



Temple Israel Presents
“How to Shavuot”

A guide for celebrating Shavuot

WHAT IS SHAVUOT?

Shavuot is the Jewish holiday that celebrates Moses and the Jewish people receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. It occurs seven weeks after Passover. (Shavuot means “weeks” in Hebrew). Long ago, the Israelites traveled to the Temple in Jerusalem for Shavuot and provided offerings to God. Today, Shavuot is a festival of Torah and actively deciding to participate in Jewish life.

COMMON CUSTOMS:

- It is customary to eat dairy foods on Shavuot because Jewish tradition compares the words of Torah to the sweetness of milk and honey. Another reason for this is that the *gematria* (numerical value) of the Hebrew word for milk, *chalav*, is 40. We eat dairy foods on Shavuot to commemorate the 40 days that Moses spent on Mount Sinai receiving instruction in the entire Torah.
- The ceremony of Confirmation (for 10th graders who have committed to continuing their Jewish education) is held on or near Shavuot
- Traditionally, the Book of Ruth is read on Shavuot. Ruth was a young Moabite woman who married an Israelite man. When her husband died, she followed her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to Israel and took the Jewish faith and people as her own.
- Decorating the synagogue or home with plants and flowers as a reminder of the spring harvest and the ancient ritual of bringing the first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem

IDEAS OF HOW TO INVOLVE KIDS ON SHAVUOT

- Re-enact the Israelites camping at the foot of Sinai with your own camp out outside. You could even make a tent indoors by building one with chairs and blankets
- Go on a nature walk and collect flowers and then decorate your house with them

SHAVUOT FOOD

Blintzes and cheesecake are among the popular foods to make and enjoy for the holiday since it is a dairy holiday.

MORE RESOURCES/READING

<http://www.kveller.com/article/shavuot-values-for-preschoolers/>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-torah-of-moses/>

Please feel free to contact Rabbi Amy Feder afeder@ti-stl.org or 314-432-8050 with any questions regarding how you can observe Shavuot!