

Station #1: Introduction to Judaism

Judaism is a diverse religion and way of life that originated with the Hebrew people of the Middle East and has strong links to ethnicity. It is based on three components: God, Torah, and Israel. Judaism asserts that there is only one God, who is different from any other entity in the universe. Most of the fundamental beliefs of the Jewish people are rooted in the Torah and the Hebrew Bible, also called the *Tanakh*, which is the same as the Christian Old Testament.

Jews believe that God has given the land of Canaan (Israel) to them and that the restoration of the Jewish people will result from the leadership of the messiah...Jews believe in the holiness of life on Earth as well as the immortality of the soul.

Judaism has 14 million followers worldwide. Its spread has not occurred through the conversion of nonbelievers, as is the case with other religions, but through the migration of Jews from the Middle East throughout much of the world in what is called the Jewish diaspora. The relatively small number of Jews believes the religion's significance: Judaism provided the philosophical and historical foundation from which two of the world's largest religions, Christianity and Islam, sprang.

Station #2: Elements of Judaism

The Jewish Bible (known as the Old Testament by Christians) outlines the central components of Jewish beliefs. The Bible (which means "books" in Greek) consists of three main sections: the Torah (Law), Neviim (The Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). Those writings, which are supplemented by a collection of more modern writings called the Talmud, describe Jewish tradition, laws, priorities, religious ceremonies, and codes of conduct. The Torah consists of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and is considered the most significant scripture.

After the Bible, the next most important writings for Judaism are the Talmud, a collection of commentaries and traditions, and the Midrash, a series of interpretations of scripture...



The Torah

"Torah." Image. Image
Source/elektraVision/PictureQuest.
World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

Station #3: Variations of Judaism

In the United States and other nations, there are four main variations of Judaism, based on the degree of religiosity. Orthodox Jews strive to adhere as closely as possible to biblical laws. They eat only kosher food, observe the Sabbath, and have the genders sit in separate areas in the synagogue. Conservative Jews are not as strict in their adherence to biblical regulations. Synagogue services are held in the common languages as well as in Hebrew, and they apply a more scientific approach to the study of the Bible. Reform Judaism applies a much less rigorous application of biblical Jewish duties and holds services on Friday nights. Men and women may sit together and do not have to cover their heads. Mordecai Kaplan founded Reconstruction Judaism, a recent movement in the United States that views Judaism not simply as a religion but also as a unique culture that encompasses art, music, literature, and other nonreligious aspects of Jewish history. Jewish sects that have often lived in isolation from other Jewish communities in China, India, Yemen, far-eastern Russia, and Ethiopia have practiced forms of Judaism that include ceremonies and observances that date back to ancient times.



Jewish Cemetery in Prague, Czech Republic

"Jewish cemetery in Prague." Image. Matt Ragen/Dreamstime. *World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

"Judaism." *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

Station #4: Religious Observances

Boys, and more recently girls in Reform Judaism, fulfill a religious obligation at age 13 through the Bar Mitzvah (or Bat Mitzvah for girls), a ceremony in which they are recognized as adults responsible for fulfilling the obligations of Judaism. Jewish marriage vows are made under a canopy, representing the bride and groom's home, and are concluded by the couple sharing wine as a representation of their common destiny. Although mixed marriages are permitted, Jewish men are strongly encouraged to marry Jewish women, as a child takes his or her faith from the mother in Jewish tradition. When a Jewish person dies, an elaborate ceremony takes place designed to comfort the closest relatives. There is a seven-day mourning period called the shiva, during which the bereaved remain at home and hold services every evening.



Citron, which is one of four plants used in the Jewish Succot ritual, is tested for its "lawfulness" (being kosher).

"Checking citron for Succot." Image. iStockPhoto.com. *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

Station #5: Holidays and Holy Days

The Sabbath, or day of rest, is observed from sundown on Friday evening to dusk the following day. Synagogue services are held on the Sabbath. The two most important holy days are Rosh Hashanah, celebrating the New Year each fall with 10 days of penitence, and Yom Kippur (meaning "Day of Atonement"), which is held at the end of the 10-day period. Yom Kippur involves a day of praying and fasting that includes confessing all one's sins and shortcomings and seeking forgiveness. Passover is a very important eight-day family festival held in early spring to mark the anniversary of the flight of the Jews from Egypt.



Two children's customs related to the holiday involve playing the dreidel game and receiving Hanukkah gelt from adults.

"Hanukkah games." Image. PictureQuest. *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.



Latkes are one of the traditional foods of Hanukkah, the Jewish eight-day festival also known as the Festival of Lights.

"Latkes." Image. iStockPhoto.com. *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

Station #6: Early History and Founders

Abraham

Judaism is thought to trace back to about 2000 BC. A man named Abraham is considered the founder. Jews believe that they descended from Abraham and Sarah, the first people to worship Yahweh (God). According to the Torah, God told Abraham to leave his home in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and take his people to Canaan (Palestine). God promised that if Abraham obeyed, he and his offspring would become a great nation in this new land. This is the first covenant, or agreement, that God made with the Jews.

Moses

Moses is considered a great prophet (a person who receives messages from God). Moses led Israelites out of Egypt and away from slavery to Israel.

Station #7: Establishment of Modern Israel

In the late 1800s a movement called Zionism began in Europe. This was led by people who wanted to create a nation for the Jews in the region of Palestine. The movement grew stronger in the early 1900s as Jews escaping harsh conditions in Europe began moving to Palestine.

This Jewish immigration increased greatly when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in the early 1930s. Hitler and his Nazi Party thought Jews were evil. First the Nazis made life hard for Jews, and later they decided to kill them. This massacre became known as the Holocaust. The Holocaust ended with the defeat of Germany in World War II in 1945. Three years later the modern country of Israel was founded as a homeland for the Jews.



Dome of the Rock and Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The ancient city of Jerusalem is considered the holiest city in Judaism and certain sects of Christianity, as well as the third holiest site in Islam.

"Dome of the Rock and Wailing Wall." Image. iStockPhoto.com. *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2010.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Assignment #: _____

Judaism Stations

Station #1: Introduction to Judaism

1. What are the 3 components that Judaism is based off of?
2. What are the two major holy texts (books) of Judaism?
3. Identify two major Jewish beliefs.
4. Explain how Judaism has spread throughout time and place.
5. Judaism only has 14 million followers. Thus, why is it so significant to study and learn about?

Station #2: Elements of Judaism

6. The Jewish _____ (known as the _____ by Christians) outlines the central components of Jewish beliefs.
7. What is the most significant scripture of Judaism?

Station #3: Variations of Judaism

8. Identify three characteristics of Orthodox Jews.
9. How do Conservative Jews practice their faith?
10. Identify three characteristics of Reform Judaism.
11. What is Reconstruction Judaism based on?

12. Identify 4 countries where one can find other groups of Jews who have lived in isolation from other Jewish communities.

Station #4: Religious Observances

13. What is the most significant Jewish observance?

14. Explain what a Bar (or Bat) Mitzvah is.

15. Explain why Jewish men are encouraged to marry Jewish women.

16. Define "shiva."

Station #5: Holidays and Holy Days

17. When is the Jewish Sabbath?

18. Identify the two most important holidays.

Station #6: Early History and Founders

19. Who is considered to be the founder of Judaism?

20. Define the term "covenant."

Station #7: Establishment of Modern Israel

21. What does the term "Zionism" mean?

22. Why did Jewish people want their own homeland?

23. What year was Israel established?