Judaism is...



"A 4000 year old tradition with ideas about what it means to be human and how to make the world a holy place" (Rabbi Harold Kushner, To Life) A "covenant relationship" between God and the Hebrew people

A celebration and sanctification of life

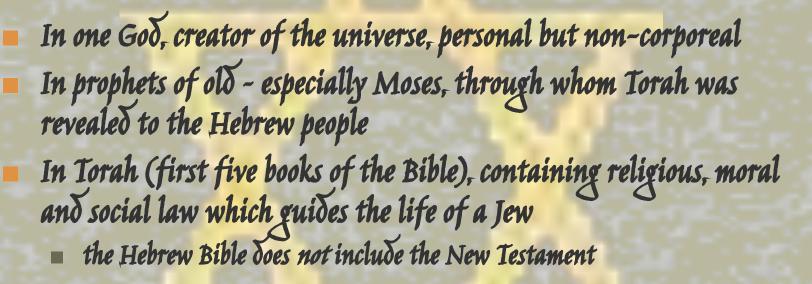
A faith, a people, a way of life...

A 4000 year old tradition ...

The Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob ("Israel") - origins of the Hebrew people (more than 3800 years ago) Enslaved in ancient Egypt and freed by Moses (more than 3300 years ago) Hebrew monarchy in the "Promised Land" (The Land of Israel), ends 6th century BCE



As a faith, Jews Believe...



As a people, Jews are ...



A nation in Diaspora (dispersed) 15 - 16 million in worldwide population United by a common heritage (an "ethnic" religion), divided in contemporary practice:



- Orthodox:
 - Modern
 - Chasidic (Ultra Orthodox)
- Reformed (18th century Germany)
 Conservative moderates, response to reform
 - Reconstructionalism (20th century America)





As a way of life, Judaism is based on...



613 commanoments found in Torah ("Written Law") Talmud ("Oral Law") - commentary of ancient rabbis that elaborates on how to apply God's Law in everyday life through:

- Dietary rules (Kashrut/Kosher)
- Dress and other symbols
- Prayer and devotion to the one God
- The Temple and Temple rites
- Observance of Holy days



- Proper social relations between male and female, in business, judicial rulings, etc.
- Thus sanctifying life, blessing it in every way

How does Judaism sanctify life?

Life cycle celebrations:



Bris - ritual circumcision, sign of the covenant Bar/Bat Mitzvah - full adult status and responsibility will religion



Marriage - "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:22) Death - funerals, mourning (sitting "Shiva"), and memorials ("Yartzeits")



How does Judaism sanctify time?

The Jewish Holidays: High Holidays: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) Sukkot, the "Festival of Booths" (fall harvest festival) Simchat Torah - celebrating Torah Chanukah, the "Festival of Lights"





More Holy Days ...



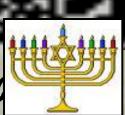
- Purim ("Lots") a carnival (commemorates events told in book of Esther)
- Pesach ("Passover") commemorates the exodus from Egypt (events told in Exodus)
- Shavuot ("weeks," Pentecost) commemorates receipt of Torah at Sinai
- Other, minor festivals
- Shabbat (Sabbath, 7th day, on Saturday) the "Day of Rest"



How is Judaism related to Christian

- Judaism predates Christianity it is the foundation of Christianity but is not a part of it
- Jesus was Jewish, as were his followers and the Apostles
- Jews do not believe that Jesus was anything more than a good and wise man who lived and died 2000 years ago - Jews still await their messiah The Jewish messiah would not be divine. He would be a political figure who restores the Hebrew monarchy and causes peace to reign on Earth Jews are not concerned about salvation and the "world to come"





Tikkun Olam - "repairing this world" through justice and righteousness; through "deed, not creed" The heart of Judaism is in the home and family, social responsibility and doing Mitzvot ("good deeds" based on God's commandments)

Through education and hard work we make our lives, the lives of others, and the world, what God intended it to be - Holy!



Web resources



Judaism 101: http://jewfaq.org/ "an online encyclopedia of Judaism, covering Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices and customs" ReligiousTolerance.org on Judaism: http://www.religioustolerance.org/judaism.htm

This POwerpoint presentation available at: http://www.nvcc.edu/home/lshulman/Rel232/resource/judaism.ppt

