

5th Grade Jewish History Curriculum

Text: The History of the Jewish People: A Story of Tradition and Change, Behrman House, Inc

This curriculum is designed for students to learn facts, key words, places and famous figures from the period of ancient Judaism through the Spanish Inquisition. More importantly, this curriculum gives students an opportunity to reflect and discuss what they've learned and contrast an historical time to ours. Each unit is designed with enough time to read, discuss and reflect, and also do computer research, create group activities and presentations, do map work and art work in the class room.

Goals and Objectives

- Students will learn history from our earliest ancestors to our dispersal in the Diaspora to the Jewish Experience in America in 1800's
- Students will consider how their lives compare to their ancestors'
- Students will consider how each generation adapts Judaism to each time and place
- Students will learn how the decisions of our forbears affect us today

Unit 1: The Birth of Our People and Monotheism, pages 2-5, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify primary differences between the early Israelites and their neighbors
- Describe the Torah as a moral and ethical code
- Apply what they've learned to explain one way in which our ancestors have influenced our lives

Key Concepts:

- Monotheism fostered the Israelites development of a strong ethical code
- Today we're guided by the same core ethical code

Key terms and figures

- B'nai Yisrael
- Phoenicians
- Aramaeans
- Canaanites
- Moabites
- Edomite's
- Amalekites
- Dan
- Asher
- Naphtali
- Judah
- Manasseh
- Issachar

- Gad
- Simeon
- Benjamin
- Rueben
- Ephraim
- Zebulon

Special Activities:

- Make flags for each tribe and set up around Levites
- Use pneumatic code to learn tribes
- Group work: What conflicts have you had with being Jewish in a multi-cultural country
- Group work: Write one action you do because it's the right thing to do
- Break into groups to study individual tribes

Assessments:

- Questions and answers in class
- Ability to discuss one tribe
- Quiz on different peoples, what they believed and how they treated Jews

Unit 2: The Early Israelites, pages 5-15, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explore how our ancestors adapted Judaism in the land of Israel and in the Diaspora
- Describe practices that helped our ancestors maintain their religious identity in the Diaspora
- Apply what they've learned to explain how the adaptations continue to influence us today

Key Concepts:

- As their circumstances changed, the Israelites changed their way of life
- Despite the many adaptations, they maintained their core religious beliefs and identities
- Our ancestors' ability to balance the need for change with their commitment to Judaism continues to inspire us

Key word and places:

- Judges
- Philistines
- Jerusalem
- Holy Temple
- Israel
- Judah

- Assyria
- Babylonian Kingdom
- Exile
- Prophets
- Persians
- 2nd Temple

Special Activities:

- Set up time line on white board
- Find places on the map

Assessments:

- Questions and answers in class
- Pencil and paper quizzes and tests

Unit 3: The Age of Hellenism, pages 16-22, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify temptations that existed for Jews to adopt Hellenistic ways
- Describe things that helped Jews resist the temptation to assimilate
- Apply what they've learned to explain how our lives today mirror those of our ancestors

Key Concepts:

- The Jews responded to the challenge of Hellenism with three strategies: resistance, accommodation, and assimilation
- We continue to use diverse strategies in facing today's challenges

Key words and places:

- Resistance
- Accommodation
- Assimilation
- Judea
- Hellenism
- Ptolemy's
- Archeologists
- Septuagint
- Seleucid Kingdom
- Maccabees

Special Activities:

- Read and discuss activities
- Create a timeline

Assessments:

- Question and answer activities
- Pencil and paper quizzes and tests
- Write 15 facts and present them to the class

Unit 4: Roman Domination of Judea, pages 28-39, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how intolerance within the Jewish community helped bring about our ancestors to the verge of destruction
- Define the term sinat hinam (senseless hatred) and describe an instance of sinat hinam from ancient times and from modern times
- Apply what they've learned by suggesting at least one way in which our differences can strengthen the Jewish community today

Key Concepts:

- The Jews of Judea were diverse in their beliefs and practices
- The lack of tolerance and lack of respect for one another led them to the verge of destruction
- Today we are faced with challenges of valuing what we Jews have in common with one another and valuing our differences

Key words and phrases:

- Sinat Hinam
- Essenes
- Sadducees
- Pharisees
- Crucifixion
- Masada
- Procurators
- Messiah
- Secarii
- Tisha B'Av

Special Activities:

- Discuss Sadducees and Pharisees
- Do a pro and con chart
- Discuss diversity of beliefs
- Assign historic figures to students for Wax Museum Project

Assessments:

- Question and answer discussions
- Pencil and paper quizzes and tests

Unit 5: Rabbinic Judaism, pages 40-49, 2 sessions, 45 minute each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe a primary difference between Jewish life in Israel and Jewish life in the Diaspora
- Identify one way the Jews communicated with God after the destruction of the Temple
- Apply what they've learned in proposing ways in which they can maintain and strengthen their own Jewish identities

Key Concepts:

