jews returned in 537 BCE
- To better understand the implications of repeated displacement of the Jews, have students share their views on the following:
 1. What is “holy ground” to you?
 2. Where are the places for you alone or for family or friends that are “very special” or “sacred”? Why are these places “sacred”?
 3. How would you feel if “foreigners” destroyed your “sacred place”? What would motivate you to continually return and rebuild it?
- Assign for journal writing the Reflection Question about a family’s defining moment (on page 32).
- After giving students fifteen minutes or so to read “Rabbinic Period,” orally quiz them to highlight some of these events that are pivotal in Judaic history—and Christian history.
- Return to the map of this region and trace the route of nations or empires who conquered Israel and Judah and then left. Point out the locations where Jews fled to colonize Jewish Diaspora communities.
- Show a brief segment of the film *Judaism: The Religion of a People* to recap much of this material, and give students a chance to view Jewish traditions mentioned early in this chapter.
- Ask three students to volunteer to present a short skit based on the famous story of the heathen and Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel. If students want to spend a bit more time developing the skit and researching these two first century rabbis, offer additional extra credit for their efforts.
- Note the Reflection Question about Hillel’s teaching on page 36. Ask the students to quietly reflect on this question and then share their responses with the whole class.

Extending the Text

- Hand out index cards to students with terms featured throughout these four subsections. Include such terms as: idolatry, Hellenization, monotheistic, pogroms, Spanish Inquisition, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Black Plague, Martin Luther, Ba’al Shem Tov, Hassidim, and Moses Maimonides. Challenge students, one by one, to recall and share one fact about their subjects. If they can’t, they must hand the card to another student who has no card. Set a time limit on the exercise.
- Invite students to review the section and locate any statements made about treatment (positive or negative) of Jews. Have students reread the statement and discuss the historical and cultural context briefly.
- Distribute copies of the handout, “Excerpts from the Talmud” on p. 56 of the Teacher’s Manual. Divide students up into small groups (2 to 4) and give them fifteen minutes to read and discuss the excerpts. Follow up and ask the groups:
 1. What are these rabbis saying about proper speech?
 2. What message is given about respect for parents?
 3. What does the Talmud predict about the Messiah’s coming?

- Outside of class, assign students to create 8.5" x 11" inch posters featuring a Talmud saying that would be useful for all people to read and heed. Refer students to the Internet where there are many sites where they can locate Talmudic sayings. Students should also try to illustrate their posters with Judaic symbols and styles.
- Point to the Reflection Question about the jurisdiction of Jerusalem on page 43. Ask students to carefully consider how the jurisdiction of Jerusalem might be handled. Explain that trying to appease or please the Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Armenians would be as complicated as pleasing Hispanics, Blacks, Chinese, and White Americans who would lay claim to the same areas of San Francisco, Chicago, or New York City. Ask for volunteers to participate in a fishbowl exercise in which a group of about six students discuss the issue while the rest of the class looks on. Every few minutes change one or two people within the group with one or two of the spectators. Emphasize that this is an opinion question, so there are no wrong answers. On the other hand, there is such a thing as informed opinion.
- Follow discussion about Jerusalem by showing all or segments of one of the suggested films on Jerusalem.
- Give each student a copy of the handout, "Four Branches of Judaism" (page 55). With the students, review the differences between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Jews. Have each group discuss how they would answer their respective questions. The handout can also be used to facilitate research.
- As an extra credit project, have students select one of the four branches of Judaism and locate information on the Internet to write a two-page report on "Life as an Orthodox (or Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist) Jew."
- Have students read the Mark Twain feature, "Concerning the Jews" on page 44. Students are undoubtedly familiar with Twain as a great American novelist. Challenge students to interpret Twain's comments about the Jews in light of his novels about heroic individuals like *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and so forth. What qualities and virtues does he see in the Jews?

Section Review Questions and Answers

1. What did the Hebrews become in the forty years it took to return to Canaan from Egypt?

In the forty years it took to return to Canaan from Egypt, the Hebrews became a covenantal community, owing their allegiance to one God only.

2. After the death of Solomon, why did the kingdom become more vulnerable to outside attacks?

The kingdom was divided into two kingdoms after the death of Solomon. The kingdom of Israel to the north was comprised of ten tribes while the kingdom of Judah in the south included two tribes. Both kingdoms weakened when they fell prey to idolatry. Israel fell to Assyrians in 722 BCE, and Judah was conquered by the Babylonians two centuries later.

