

# Judaism

## Objective

To learn about Judaism as a religion and culture

## Scriptural Verse

“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great” (Exodus 12:2)

## References

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/readings.htm>

<http://www.suscopts.org> - pre-servants and servants

## Introduction

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people, based on principles and ethics embodied in the Torah and the Talmud. According to Jewish tradition, the history of Judaism begins with the Covenant between God and Abraham (ca. 2000 BC), the patriarch and originator of the Jewish people.

## Lesson Outlines

- † Judaism is among the oldest religious traditions still in practice today.
- † While Judaism has seldom, if ever, been monolithic in practice, it has always been monotheistic in theology.
- † It differs from many religions in that central authority is not vested in a person or group, but in sacred texts and traditions. Throughout the ages, Judaism has clung to a number of religious principles, the most important of which is the belief in a single, omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent, transcendent God, who created the universe and continues to govern it.
- † A traditional Jewish belief, the God who created the world established a covenant with the Israelites, and revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of the Torah, and the Jewish people are the descendants of the Israelites. The traditional practice of Judaism revolves around study and the observance of God's laws and commandments as written in the Torah and expounded in the Talmud.
- † The word Torah means "teaching," "instruction," "scribe", or "law" in Hebrew. It is also known as the Five Books of Moses, the Law of Moses
- † The Talmud is an "Oral Torah," a tradition explaining what the above scriptures mean and how to interpret them and apply the Laws. Orthodox Jews believe God taught the Oral Torah to Moses, and he taught it to others, down to the present day. This tradition was maintained only in oral form until about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when the oral law was compiled and written down in a document called the Mishnah.
- † Over the next few centuries, additional commentaries elaborating on the Mishnah were written down in Jerusalem and Babylon. These additional commentaries are

known as the Gemara. The Gemara and the Mishnah together are known as the Talmud. This was completed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

- ✚ With an estimated 14 million adherents in 2006, Judaism is approximately the world's eleventh-largest major religious group.
- ✚ According to Jewish law (Halakha), only a convert or a child born to a Jewish mother is counted as Jewish. Although an infant conversion might be contemplated in some circumstances (such as in the case of adopted children or children whose parents convert), children who convert would typically be asked if they want to remain Jewish after reaching religious adulthood, which is 12 years old for a girl, 13 for a boy. This standard is applied within Orthodox Judaism, which accepts Halakha as normative, and Conservative, who determine Halakha based on alternate interpretation.
- ✚ Other Jewish denominations, which do not accept Halakha, have adopted different standards. North American Reform Judaism and British Liberal Judaism accept the child of one Jewish parent (father or mother) as Jewish if the parents raise the child as a Jew.
- ✚ All mainstream forms of Judaism today are open to sincere converts; all denominations accept converts converted by their denominations.

### **Conclusion**

God has chosen the Israelites in the Old Testament to be His people. However, He has extended this to all people who accepted His salvation and believe in Him as THE SAVIOR in the New Testament.

### **Activities/ Discussion Points**

Divide the group into two:

- ✚ The first group is to discuss similarities between Judaism and Christianity
- ✚ The second group is to discuss differences between Judaism and Christianity

The two groups share the outcomes of their discussion together at the end of the meeting