- The sages reoriented Judaism from a land based religion to one that could survive and flourish after the destruction of the Temple
- Today we must continue to renew our version of Judaism so that it not only survives but thrives

Key words and places:

- Ascetics
- Tshuva
- Yavneh
- Religious court
- Halacha
- Beitar
- Palestine

Activities:

- Develop Diaspora maps

Assessments:

- Class discussions
- Pencil and paper quizzes
- Debates

Unit 6: Judaism and Christianity, pages 50-61, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe some traditions that are shared by both Judaism and Christianity
- Explain how the conflict between the Jews and the conflict between the Jew and the Christians led to disaster
- Apply what they've learned to recommending at least one action that could lead to improved relations within their community

Key Concepts:

- Christianity's roots are in Judaism

- The seeds of mistrust, rivalry, and persecution were sewn in the process of Christianity becoming a separate religion
- Improving interfaith relationships can help us make a better, more peaceful world

Activities:

- Compare and contrast Judaism and Christianity, Judaism and Islam
- Debate between Jews, Christians and Muslims regarding which religion offers the most to its followers.

Key Words:

- Baptism
- Mikvah
- Resurrected
- Christians
- Epistles
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Gospels
- Bishops
- Dioceses
- Pope

Assessments:

- Group discussions
- Oral quizzes
- Compare and contrast activities

Unit 7: Babylonia, pages 62-73, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the challenges Jews faced in Babylonia
- Describe how our ancestors adapted to life in Babylonia
- Apply what they've learned to explain how Jews of Babylonia provided a model for strengthening Jewish life in the 21st century

Key Concepts:

- After the destruction of the 2nd Temple, the Diaspora became the new center of Jewish life
- Judaism continues to evolve by adapting to changing times and integrating aspects of surrounding cultures
- To this day, the majority of Jews live outside of Israel, and the Diaspora continues to remain a cultural, spiritual, and creative force in Jewish life

Key words and names:

- Oral Law

- Mishnah
- Gemara
- Palestinian Talmud
- Babylonian Talmud
- Rabbinic Judaism Exilarch
- Goanim
- Islam
- Koran
- Karaites
- Heretics

Activities:

- Discussion about if we suddenly had to leave America for a foreign place, what would be the 10 most important customs and holidays that we would want to hold onto.

Assessments:

- Class discussions
- Oral quizzes
- Student oral definitions of key terms

Unit 8: Sephardi and Ashkenazi, pages 74-85, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify primary differences between the Jews of Spain and the Jews of Germany
- Describe challenges each group faced
- Apply what they've learned to explain how these communities contributed to the diversity of today's Jewish communities

Key Concepts:

- The Diaspora broadened when the Jews left Babylonia
- Despite shared traditions, Jewish communities in different geographic areas developed distinctive ways
- Today's Jewish communities are also diverse even as we continue to share core traditions and values

Key words and places:

- Shepard
- Golden Age of Spain
- Maggid
- Jewish mystics
- Zohar
- Mishnah Torah
- Ashkenazi
- Kahal

- Excommunicated
- Tosafists

Activities:

- Compare and contrast chart of differences between Jews of Spain and Jews of Germany
- Discussion of whether the Jews of Spain or the Jews of Germany suffered greater hardships

Assessments:

- Debates
- Class discussion
- Oral and pencil and paper quizzes

Unit 9: Medieval Europe, pages 86-97, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify primary causes of the persecution of Jews in Medieval Europe and its affects on the Ashkenazi community
- Describe how the Jews responded to changing conditions and persecutions
- Apply what they've learned to explain why the experience adds to our responsibilities to help those who are repressed

Key Concepts:

- Because of religious prejudices, political factors, and economic competition, the Jews became targets of persecution and violence in Medieval Europe
- Today many forms of prejudice exist. It is incumbent upon us to fight persecution

Key words and places:

- Infidels
- Crusade
- Guilds
- Blood Libel
- Inquisition
- Disputation
- Black Death

Activities:

- Write an essay : Why have Jews always suffered from Anti-Semitism

Assessments:

- Class discussions
- Oral quizzes
- Debates

Unit 10, The Sephardic Diaspora, pages 98-109, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives**Students will be able to:**

- Explain why the Jews were expelled from Spain
- Describe how Sephardic Jews adapted to their new countries
- Apply what they've learned to explain how the experiences and contributions of the early Sephardic Diaspora continues to influence us today

Key Concepts:

- As a result of the Sephardic community's expulsion, Jews learned 1) never to take their security for granted, 2) value the ties that unite all Jews, and 3) be flexible and adaptable

Key words and places:

- Conversos
- Crypt-Jews
- Marranos
- Sephardic Diaspora
- Ladino
- Safed
- Tikkun
- Shulchan Aruch

Activities:

- In class discussion as to what would you do if you faced an Inquisition today
- Examine new discoveries of descendants of Conversos in the Southwestern United States

Assessments:

- Class discussions
- Oral quizzes