



5 Starter Facts About Judaism

1. Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions and was founded nearly 4000 years ago in the Middle East. There are only ~14.5 million Jews worldwide, almost half of which live in Israel. ~5.7 million Jews reside in the United States.
2. The central religious scripture is the Torah and it is written in Hebrew. Jews believe G-d appointed them to be His “chosen people” to set an example of holiness and ethics to the world. Jews believe people should be judged not by the merit of their beliefs, but by the way they actively live it – ultimately how much they contribute to the overall goodness of the world.
3. The Jewish Sabbath is observed Friday sundown until Saturday sundown. The way in which it is observed differs by the branch, but generally includes a candle lighting, prayer service, and family meal on Friday evening.
4. Jews feel it is more of a culture than just a religion and feel part of a global community with a close bond of Jewish people all over the world. A lot of Jewish religious life is based around the home and family activities. There is a heavy emphasis on community in all customs.
5. Since B.C.E., the Jewish people have consistently faced anti-semitism and persecution in whichever land they temporarily call home. This includes expulsion, forced conversion, synagogue burnings, enslavement, massacres, pogroms, mob attacks, and ultimately the 20th century Holocaust.

Learn more at:

<http://www.jewfaq.org/m/index.shtml>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/>

These five points are not meant to be comprehensive or authoritative. We hope they encourage you to explore this spirituality more deeply and seek out members of this community to learn about their beliefs in action. In understanding our differences we will better understand our common humanity.

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