

JUDAISM

Mark It on the Map

Hang a world map on the wall. Have students locate the **Middle East** and specifically **Israel** and the countries which border **Israel (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria)**. Then have students look at the map on page 5 and locate the same areas on the full-page map. As they read through the issue, have them locate each site mentioned both on the issue's maps and on the world map. When they locate a site on the world map, have them note its position in Israel and its relationship to the neighboring countries.

Vocabulary

archaeologist	proverb
civilization	Jew
covenant	descendants
diaspora	exile
Torah	menorah
Hebrew	Bible
Mishnah	Talmud
prophet	synagogue
yarmulka	<i>shofar</i>
Yiddish	scroll

Introduction

Have students read the "Message From the Editors" on page 2. Ask if any of them have been to a Jewish service or celebration. Invite those who have to tell of their experiences. Then have students locate the Dead Sea on the map on page 5. Ask whether they have heard or read about the Dead Sea Scrolls and ask volunteers to tell what they know. Explain that these particular scrolls were uncovered in the late 1940s and that the writings on the scrolls date back almost 2,000 years. Scholars believe that these writings, which are religious in nature, provide an understanding of the Jewish community of the time and of the early Christian community.

Questions for Discussion

- What is the Fertile Crescent and how did it get its name?
- How did Israel get its name?
- What was the Exodus?
- What was the Ark, and what was its purpose?
- What is meant in Jewish history by the Exile? Why and when did it occur?
- What three traditions bind all Jewish people together?
- What is the difference between the Torah and the Mishnah?
- Who were the prophets? What role did they play in the history of Judaism?
- What is a synagogue's most important task?
- What is the purpose of the *sukkah* during the festival of Sukkot?
- What is a bar mitzvah? What is the difference between a bar mitzvah and a bat mitzvah?
- Why do Jews, Christians, and Muslims consider Jerusalem a sacred city?
- What are the Dead Sea Scrolls, and how do they relate to Judaism?
- Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls so difficult to read and decipher?

Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read the quotation on page 3 and then write an essay explaining why this proverb is good advice for you. Include at least one incident that has happened to you or to someone you know that illustrates why the proverb's advice should be followed.

- The word *Diaspora* comes from the Greek verb *diasperein*, meaning “to scatter.” Write an essay giving your reasons why the Jewish use of this word is appropriate.
- After reading about Judas Maccabeus on page 12, write a speech that Judas Maccabeus might have given to win followers. If possible, tape the speech to be sure that it can be given clearly and with correct emphasis. Rewrite and retest the speech.
- Psalm 15 describes the ideal person as: “He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks truth from his heart.” Describe specific examples of how a person could do to what the psalm requires.

Viewpoints

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Unleavened matzah is a symbol of the Jews’ flight from Egypt. Write two or three paragraphs telling why you think the Jews chose unleavened matzah as the symbol.
- Discuss why the sentence “Next year in Jerusalem, next year may all men be free” is an appropriate ending prayer for the Passover Seder.
- By tradition, the *shofar* is made of a ram’s horn. Why do you think a ram’s horn is used, and how do you think this custom began?
- Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the Jewish year. Why do you think this is so?

Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- After reading “Early Judaism” on pages 6–8, divide the class into twelve groups. Assign each group a paragraph, omitting the first one. Have each group illustrate its paragraph on a poster. Display the illustrations in order on the wall.
- Use the description of a synagogue on pages 18 and 19 as a guide to diagramming its interior. Use a different colored marker to label each area. Next to each label write an explanation of the term.
- After reading the story of “Esther and the Festival of Purim” on pages 20–23, use your imagination to draw appropriate masks for Esther, Haman, and Mordechai.
- Choose one of the Jewish expressions on page 25 and design a banner that features it. Display the banner in the classroom. Use the expression at appropriate times.

“Play” Time

Have students prepare a short play based on the story of “Esther and the Festival of Purim” on pages 20–23. Tell them to write brief lines for the ancillary characters and the banqueters. Assign the parts of Esther, Haman, Mordechai, the guests at the banquet, the executioner, and the reader of the king’s proclamation. Have students rehearse and perform the play for other classes.

Words With a Past

- Have students read the explanations of the terms *Jew* (page 5), *Hebrew* (page 15), and *Yiddish* (page 35). Ask them to make a chart or collage that clearly explains what each term means. Somewhere in the chart or collage should be three sentences, each using one of the terms correctly.
- Have students read the history of the words *Satan*, *Sabbatical*, and *scapegoat*. Then ask them to compose a sentence for each that clearly shows they understand its meaning.

Host a Guest

Invite a member or a leader of the Jewish community to speak to your class about Judaism. Be sure to provide time for questions and answers.

Research Projects

Working individually or in groups, students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read “Passover” on page 9. Find out The Four Questions the youngest child asks at a Passover Seder and what their significance is.
- Research the basic differences between the Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist branches of Judaism in North America.
- Research the origins, the development, and the present-day status of the following movements in Judaism: Rabbinic, Sephardic, and Ashkenazic or “Germanic” Judaism. Present an overview of each movement to the class.
- Find out more about Solomon’s temple: its design, what remains, and whether excavations are ongoing at the present time.
- Research what progress has been made since Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat signed the Peace Accord in September of 1993.
- Locate on a map other bodies of water like the Dead Sea.

Class Projects

- In December, celebrate the festival of Hanukkah. Borrow a menorah or use eight candlesticks. On the first day of Hanukkah, have one student tell the story of the festival and another student light the first candle. Each day thereafter, have a student light a candle. On the last day of Hanukkah, invite a volunteer to remind the class of the significance of lighting the candles.
- In March, celebrate the festival of Purim with the following activities: Invite a student to read aloud the story on pages 20–23. Tell the class to slap their desks every time the name of Haman is mentioned. Hold a contest to see which students can say the name of Haman’s ten sons all in one breath. Ask volunteers to make Hamantashen, the Purim cookies described on pages 22 - 23, for the class to enjoy. Or, purchase a box of triangle-shaped cookies and put a spot of jam in the center of each. Other possible Purim activities are described in “Play Time” and “Get Into Art.”

Class Research Projects

Divide the class into 10 groups and assign each group one of the Ten Commandments. Have each group write its commandment in large letters on a sheet of paper. Then have the group develop a brief explanation of what the commandment means and print it below the commandment. When students are done, organize the groups in order of the commandments. Have one member read the commandment aloud and another member read the explanation of the commandment.

Time Line Activity

Have students use the articles “The Spread of the Diaspora: The Second Temple Era” and “Past Is Present: Jerusalem, the Holy Land” to find dates related to Jerusalem’s history. Have them list the dates and events in chronological order. Make sure students understand B.C.E. and C.E.

Literature Enrichment

Get a copy of a book with excerpts from the Torah and the Talmud. Select a few passages that you feel would give your class an understanding of the sacred writings of Judaism. Read them to the class, checking to be sure the students are following what each passage says and understand what it means.

Just For Fun

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- Read the two poems on page 34 and discuss how they represent Jewish religious practices.
- Working in groups and using materials that are as identical as possible, prepare and perform the experiment on page 45. Compare the results among the groups and suggest explanations for the differences.

Follow These Footsteps

Abraham
Solomon
Nehemiah
Esther

Moses
Jacob
Judas Maccabeus
Haman

David
Cyrus the Great
Herod
Mordechai