

Shabbat

1. When do Jews observe Shabbat?
Jews observe Shabbat from **Friday evening to Saturday evening**. Timings are either worked out around sunset or Shabbat is observed by agreed timings.
2. What are the origins of Shabbat?
In the **book of Genesis in the Torah**, it says that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. **The Ten Commandments** given to Moses told Jews to observe Shabbat.
3. How do Jews define work?
In the Torah, **39 things are defined as work**. Jews need to decide for themselves if other things count as work or not, and they do not always agree. Cooking, driving and using electronic devices such as mobile phones may all be considered work.
4. Why do you think it might be hard for Jews to observe Shabbat in the modern world?
It may be difficult to get to the synagogue without driving. Also, if turning on light switches and other electronic devices is considered work, it makes it very hard for Jews to observe Shabbat. Also, more people have jobs that mean they need to work on a Saturday.

Why do Jews pray?

1. How often do most practising Jews pray?
Many practising Jews pray **three times a day**.
2. Why do Jews pray?
Jews pray for lots of different reasons: **to praise and thank God; to ask for something; or just to keep God present in their minds**. The main aim of prayer is **to build the relationship between the individual and God**.
3. Why is praying in the synagogue important for Jews?
The daily prayers in the synagogue are the most important act of Jewish worship. These prayers remind Jews that they are **all part of an ancient community**.
4. What the Shema teaches about Jewish beliefs.
The Shema is the most important Jewish prayer. It declares that there is only one God and that Jews should love him with their whole being, and follow his laws.

Jewish festivals

1. Why are festivals important for Jews?
Festivals are reminders of important events in history, and key moments to reflect on life.
2. What happens at Rosh Hashanah?
Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the year and is a time to think about behaviour, reflecting upon actions and making peace with others. Many Jews visit the synagogue, then go home for a special meal before returning to the synagogue the next morning.
3. Why is Yom Kippur important to Jews?
Yom Kippur is the day when God makes his final decision about the year ahead. People seek forgiveness and repair their relationships with one another and God.
4. Symbolism of different items in the **Seder meal during Pesach**
 - **bitter herbs**: the bitterness of slavery
 - **a green vegetable dipped in salt water**: the tears of the slaves
 - **a mixture of nuts, wine and apples called charoset**: the cement that the slaves were forced to make for the Egyptians
 - **a roasted lamb shank bone**: the lambs that were sacrificed in the Temple before it was destroyed
 - **egg is roasted**: new life.



The value of human life

1. Why do Jews believe that human life is sacred?
Jews think that life should **be respected** because it is given by God. The Talmud explains that everyone is **descended from a single person**, so harming or destroying one person is in some way destroying the whole world.
2. What does the principle of **Pikuach Nefesh** require of Jews?
The principle does not simply allow people to break laws to save someone's life – it actually requires that laws are broken in some situations. This is based on Leviticus 19:16, which says 'You shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed'. The Talmud says 'The Sabbath has been given to you, not you to the Sabbath.'
3. Some modern situations where the principle of Pikuach Nefesh might be used.
Abortions are permitted when the mother's life is at risk, because her life is considered to be superior to that of the unborn child. Life-support machines can be switched off, but euthanasia is not allowed.

Year 7 Autumn 2 Religious Studies: Jewish Practices

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Knowledge
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revise before
any
assessment
in Judaism

Key words

- Shema** The most important prayer in Judaism
siddur A Jewish prayer book
mitzvot Jewish laws (there are 613 in total); the singular is mitzvah
Shabbat/Sabbath A day of rest and religious observance
Tefilah is the Hebrew word for prayer.
A **mezuzah** contains the Shema written on a scroll which is often attached to the front door

