

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 5 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 25 CELEBRATING OUR JEWISH ROOTS

Objectives

- Recognize the bonds of faith we share with the Jewish people.
- Explore the meaning of the Seder.
- Discover ways to strengthen the special bond between Jews and Christians.
- Compare major Jewish and Christian feasts.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experience), pages 186–187

Ask your child to recall a time he or she felt special because of being chosen to join a team, the cast of a school play, or some other group. Tell your child that a few thousand years ago, Abraham and his descendents were chosen to be God's people. God has chosen us also. Then pray together the **Prayer** on page 186.

Read the title (**Celebrating Our Jewish Roots**) and the text on page 186. Explain that in ancient Judaism, *rabbi* was a title of respect often used for a teacher. Today it is also the title of the person who leads a Jewish congregation. An *abbot* is the leader of a monastery or of a religious community that lives in a monastery. Ask: What do you think the story of the monastery means? (If we truly believe that God is present in all people, we will treat each other with respect and love.)

Direct your child's attention to the photographs on pages 186–187. Have your child discuss what he or she sees in the pictures. Then help your child complete the **Activity**.

Read **Bonds of Faith** on page 187. Ask: Why do you think the title *Bonds of Faith* is appropriate? (There are similarities between the Christian faith and Jewish faith, such as the Ten Commandments and Scripture.)

Read the **Scripture Signpost** and answer the question. (covenant, Commandments, Scripture, worship) Remind your child that the *patriarchs* of founders of the people of God, are Abraham and his descendents, Issac, Jacob, and Joseph. As you discuss *Romans 9:4–5*, share the following information with your child: In *Romans 9:4–5* Paul lists eight ways in which the Israelites were specially chosen by God:

1. God adopted the Israelites as his own sons and daughters.
2. God was gloriously present to the Israelites in the desert and in the Temple.
3. God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.
4. God gave the law, including the Ten Commandments, to Moses.
5. God introduced worship that differed from the idolatrous worship of neighboring countries.
6. God made and kept promises with Abraham, Moses, and David to be with their families.
7. God gave the Israelites a glorious ancestry in its patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
8. God brought forth from the Israelites the Messiah, who Christians believe is Jesus.

Paul expresses sorrow that many Israelites have accepted the first seven gifts of God, but not the last one. Then invite a response to the question. (covenant, Commandments, Scripture, worship)

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 188–191

Point out the illustration on page 188 and read the caption. Ask: What do you remember about the Exodus? (Possible answers: Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, across the Red Sea, and into the wilderness.)

As you read **The Passover**, make sure your child understands the highlighted terms. Refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook for clarification. Read aloud *Genesis 1:2–21* and *Exodus 12–14* to your child and share this background information.

- *Genesis 1:20–22* tells the story of how God created the birds and all living things in the sea. The story is not meant to be taken in the sense that God created each individual thing separately. Rather, its message is that God is the author of all life, both on land and in the sea.
- *Exodus 12–14* describes the ritual Passover meal that the Israelites were to eat. This Passover ritual absorbed two ancient practices: the shepherds' sacrifice of the first spring lamb and the farmers' prayer of thanks for leavening. The combined ritual of the Passover lamb and the unleavened bread showed the dependence of all the Jewish people on God.

Ask: Why do you think the Exodus story is retold during the Seder as if it were happening now? (Lead your child to see that the Seder celebrates not just what God did in the past but what God continues to do—lead the faithful toward the kingdom of God.)

Read **Catholics Believe** and make sure your child realizes that in the practice of our faiths, both we and our Jewish brothers and sisters look for the coming of the kingdom of God in its fullness.

Continue reading the text on page 189. Tell your child that the symbolic foods of the Seder are:

- *haroset*, a collection of dried fruit and spices or a finely chopped mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, honey, and wine, which symbolizes the mortar Hebrew slaves used to construct buildings in Egypt
- a green vegetable, which symbolizes spring
- a roasted lamb shank, symbolizing the Passover sacrifice
- a roasted egg, which also symbolizes sacrifice
- bitter herbs, which symbolize slavery
- matzo, the traditional unleavened bread of the Seder (nothing added to make the dough rise)

The first part of the Seder involves the ritual eating of the symbolic foods and the retelling of the Exodus story. The remainder of the Seder is taken up with the enthusiastic singing of traditional folksongs and songs of praise. Ask: How is our Mass like the Seder? (Possible answers: Both are sacred meals that recall the great things God has done and continues to do for us; both celebrate God's liberation of his people—from slavery and sin; both praise God.)