3. What is the Diaspora?

The Diaspora originally referred to the large community of Jews who lived outside of Palestine. Driven out by many foreign conquerors, the Jews were dispersed and set up Jewish communities throughout the world. Today, the term refers to Jews living outside of Israel.

4. According to the rabbi Hillel, what is the summation of the Torah?

According to Hillel the summation of the Torah is that whatever is hateful to you, you are not to do to your neighbor.

5. Who was Moses Maimonides, and what did he argue for?

Moses Maimonides was a medieval Jewish philosopher who argued that there was no contradiction between the philosophy of Aristotle and the Jewish religion.

6. Define Hasidism.

Hasidism was a spiritual movement founded by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer in the eighteenth century. In this era of darkness and persecution, Eliezer's teachings stressed the presence of God—light—in all aspects of Jewish life. It was a comforting teaching that helped Jews endure their trials.

7. Name and briefly differentiate the four types of Judaism that are present in the Modern Period.

The four types of Judaism present in the Modern Period are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. Orthodox Jews interpret Torah in the most literal manner. Conservative Jews modify Jewish traditions in a limited manner. Reform Jews advocate full integration into the culture where one lives. Reconstructionist Jews advocate Judaism as a culture rather than a religion.

2. Sacred Stories and Sacred Scriptures (pages 45–47)

Tanakh and *Talmud* and *Midrash*

Objective

In this section the students will:

- get an overview of Judaic Sacred Stories and Sacred Scriptures, especially the Torah, the first five books of the Bible;
- become familiar with the origins and use of the Talmud, commentaries, and discussions about the Torah and how it should be lived;
- gain a working familiarity with the terms Torah or The Five Books of Moses, Tanakh, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, Written Torah, Oral Torah, Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash

Preview

Several sources of sacred Jewish writing or Scriptures center on the **Torah**, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Jews also often call this pivotal resource “The Books of Moses.” Even in modern times, this holy book is produced as a hand-sewn scroll of handwritten Hebrew on parchment. A part of the Torah is read aloud each Sabbath. The whole Bible, called the **Tanakh**, is divided into three sections: the **Torah**, the **Nevi'im** or the books of the prophets, and the **Ketuvim** or writings. In the Torah, traditional Jews find the roots of the 613 laws they must follow. Interpretations of Jewish laws were written down by Yehudah HaNasi in 200 CE. This written interpretation is called **Mishnah** or teaching. The **Talmud** is a collection of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history. **Midrash** is another kind of interpretation of biblical texts through the use of stories.

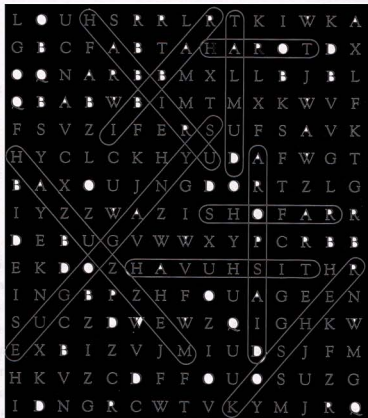
Using the Text

- Have students read these short sections on their own—*Tanakh*, *Talmud*, *Midrash*. Review the material, posing questions about how Jews use and see these sacred writings.
- If possible, read a cross section of the 613 laws observed by Jews. These laws together constitute the Torah.

Extending the Text

- Give students fifteen minutes or so to answer the Section Review Questions on page 47 on paper. Call on several students for each answer, and discuss any discrepancies in the way students have answered these questions.
- Distribute copies of the *Judaism Word Search* from p. 57 of the Teacher's Manual, and have students do the search.
- Share, if possible, some stories from the contemporary book, *Does God Have a Big Toe? . . . Stories About Stories in the Bible* by Marc Gellman and Oscar de Mejo.

Judaism Word Search Answers



Section Review Questions and Answers

1. What are the three divisions of the Tanakh?

Tanakh is an acronym for the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible. The first is the Torah, or the first five books of the Bible. The second is the Nevi'im, the books of the major and minor prophets. The third is Ketuvim, or the writings which includes the Book of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs.

2. What is the Talmud?

The Talmud is two long collections of Jewish literature that are commentaries on the Mishnah, the Hebrew code of laws that emerged about 200 CE.

3. What is the difference between the Oral Torah and the Written Torah?

The Oral Torah is an explanation and interpretation of the Written Torah. It explains how the Torah is to be lived and applied.

4. What is Midrash?

Midrash is a type of literature that explains the meaning of a religious text in an imaginative way. Often, Midrash is expressed in stories which elaborate on the holy texts in memorable and appealing ways.

