

Enquiry Question: Does celebrating Shavuot make Jewish children feel closer to God?

Worldview/Faith
– Judaism



In this unit, we will look at the story of Shavuot and understand how Jews celebrate it today.

Key vocabulary

- Shavuot:** Festival marking the giving of the Torah and 10 Commandments to Moses
- Bikkurim:** Blessing of first wheat and fruits
- Mezuzah** (on the doorposts of Jewish homes) and the **tefillin** (boxes worn on the hands and head by some Jews) contain a scroll with Hebrew writing and is called the
- Shema:** The main Jewish prayer also given to Moses with the Torah : Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

- Shavuot means “weeks.” It’s sometimes called the Feast of Weeks. It doesn’t fall on the same date every year, and it’s one of the lesser-known Jewish festivals.
- Long ago, Jewish people would pick their first wheat and fruits of the year and take them to the Temple in a special basket to be blessed. This thankful gift was called Bikkurim.
- During Shavuot, some Jewish people stay up all night learning! This tradition is called Tikkun.
- Prayer is an important part of Shavuot. One special prayer is the Shema, which comes from the Bible in Deuteronomy 6:4–9.

History/Context

- Shavuot celebrates the time when God gave the 10 Commandments and the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- There’s a story that the ancient Israelites accidentally slept late on the day the Torah was given. To make up for this and to show how excited they are to learn, many Jewish people stay up all night studying on Shavuot.
- In some synagogues, everyone finishes their night of learning with a special sunrise service when the sun comes up.

Links to other aspects and beliefs:

- Special relationship between God and Jews
- Moses – Covenant
- Celebration of festivals at home and in the synagogue



Impact on belief/daily life

- On Shavuot, many Jewish people go to the **synagogue** to hear the **10 Commandments**. The building is decorated with **flowers** to remember Mount Sinai. People say **prayers** to thank God for the Torah, and **candles are lit**.
- It’s a custom to eat **dairy foods**, like cheesecake. One idea is that it reminds people of the promise of a **land flowing with milk and honey**.
- Many Jewish people **wear white** on Shavuot to show joy and make the day feel special.

Personal connection:

- Do we like to follow certain rules or structures? Why?
- Why is it important to remember old stories?