Explain that the unleavened bread recalls the hasty departure of the Hebrews, who didn't have time to let the bread rise. We use unleavened bread in the Mass to recall the Passover bread Jesus shared with his friends. The ritual reminds us that because of Jesus' sacrifice, we, too, will pass from sin and death to new life.

Direct your child's attention to the photograph on page 189. Point out that the Passover table is always set with a beautiful tablecloth, wine cups for everyone, and a Seder plate as the centerpiece. On the plate are the symbolic foods that will be eaten during the meal. Ask: How does the picture show that the Seder is an important tradition from the Jewish people? (An older man, possibly the grandfather, seems to be teaching the boy about it.)

Provide art materials for your child to do the **Activity**.

As you read **Renewing Ties** on page 190, clarify the term *scapegoat*. Explain that in ancient Jewish religious ritual a goat was symbolically burdened with the sins of the people then released in the desert to die.

The English word *holocaust* first appeared in the fourteenth century. It referred to the ancient practice of offering a burnt animal sacrifice to God; it came from a Greek word, translated from Hebrew, meaning “that which is completely burnt.” *Holocaust* was later used to refer to very destructive fires. By 1942 it was used to describe the mass slaughter of European Jews by the Nazis. *Shoah*, a Hebrew word meaning “catastrophe,” was first used in 1939 to describe the slaughter of Jews. In the Bible *shoah* had several meanings, from “Personal ruin or devastation” to “a wasteland or desert.”

You might mention that *Yom HaShoah*, Holocaust Remembrance Day, is observed on May 4, with interfaith prayer services.

Call attention to the photograph and read the caption. Ask: Why is it important that the leaders of Jewish and Christian faiths meet? (It is important for leaders to set an example; by meeting, they are confirming that the Jewish and Christian faithful share a bond and respect one another’s beliefs.)

Look at the chart of **Major Feasts Celebrated by the Jewish Community**, on page 191. Read about each feast and discuss what you know about each of these celebrations.

- **Rosh Hashanah** (RASH hah•SHAH•na): On this day in September or October, one of the most ancient of instruments, the *shofar*, or ram’s horn, is blown. The sound of the shofar is like a spiritual wake-up call.
- **Yom Kippur** (YOM kih•POOR): This solemn day of atonement closes the high holy days. The story of Jonah, read this day, reminds people that God offers justice tempered with mercy.
- **Sukkot** (suh•KOHT): During this festival some families spend time in huts made from thatched branches.
- **Hanukkah** (HAHN•uh•kuh): *Hanukkah* literally means “dedication.” The eight-branched candelabra called the *menorah* recalls the sanctuary lamp of the Temple.
- **Passover**: On this day Jews remember that everyone has a responsibility to work for the freedom of people worldwide.
- **Shavu’ot** (shah•voo•OHT): Originally a harvest celebration, this festival became a celebration of God’s covenant at Sinai. It was during the celebration of Shavu’ot that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in Jerusalem.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Everyday Life), page 192

Review the material taught in this lesson by completing the sections **Recall, Think and Share**, and **Continue the Journey**.

Read and discuss **We Live Our Faith: At Home** and **In the Parish**. Try to follow through on these suggestions.

Refer to the **Language of Faith** section in the back of the textbook for clarification and review of all highlighted words.

Complete pages 49–50 in the **Faith Journal**.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 193

Remind your child that, like the Jewish people, we believe God is with us always. Read **Sing to the Lord** on page 193. Ask: Why should the Israelites' song be part of our Easter Vigil? (God's saving act in Exodus is part of our history as God's people; just as God saved the Israelites, so he saved us through Jesus' death and resurrection.)

Invite your child to examine the pictures on this page and tell what they show. (a stormy ocean; Moses leading his people across the Red Sea) Ask: What idea do you think the artist wanted to get across in the painting of the Exodus? Help your child see how the artist, Raphael, conveyed the power of God's action by including dramatic details—upraised hands, the woman kissing the ground, the struggling horse with a figure clinging to it, and so on.

Close the lesson with **Prayer**. Using your family Bible, turn to *Exodus* 15:1–18. One of you read the passage a verse at a time; the other respond with Miriam's refrain (verse 21).