

Exploring Traditions in Judaism with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the significance of the Shabbat, the Torah, and the importance of the synagogue in Jewish life.

Read each question carefully. Use your knowledge of Jewish beliefs and practices to provide detailed answers. Ellie the Elephant, who has a wonderful memory for history and stories, is here to help you reflect on these traditions.

Ellie the Elephant has been visiting the local community centre and learning all about the Jewish faith. She has discovered that for Jewish people, the home and the synagogue are both very special places. From the sacred scrolls kept in the Ark to the peaceful family time during Shabbat, there is so much to learn about how Jewish families celebrate their faith and history.

Word bank: Shabbat · Synagogue · Torah · Ark · Challah · Kiddush · Rabbi

1. Ellie has learnt that Shabbat is a time of rest. Explain why Shabbat is considered a holy day and describe one way a Jewish family might prepare for it. (3 marks)

2. The Torah is the most sacred object in a synagogue. Describe how it is treated and explain why you think it is handled with such great care. (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the role of the synagogue with the role of the home in Jewish life. How do they serve different purposes? (4 marks)

4. Justify your answer: Why is it important for a community to have a central place of worship like a synagogue, rather than just praying individually? (3 marks)

5. What might happen if a Jewish family was unable to share a meal together on a Friday evening? How would this affect their observance of Shabbat? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a Shabbat dinner table. Include items such as the Challah bread, two candles, and the Kiddush cup. Think about the colours you use to represent a peaceful and holy atmosphere.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an architect designing a new community space. Write a short paragraph explaining how you would design a synagogue to be both a welcoming place for people to socialise and a respectful, quiet space for prayer. What features would you include and why?