3. Beliefs and Practices (pages 48–52)

God and Torah and Israel

Objective

In this section the students will:

- learn that the essence of Judaism is God, Torah, and Israel;
- understand that when Jews follow and respect the commandments within Torah, the Torah becomes alive in the world;
- explore the *Sh'ma*, a prayer recited daily by devout Jews that addresses the central Judaic belief that there is one God who created all things and who is good.

Preview

In Judaism, an expression of their fundamental monotheistic belief is the *Sh'ma*, a prayer recited daily by devout Jews. The central source of knowledge guiding Jews, the Torah is kept in a place of honor in the Jewish synagogue and revered by the congregation. Studying and living the Torah and the 613 commandments it contains is the essence of Jewish practice. The Ten Commandments and the other laws given in the Torah are called *mitzvot*. Israel is not only a political entity but a term for “God’s Chosen People.” Jews trace their chosen (and holy) status to Abraham. A covenant or mutual agreement between God and his people (Israel) commits Jews to living a holy, righteous life, a commitment termed *halakhic* obligations. It is commitment of the individual Jew to the covenant.

Using the Text

- If possible, arrange a tour of a local Jewish synagogue. Or, show pictures of a typical Jewish synagogue, particularly the **Ark** where the scrolls of the Torah are held. Show students what Hebrew writing looks like.
- Locate the phonetic Hebrew pronunciation of the short Jewish prayer, the *Sh'ma*, which is recited daily by Jews. Recite the prayer in Hebrew and challenge students to learn it in both English and Hebrew.
- Emphasize to students that Israel is both a land and a people. In addition, the Jews were God’s Chosen People because of God’s initiative, not their own.
- Ask students to describe the terms of the ancient covenant (contract) between God and Israel (aka the Jews). Draw students more deeply into the topic, asking: “What effect did knowledge of this covenant with God likely have on Jews over many centuries? How might it have molded and motivated them?”

Extending the Text

- Assign the Section Review Questions on pages 51–52 as a written assignment to recap this section’s material and to prepare students for the next section on Sacred Times.
- Present the Reflection Question about Jewish law and the refrigerator light on p. 50 as a debating topic. Allow students to choose a “Yes” or “No” position on the topic but remind them to consider the question more broadly as well. Say: “Are there customs within your own religious tradition that you have learned that seem strange to ‘outsiders’ but not strange

to you?" (Examples might be Catholics eating no meat on Friday during Lent or kneeling in prayer before statues.) Recruit four students on each side of the issue to open the debate with sixty-second presentations. Allow other students to replace the eight team members after five minutes of debate. Plan fifteen to twenty minutes for this debate, after giving students time for some rereading and preparation.

- Play "Blessing Before the Torah Reading" from the audiocassette *Teaching Christian Children About Judaism*. This will give the students another opportunity to hear a traditional blessing in Hebrew.
- Direct students to respond through a journal entry or a written theme to the Reflection Question on p. 48 about a personal experience of God as good, as Creator, and as one.

Section Review Questions and Answers

1. What do Jews believe about God?

Jews believe **God exists, God is one, God is creator, and God is good.**

2. What do Christians understand the Torah to be?

Christians understand the Torah to be **the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.**

3. How are both reverence and familiarity operational with the Torah?

When not in use, the Torah scrolls **are reverently kept in a specially made Ark in the synagogue. But, Jews are delighted when the Torah is carried by the rabbi on special occasions. It is common for Jews to touch, kiss, or dance near the Torah. They believe that God's word—represented by the Torah—is among them in an ordinary, but also an extraordinary way.**

4. When did the call to be a Chosen People originate with the Jews?

Jews see themselves as the children of Abraham. They believe that Abraham was called to holiness and to a different path when God called him to leave Ur and to leave pagan idolatry behind. The "children of Abraham" believe that they have inherited this "chosen" status.

5. What does it mean to say that Jews are God's Chosen People?

To say Jews **are God's Chosen People means that they are holy or separate.**

4. Sacred Times (pages 52–61)

Festivals and Holy Days and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and Sukkot and Pesach and Shavuot and Hanukkah and Purim and Shabbat and Birth and Coming of Age and Marriage and Death

Objective

In this section the students will:

- learn the difference between a Jewish and a civil calendar;
- become familiar with the major festivals, holy days, and occasions celebrated by Jews—Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesach, Shavuot, Hanukkah, and Purim;
- examine the observance of Shabbat or the Sabbath.

