

Homework for Lesson 5: The Faith of Jesus

We're going to look at the history of faith by talking about the faith of Jesus. Jesus was born into the Jewish faith, which you may be familiar with because it's the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and most of the other people you've heard about in Sunday school. Let's look at what do you know about the Jewish faith at the time of Jesus.

Where did Jewish people at the Jesus's time worship?

Most communities would meet in synagogues, which were local buildings set aside for religious ceremonies and instruction. Synagogues would often serve as schools as well.

However, on special feast days, especially Passover and the Day of Atonement, many Jewish people would travel to the Temple in Jerusalem to participate in the religious festivals and ceremonies.

What important holidays or celebrations did they have?

The Jewish people had several holy days set aside to remember God's acts throughout their history. There were seven festivals including: Passover, The Festival of Unleavened Bread, The Feast of First Fruits, The Feast of Weeks, The Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, and The Festival of Booths. The most important of these was Passover when the people would remember God leading them out of Egypt.

What did they study to learn about God?

They would have studied the books that make up what we call the Old Testament. It was typically divided into three parts: The Law (Torah), The Prophets (Nevi'im), and The Writings (Kethuvim). Memorization and discussion was very important in studying the scriptures for Jewish leaders. But the vast majority of Jewish people were unable to read or write, so they learned about God mostly through stories passed down from family, and teaching from the rabbis in the synagogue. Each week, rabbis and Jewish leaders read scriptures, told stories about the faith, and gave commentaries (called Midrash) about the scriptures.

We should remember that Jesus was born more than 2000 years ago, while we have the Bible to tell us a lot about that time, as well as history books and archaeologists, there is still a lot that's not been documented. Let's think about Now.

1. How would you describe where we workshop? How do we worship?
2. What important traditions and holidays do we celebrate as Christians?
3. What traditions (and practices) do we have as Methodists?
4. How do we study the Bible? How do we learn about God?

What seems similar between The Faith of Jesus and Our Faith? What is different?

What do you think that people 2000 years from now will think about the place and way we worship?

What do you think they'll see as strange that we see as being totally normal?

How does this help you gain perspective on your own faith?