



# JUDAISM RELIGION



Star of David

## SYMBOL

The six-pointed Star of David is the symbol of Judaism.

## FOUNDER

God first revealed himself to a Hebrew man named Abraham, who became known as the founder of Judaism. Jews believe that God made a special covenant with Abraham and that he and his descendants were chosen people who would create a great nation.

## PLACE OF WORSHIP

Jewish people attend services at the synagogue on Saturdays during **Shabbat**.

**Shabbat** (the Sabbath) is the most important time of the week for Jews. It begins on Friday evenings and ends at sunset on Saturdays. During Shabbat, Jews remember that God created the world and on the seventh day he rested. Jews believe God's day of rest was a Saturday.

The services in the synagogue are led by a religious leader called a **rabbi**, which means 'Teacher' in Hebrew.

## HOLY BOOK

The Jewish holy book is called the **Torah**. The Torah is written in Hebrew. It is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Christians call this book The Old Testament. The Torah has **613** commandments which are called **mitzvah**. They are the rules that Jews try to follow. The most important ones are the **Ten Commandments**. The Torah is so special that people are not allowed to touch it. It is kept in a safe place called an **ark** in the Jewish temple and when people read from the Torah, they use a special pointer stick called a **yad** to follow the words.



## SPECIAL HOLIDAYS

Jewish people observe several important days and events in history, such as:

**Passover:** This holiday lasts seven or eight days and celebrates Jewish freedom from slavery in Egypt. Specifically, Passover refers to the biblical story of when the Hebrew God “passed over” houses of Jewish families and saved their children during a plague that was said to have killed all other first-born babies in Egypt.

**Rosh Hashanah:** Jews celebrate the birth of the universe and humanity during this holiday, which is also known as the Jewish New Year.

**Yom Kippur:** This “Day of Atonement” is considered the holiest day of the year for Jews who typically spend it fasting and praying.

**High Holy Days:** The 10 days starting with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur are also known as the High Holidays, the Days of Awe or Yamim Noraim. The High Holy Days are considered a time of repentance for Jewish people.

**Hanukkah:** This Jewish celebration, also known as the “Festival of Lights,” lasts eight days. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabees defeated the Syrian-Greeks over 2,000 years ago.

## FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znwhfg8/articles/zh77vk7>

## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What does “shabbat” mean?
2. Who founded the religion Judaism?
3. What is unusual about the Jewish holy book?
4. What is this symbol called?
5. Where do Jewish people go to worship?
6. What are their spiritual leaders called?
7. What is the Festival of Lights called?
8. What is Yom Kippur known as?