

Unit 2: Our History and Heritage

In order to truly understand our lives and beliefs, we must understand the lives and beliefs of the people who came before us. Our identity and faith is rooted in, and shaped by, the experiences of our spiritual ancestors traced back over the centuries.

These six lessons are designed to help you consider where your faith comes from in the hope that it will give you a better understanding of where it may be going. You'll be introduced to a long and diverse tradition that you're already a part of, and encouraged to imagine how you might carry that tradition into the future.

Unit 2: Our History and Heritage

Lesson 5: The Faith of Jesus

Welcome to Confirmation Class

Confirm Series: Lessons 5-6

As we wait to begin, take a moment to review our goals and expectations for class:

Lesson Goals

As a result of this lesson, I will be able to...



- Explain the significance of Jesus' Jewish faith and how it relates to early Christianity
- Discuss how the beliefs and practices of early Christians influence my faith today
- Identify key figures and events of the Reformation that shaped modern Christianity

Class Expectations



- WORK HARD
- BE KIND
- No phones should be out (*unless instructed to use them for class*)

For Fun!



Talk to your neighbor or the table:

- What is one place you've always wanted to visit? Why?
- Do you prefer the beach or mountains? Why?
- What is one comfort food for you?


“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the
children of God.”

Romans 8:14

Tentative Agenda

5:00-5:05= Welcome/Opening Prayer

5:05-5:40= Lesson 5: The Faith of Jesus

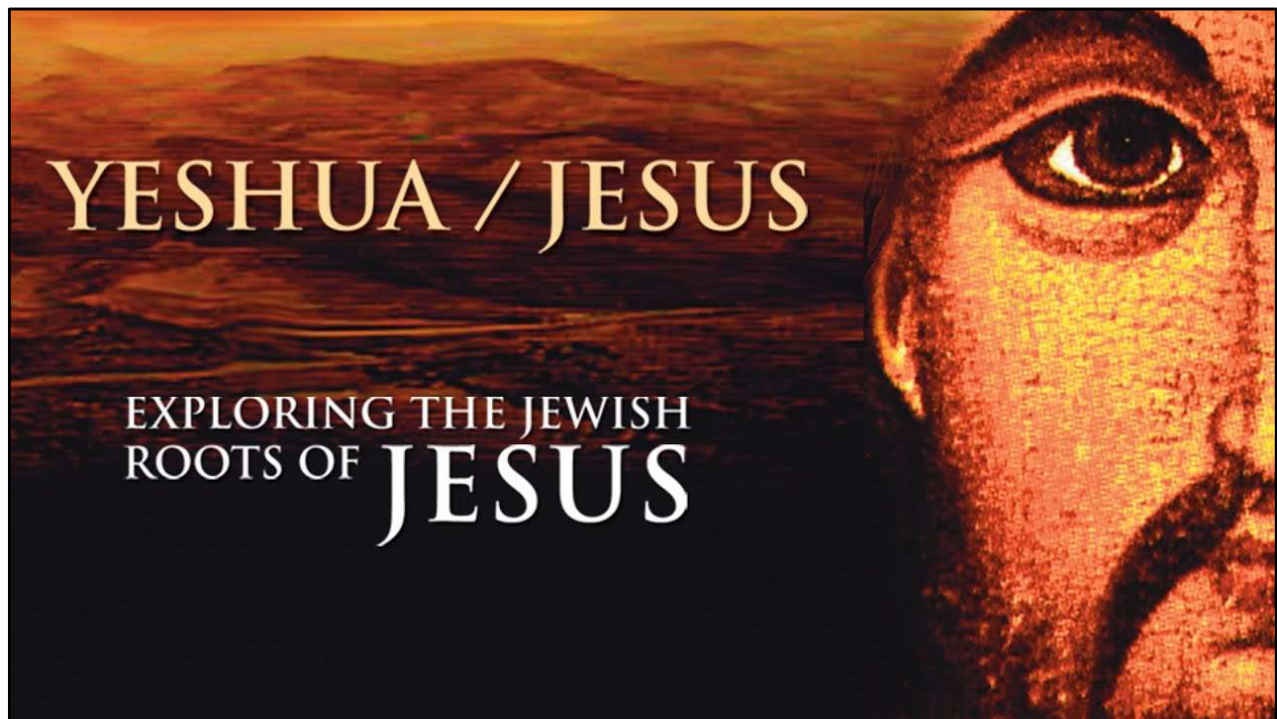
5:40-5:50= Break/Snack

5:50 -6:25= Lessons 6: The Early Church

6:25-6:30= Wrap Up/Closing

Opening Prayer

Dear God, thank you for guiding us as we explore the faith of Jesus as a Jewish person, the early Christians who helped shape our church, and the Reformation that transformed our understanding of faith. Help us to appreciate the deep history of Your people and the courage of those who followed Your teachings, inspiring us to grow and seek truth. May we honor both the past and our call to follow You with faith and courage. Amen.