Preview

In Jewish belief, every moment of life is holy. Time is a gift from the Creator. Jews believed that God is a God of history, and they created a calendar that “estimated” the creation of the world. The Jewish calendar begins there. The Jewish year has 354 days, and the eleven-day discrepancy with the civil calendar is reconciled in different ways. Rich with many religious feasts and festivals, Jewish celebrations are divided into two main cycles—the Tishri cycle in the autumn and the Nisan cycle in the spring. Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, is the weekly celebration of God’s goodness. It begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday.

Using the Text

- Divide the class up into three groups and give each group markers and large sheets of newsprint or poster board. Have one group create a civil or non-religious calendar that could be used by anyone that year. Give the second group a list of major religious feasts and liturgical seasons and have these students create a Christian liturgical calendar. Provide school-related information for the third group and have them create an academic calendar. Each calendar should note key days (e.g., holidays and seasons) and particular starting and ending points. These do not have to be elaborate calendars, but students should be encouraged to be creative.
- If you do not have time for the group work described above, locate the three types of calendars and hang them in front of the classroom. Take a few moments and have students to locate the following in each calendar:
 - the first day of the year
 - the last day of the year
 - how many months each calendar contains
 - what events are celebrated in the civil calendar that are not celebrated in the other two calendars
 - what events are celebrated in the Christian calendar that are not celebrated in the other two calendars
 - what events are celebrated in the academic calendar that are not celebrated in the other two calendars

- Assign two to three students to each of the Jewish festivals (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesach, Shavuot, Hanukkah, Purim) throughout this section. Have all groups each read the introductory paragraphs of this section and then the subsection Festivals and Holy Days. Groups should then research their festival through the Internet and prepare a three to five minute presentation. If they can find them, students should bring photos, recordings of festival music, etc. to illustrate the festival they are reporting on.

Extending the Text

- Play all or part of the video *The Jewish Holidays Video Guide* (especially the sections on Shabbat or Passover Seder). Or, play the audiocassette *Teaching Christian Children About Judaism* that has a number of traditional Jewish holiday songs.
- Invite a Jewish adult or a rabbi to talk briefly about the weekly celebration of Shabbat or Sabbath, as well as the life cycle celebrations—birth, coming of age, marriage, and death.
- Bake or purchase challah bread and bring in some of the foods used in the feast of Pesach or Passover. Encourage students to sample all of these foods used during Jewish sacred times.
- Use the reflection questions in this section on pages 54, 56, and 59 as you move through and focus on the material. Consider assigning the third one as a written reflection. This will prompt students to consider what it means to keep a day “holy.” Call on students to read their reflections to the whole group.

Section Review Questions and Answers

1. What are the two main cycles on the Jewish calendar?

The two main cycles are the Tishri cycle in the fall and the Nisan cycle in the spring. Tishri is named for the first month of the cycle. Nisan is the first month of the spring cycle and the word “Nisan” comes from the Sumerian word for “first fruits.”

2. How is the Jewish calendar different from the Roman or civil calendar?

The Jewish calendar is different from a civil calendar in that a Jewish calendar runs on a lunar cycle while a civil calendar runs on a solar cycle.

3. What happens on Yom Kippur?

Yom Kippur is generally accepted as the holiest day of the year for Jews. It is a day of prayer, fasting, and repentance. Jews ask forgiveness for both communal and personal sins. In cases involving personal forgiveness, Jews try to go directly to the person they have offended.

4. Cite the similarities between Rosh Hashanah and Pesach.

Rosh Hashanah and Pesach are similar in that they are both memorials of creation. Rosh Hashanah memorializes the creation of the world while Pesach memorializes the creation of the Jews as a people.

5. What are the “days of awe” and what is their significance?

The “days of awe” are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the Jewish New Year while Yom Kippur is the “Day of Atonement.” Rosh Hashanah is the first day of

a ten-day penitential period while Yom Kippur is the last day of that period. During these "days of awe" Jews turn back to the proper way of living.

6. Why did a relatively minor feast, Hanukkah, take on more significance, especially in America?

Hanukkah gained more significance as Jewish parents saw that it was important to counteract the strong influence of Christmas on all non-Christians in America. Since Hanukkah is also a winter celebration and has light as one of its symbols, Jewish celebration of it "answered" the Christian celebration of Christmas.

