Knowledge organiser: GCSE Judaism beliefs and teachings

Sub topics

- A history of the Jewish religion from the Old Testament to the modern day.
- The Jewish sacred texts: the Torah, the Tenakh, and the Talmud.
- The Covenant with Abraham.
- The Sinai Covenant and the 10 Commandments.
- The Festival of Pesach.
- The nature of God as one.
- The nature of God as creator.
- The nature of God as lawgiver: mitzvoth and freewill.
- The Divine Presence. (Shekinah).
- The nature of God as Judge.
- Beliefs about life after death.
- The festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- The nature and role of the Messiah.
- Key moral principles in Judaism.
- Sanctity of life: Pikuach Nefesh.

Key words

Torah- (1)the five books of Moses, which form the first section of the Tenakh. (2) The Jewish Law.

Shabbat: the Jewish holy day; a day of spiritual renewal starting shortly before sunset on Friday and continuing to night time of Saturday.

Mitzvot (singular Mitzvah): Jewish rules or commandments.

Shekhinah: the divine presence.

Talmud- a commentary by the rabbis on the Torah- it consists of the Mishnah and Gemara together in one collection.

Pikuach nefesh: the obligation to save life, even if doing so breaks Jewish law.

Possible H/WK tasks-

Self/Peer assessed H/WK tasks

Prepare a job description for the Messiah. It must include:
- Reference to Moses Maimonides
- Reference to the prophecies of the Messiah in the Tenakh.
- A description of the role of the Messiah.

'Explain two Jewish beliefs about the nature of G_d.' Refer to scripture or sacred beliefs in your answer. **[5 marks]**

Students may be set additional assessed tasks by their class teacher which will help the class teacher to assess their progress and inform their planning.

Opportunities for independent learning/Stretch and challenge

BBC Bitesize.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zkbmcqt

The Story of Abraham retold.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c0-cqYINPE

The Story of Moses retold.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRT6WPn2vnQ

Visit the Manchester Jewish Museum. (With parental permission).

Chabad is an excellent source of information.
https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3710122/jewish/What-Is-Judaism.htm

www.myjewishlearning.com
An excellent source of information to further your knowledge and understanding of Judaism
Complete examination practice questions for unit 9 on shared area.

Introduction to Judaism

- Judaism is one of the oldest world Religions. It began in modern day Israel around 1900 BC. Judaism originates back to the person of Abraham and his covenant with God.
- As Judaism has develop throughout the years, different groups have emerged within Judaism. The 2 main groups that exist today are Orthodox and reform. The main difference between Orthodox and Reform Jews is in the way they observe the Torah and the Mitzvot.
- The key sacred text in Judaism is the Torah, which Jews believe was given to Moses by God. The Tenakh is the Jewish Bible, which contains the Torah alongside the prophets and wisdom literature.
- The other key sacred text for Jews is the Talmud, which contains the Mishnah and Gemara.

Judaism and covenants

- Covenants are a key aspect of the Jewish faith. Throughout Jewish history, God made many covenants with the Jewish people, which signalled his special and unique relationship with them as his chosen people
- Jews believe that covenants made with God are binding, meaning that they are still relevant and valid today.
- The key marks of Abraham's covenant were monotheism, circumcision and sacrifice/faithfulness to God. Jews still practice circumcision today, as it is a mark of the covenant that is binding and valid today.
- The covenant at Sinai was between God and the Jewish people. God made this covenant through MOSES. God promised that he would protect the Jewish people and make them a great nation and in return, the Jews were to worship God and keep his commandments. The festival of Pesach commemorates the Jewish freedom from slavery and God's role in saving the Israelites from Egypt.

The nature of God in Judaism

- The belief that God is one is the most basic principle in Judaism. Jews believe that God is a single, whole, indivisible entity who cannot be divided. The Shema is a key Jewish prayer that affirms the Jewish belief in one God.
- Jews believe that God is the creator of all things. Jews believe that God created the universe out of nothing, exactly how he wanted it to be. Different groups of Jews disagree on whether the creation story in Genesis should be accepted as literal.
- A key Jewish belief about God is that he is the lawgiver. Jews are often referred to as people of the law and law forms the basis of Jewish life. Jews believe that God give the 613 mitzvoth to Moses on Mount Sinai and the mitzvoth guide a Jews relationship with God and with man. Orthodox and reform Jews have different views on how they should be followed.
- Jews believe that God will judge them on how well they have followed these laws. There are many different beliefs amongst Jews on the afterlife including Sheol, Gan Eden, Olam ha ba and resurrection.
- Jews believe that they receive God's judgement annually at the festival of Rosh Hashanah and when they die. The festival of Rosh Hashanah celebrates the Jewish New Year and is a day of judgement. Th festival of Yom Kippur is celebrated 10 days later and is the day of atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.
- Jews also refer to God as the Shekinah (divine presence). This refers to the presence of God on earth and originates back to the tabernacle which was a portable structure carried by the Jews on their journey through the exodus which was seen to be the dwelling place for God. The Shekinah IS God's presence among people and their experience of the spirit of God

Nature and role of Messiah/life after death

- Jews believe that the Messiah is the anointed one who is expected to live on earth at some time in the future.
- Many Jews believe that the Messiah will be a future leader. They are expected to be a future king of Israel and a descendant of King David, who will rule the Jews during the messianic age.
- Orthodox Jews believe that there is a successor of King David in every generation and when the Jews are worthy of redemption, the person will be directed by God to become the redeemer.
- Many reform Jews do not believe that one specific person will unite the Jews and reject the idea of a Messiah. Rather, they believe that everyone should work together to bring about the peace that will bring on the Messianic age.

Judaism and morality

- There are 3 key moral principles in Judaism that Jews believe help them live in a way that is pleasing to God. These are justice, healing the world and kindness to others.
- A key moral principle in Judaism is the sanctity of life. This is the belief that all life is holy as it is created and loved by God; therefore, human life should not be misused or abused.
- Preserving life is therefore a duty in Judaism.
- Pikuach nefesh is the obligation to save a life in Judaism, even if doing so breaks Jewsih law.