We're going to start our look at the history of faith by talking about the faith of Jesus. Jesus was born into the Jewish faith, which you may already know. This is the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and most of the other people you've heard about in Sunday School or sermons. Let's look at what you know about the Jewish faith at the time of Jesus.

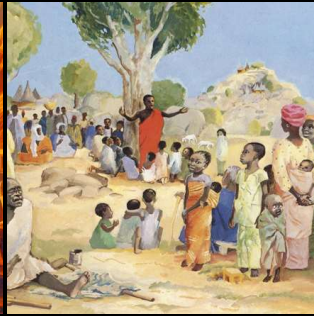
- **Do you know where Jewish people during Jesus's time worshipped?**
 - Most communities would meet in synagogues, which were local buildings set aside for religious ceremonies and instruction. Synagogues would often serve as schools, as well.
 - However, on special feast days, especially Passover and 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 does the Jewish community 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 the 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. Leviticus 23 has more information about these festivals.
- **What did the Jewish 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). They learned mostly through stories passed down from family and rabbis teaching in synagogue.
 - We should remember that Jesus was born more than 2,000 years ago. While we have the Bible to tell us a lot about that time, as well as history books and archeologists, there is still a lot that has not been documented.



- You might find confirmation strange. Maybe you're the only one of your friends at school who is going through it. But there is a legacy of people who, at your age, are committed to a special group to learn more about their faith, ask questions, and look for answers.
 - Even Jesus went through something similar in the book of Luke.
- To get a sense of what Jesus would have been learning the temple, we will be reading aloud from several important passages in the Old Testament, which help to tell the story of God's people.
- Before reading the passages, it helps to know a little about the world where Jesus grew up.
 - Centuries before Jesus was born, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Israel, exiled the people, and destroyed the temple.
 - After 150 years, a man named Nehemiah was allowed to bring some of the people back to repair the walls of Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
 - However, the people of Israel were never truly free of their captors.
- The rule of Babylon gave way to the rule of the Persians and then the Greeks, and eventually, decades before Jesus's birth, the Romans came to power.
 - By the time Jesus heard these were his people, the Israelites, had been dispersed all over the empire, and the nation of Israel had been under the thumb of a ruling nation for 600 years.
- When Nehemiah and his small group of Israelites returned to Jerusalem, they rededicated themselves to their faith and their tradition.
 - Our first two readings are from the Book of Nehemiah, where the people collectively remember their history and repent of their sins.
 - As you listen to these Scriptures, imagine you are in the Temple with Jesus, possibly hearing these words for the first time.