7. Explain what takes place on Shabbat.

On Shabbat (known to Christians as Sabbath) Jews attend synagogue service, study Torah, and engage in a ritual dinner. The Shabbat dinner table includes a white tablecloth, two candles, wine, and a braided loaf of bread called challah. Shabbat begins eighteen minutes before sunset Friday evening with the lighting of the Shabbat candles. A prayer of blessing over the candles is generally recited by the woman of the house. There is a blessing over the wine and bread. After these blessings, the meal begins. The Shabbat candles are not extinguished, but are allowed to burn themselves out. Shabbat ends at sunset Saturday. A brief ceremony called Havdalah concludes this sacred time. A braided candle is lit and held in the hand so one can see its reflection of light on the fingertips. Again, wine accompanies this closing ceremony as a symbol of thanksgiving and joy. A box of aromatic spices is lit, carrying the aroma of the Shabbat into the week.

5. Sacred Places and Sacred Spaces (pages 61–65)

Synagogue and Home and Land of Israel and Jerusalem

Objective

In this section students will:

- learn that the synagogue and home are sacred places to Jews;
- examine the design and use of the Jewish synagogue;
- study the rituals that make a Jewish home holy;
- grow in appreciation for the central importance of the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

Preview

We have already discussed the sacredness of the land of Israel for Jews. This section focuses on the other sacred places for Jews—the synagogue and the home. While some observances are primarily in the home or in the synagogue, others are in both. A traditional Jewish home has a mezuzah on at least one doorpost of the house. A kosher home has one set of dishes for eating and cooking meat, and one set for eating and cooking milk products. Keeping milk and meat dishes separate, and avoiding “unclean” foods, such as pork and shellfish, maintains the proper or “kosher” nature of the home. Israel as a political state and the city of Jerusalem are tremendously significant for Jews around the world. This is holy ground—the land given to their fathers in faith 3,000 years ago, the land they view as “promised” to them by God. Jerusalem is David’s capital, a city that held the Temple and still holds its remnants.

Using the Text

- Play several Catholic liturgical music selections that feature Jerusalem as a holy city, as the destination of those journeying to God. Many hymnals now include some of the excellent, spirited music from the charismatic renewal that often focused on Jerusalem.
- Remind students of a synagogue’s three main functions. It is a place for prayer, for studying Torah, and for socializing. Recall that the reason synagogues came into existence was because Jews were denied the freedom to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was destroyed twice, first by the Babylonians and then by the Romans. Some Orthodox Jews are praying for the establishment of a third Temple, but the site of the destroyed Temple presently is home to the Muslim mosque known as the Dome of the Rock.
- Point out the photo of the synagogue on page 62. Note the standard synagogue features that are visible or have students identify them.
- Refer to the traditions used to make a Jewish home sacred and then sample student responses to the Reflection Question on page 63. What ways do Catholic families use to designate their houses as holy?

Extending the Text

- Show the class a more detailed map of Israel, pointing out the major cities and the Arab neighbors surrounding Israel.
- Draw this section to a close by posing the Reflection Question about the survival of religious traditions if places of worship closed. The question appears on page 63. Challenge students

to imagine that their parish church—in fact all parish churches in their community—were closed. How could the practice of their Catholic faith continue? How would it be very different?

- Read the extract from Psalm 137 about Jerusalem on page 65. Invite comments about the intensity of feeling in this brief and ancient statement.

Section Review Questions and Answers

1. What does the word “synagogue” mean?

The word “synagogue” means **“place of assembly” outside one’s homeland.**

2. What takes place in a synagogue?

The synagogue is **a place for prayer, for studying Torah, and for socializing.**

3. What makes a home kosher?

A kosher **or “proper” home has one set of dishes for eating and cooking meat and one set for eating and cooking milk products. Keeping milk and meat dishes separate and avoiding “unclean” foods such as pork and shellfish maintains the proper or “kosher” nature of the home.**

4. What is the significance of Israel and the city of Jerusalem for Jews?

The state of Israel **and the city of Jerusalem are tremendously significant for Jews around the world. This is holy ground—the land given to their fathers in faith 3,000 years ago, the land they see as “promised” to them by God. Historically, Jerusalem is David’s capital, a city which held the Temple and now the Temple’s remnants.**

6. Judaism through a Catholic Lens (pages 66–73)

Messiah and Incarnation and Scripture and Liturgy and Holy Thursday and Passover and Pentecost and Shavuot and Challenges of Dialogue

Objective

In this section the students will:

- look more closely at the history, Scripture, liturgy, and theology shared with the Jews;
- compare the Jewish vision of Messiah with the Catholic vision of Jesus as Messiah;
- examine Jewish teaching about Scripture, liturgy, Passover, and Pentecost in the light of Catholic teaching and practice.