Nehemiah 9:1-15
Page 593



Micah 6:1-8
Page 1117



Nehemiah 9:26-38
Page 594

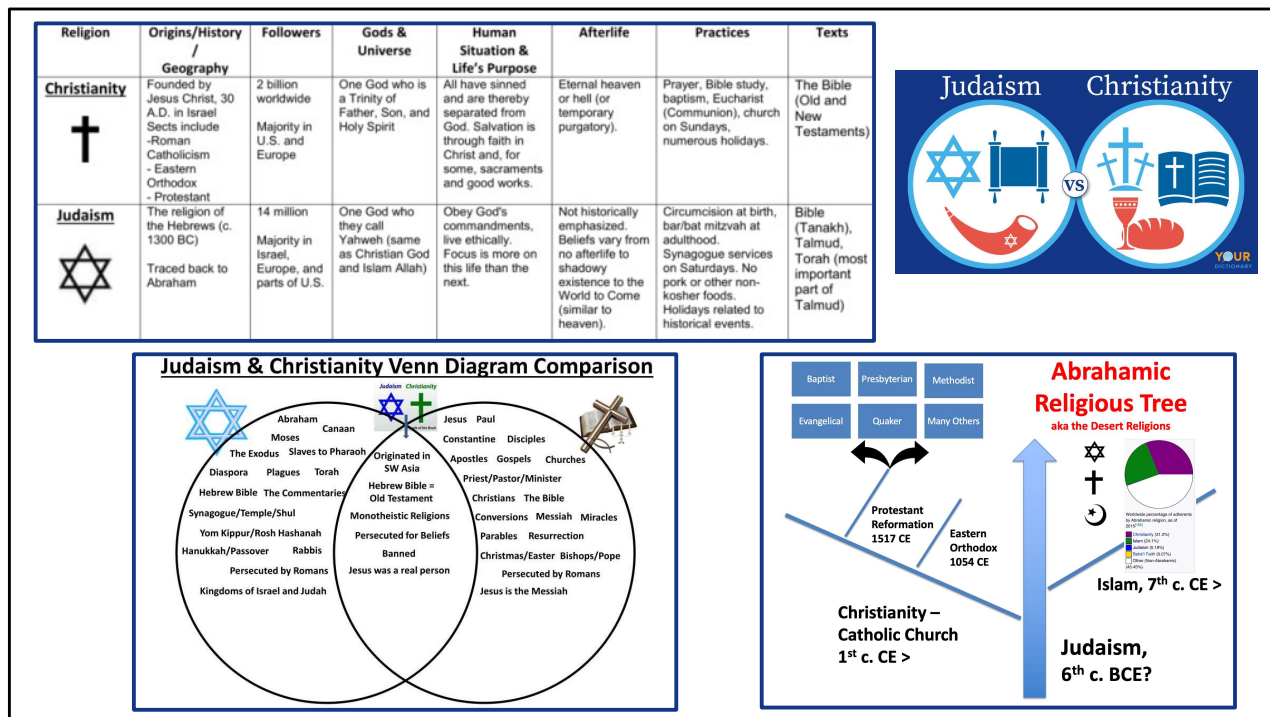


Isaiah 9:1-7
Page 824

- Jesus is sitting in the same temple that Nehemiah had built after returning from exile more than 400 years previously and learning the same story of faith that his people had passed down for generations. Think about what these words must have meant for someone in his situation.
 - Have a youth read: **Nehemiah 9:1-15 (page 593)**
- Despite God's goodness, the Israelites still wanted things their own way; and so God sent prophets to bring them back to God. This next reading is from one of those prophets, a man named Micah.
 - Have a youth read: **Micah 6:1-8 (page 1117)**
- But the people didn't listen to Micah's words; they did not do justice, embrace faithful love, or walk humbly with their God. Let's pick up the story again in Nehemiah.
 - Have a youth read: **Nehemiah 9:26-38 (page 594)**
- This was still the situation in the time of Jesus. The Babylonians no longer ruled Israel, but the Romans had taken over and Israel remained an occupied nation. Yet there was still a promise for the future and a hope.
 - Have a youth read: **Isaiah 9:1-7 (page 824)**

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Lesson 6: The Early Church



Difference between Jewish and Christian faiths...

- **Judaism** and **Christianity** are two different religions that share some common history but have different beliefs about who God is and how people should follow Him.
 - **Shared Origins**
 - Both Judaism and Christianity believe in one God and both look to the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) as sacred scripture.
 - They share stories of early figures like Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.
 - **Key Difference – Jesus**
 - The biggest difference is what each religion believes about Jesus.
 - Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah (Savior) who came to Earth to save humanity from sin.
 - They believe that through Jesus' death and resurrection, people can have a relationship with God and eternal life.
 - Judaism, on the other hand, does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Jewish people are still waiting for the Messiah to come and do things like bring peace to the world and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - **Scripture**
 - Christians have both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - The New Testament includes the life and teachings of Jesus and the early church.
 - Jews follow the Hebrew Bible (what Christians call the Old Testament), but they don't recognize the New Testament as scripture.
 - **Practices**
 - There are also differences in religious practices.

- Jewish people follow the laws and commandments of the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) very closely, including things like observing the Sabbath, eating kosher, and celebrating holidays like Passover and Yom Kippur.
- Christians, while they respect the Old Testament, believe that Jesus' life fulfilled those laws, so their focus is more on faith in Jesus and following his teachings, celebrating holidays like Christmas and Easter.
- In short, **Judaism focuses on living by the laws of the Torah and waiting for the Messiah to come**, while **Christianity centers on Jesus as the Messiah and his message of salvation**.
 - Both religions, though, are about following God and living good, moral lives.



Confirm Series: Lessons 5-6

As we wrap up class, lets go over a few things together:

Objective

The objective of class today was...

Application

Today's lesson is important to me because...

Upcoming Dates

- October 4-5
 - Youth Fall Retreat
- October 5
 - Sunday Night Live (5-7p)
- October 12
 - Confirmation Mentor Meet-Up (10-10:30a)
 - YPB (4-5p)
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30p)
- October 18
 - HarvestFest volunteer opportunity (10-2p)
- October 19
 - Sunday Night Live (5-7p)
- October 26
 - YPB (4-5p)
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30p)

Closing Prayer

One confirmand will lead us in a closing prayer.