Preview

Like cousins with the same grandparents, Catholicism and Judaism have much in common. Catholicism finds its roots in Jewish history, Scripture, liturgy, and theology. Above all, Catholics share with Jews a belief in one God and a common Scriptural heritage. Both Catholics and Jews see the Ten Commandments as the platform for moral teaching. The principle difference between Judaism and Catholicism is in their perceptions of the Messiah. For Catholics, Jesus is the Messiah, the divine Son of God. Catholics and Jews also differ in the Old Testament books they accept as revealed by God. Major feasts celebrated by Jews and Catholics also have common roots. They are Holy Thursday, or Passover, and Pentecost. Catholics must also grow in their understanding of the Shoah, the devastating massacre of millions of European Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Using the Text

- Share some researched background information about the primary symbol of Judaism—the Star of David—and the primary symbol of Christianity—the cross. Show students examples of these symbols and describe their respective histories and symbolic content.
- Have students review the “Messiah” and “Incarnation” sections. Pause and ask students to help you make a list of things that would be different if they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised savior and Son of God. (*They wouldn’t wear crosses as jewelry, no crosses on walls in their homes, would never make the “Sign of the Cross,” might worry or wonder when the Messiah would come, wouldn’t celebrate Mass, wouldn’t read the Gospel or Gospel passages, etc.*)
- Show students a list of the forty-six Old Testament books that Catholics recognize. Then show them the thirty-nine books that Jews recognize in their “Hebrew Bible.” Share with students any information you have discovered that explains the differences.
- Ask students if any of them have attended a “Seder,” a Jewish ritual meal that is celebrated on the first day of Passover. (*Many students may have attended a Christian variation of this ritual since Jesus also celebrated this meal in Jerusalem on the night before his death. Some Catholic parishes or communities offer a “Christian Seder” meal and celebration during Holy Week.*) Solicit student reactions or memories of the Seder they attended.
- On the blackboard, overhead projector, or with a PowerPoint program, review the links between Jewish and Catholic feasts, especially Holy Thursday/Passover and Pentecost/Shavuot.

Extending the Text

- Direct students to the Research and Activities section on page 77. Have students choose one project and allow a week to ten days for its completion. Permit students to work in teams of two if they wish.
- Randomly ask what students know about the Shoah. When did it occur? Where did it take place? Who promoted and then carried out this persecution and extermination of millions of Jews?
- Show a twenty to thirty minute portion of *Schindler's List*, a true account of one man's attempt to save Polish Jews from prison and death in concentration camps because the Shoah was wrong in his eyes.
- Devote at least twenty to thirty minutes on a class period to help students review for the Chapter 2 Test. Ask a student volunteer to read aloud the two paragraphs of the Conclusion on page 74. Repeat the central point—that the faithful adherence by Jews to God has given them heroic strength and cohesion as a people. Have students independently review the section and chapter Summary statements as well as vocabulary terms, etc. Ask students if they have any other questions about the major beliefs and practices of Judaism.
- Make sure that students know the date of this chapter's test. Use the remainder of the review session for prayer. Recite together the Aleinu, a traditional Jewish prayer said at the end of synagogue services.

Section Review Questions and Answers

1. List four areas in which Jews and Catholics are in agreement.

Jews and Catholics share a great deal of common ground historically, scripturally, liturgically, and theologically. Each religion is monotheistic. They share Abraham as their Father in faith and the moral heritage of the Ten Commandments. They share most of the books of the Old Testament except that Catholics also include 1 and 2 Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Sirach, and Wisdom in their list of Old Testament books inspired by God.

2. What is the difference between what Catholics believe about Jesus and what Jews believe about Jesus?

Catholics believe that Jesus is the only Son of God who was sent into the world as the Messiah. He is, Catholics believe, the savior and redeemer promised by God to our fathers in faith. The Jews acknowledge that Jesus was a historical figure, a charismatic figure, and a prophet. They do not agree that Jesus was divine and do not acknowledge him as the Messiah. Many Jews are still waiting for the arrival of the Messiah.

3. What are some similarities between the Mass and Passover, and Shavuot and Pentecost?

In both the Mass and the Passover celebration, there is reading of Scripture, an offering, the blessing and breaking of unleavened bread, and the offering and drinking of blessed wine. Both liturgies are also opened with very similar prayers. The Jewish Passover begins this blessing ritual with the prayer: "Blessed are you, King of the universe." In the Mass, we pray, "Blessed are you, God of all creation."