Looking at the Hebrew Scriptures with Stage 6
CATHOLIC STUDIES

Sydney: C6-3 World Religions

It is intended that students will be able to:

Values and Attitudes
- reflect on excerpts from sacred texts of religious traditions

Knowledge
- describe the essential meaning of excerpts from sacred texts of religious traditions

Skills
- examine excerpts from the sacred texts of religious traditions

Parramatta: Interest Study

Outcome:

C6.3 evaluates the role, interpretation and application of sacred writings and ethics in Christian and other faith traditions
SOR PRELIMINARY COURSE

RELIGIOUS TRADITION STUDY: Judaism

OUTCOMES

P3 investigates religious traditions and belief systems
P4 examines significant aspects of religious traditions
P5 describes the influence of religious traditions in the life of adherents
P6 selects and uses relevant information about religion from a variety of sources
P7 undertakes effective research about religion, making appropriate use of time and resources
P8 uses appropriate terminology related to religion and belief systems
P9 effectively communicates information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

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The skills and knowledge learnt in this unit directly relate to the Religious Tradition study in the HSC course.
The Jewish sacred text or bible is called the Tanakh.

The word Tanakh (or Tenach) is an acronym of the name of the three sections of the Jewish sacred text:

Torah (Law/Revelation),
Nevi'im (Prophets), and
Ketuvim (Writings).

It is important to understand that these texts are not standalone for adherents, but supported by the Talmud (oral tradition) and interpretations through Midrash (sermons and teachings of Rabbis).
JIGSAW COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

1. Ss split into groups of four and allocated one of the following topics:
   - Tanakh
   - Torah
   - Nevi’im
   - Ketuvim

2. Each group uses the information provided to summarise the key points about their allocated topic.

3. Groups reform with at least ONE person from each original group.

4. Students share findings to create (an individual) Glossary of Terms.

Students learn about: Sacred Texts and Writing

Addressed Outcomes:
P8 uses appropriate terminology related to religion and belief systems
P3 investigates religious traditions and belief systems
P4 examines significant aspects of religious traditions

This task would be most suited to an introductory/focusing lesson at the beginning of the unit.
MODEL OF ACTIVITY

We are assuming that the first group has already taken place.

1. Each of you have a glossary table with one box filled in from your ‘first group activity’. Re-read over the information (30 seconds).

2. Join together with three other teachers who have ‘completed’ the other three boxes. (2 min)

3. Take down dot-points of their key ideas into your table.

(If you don’t get all the notes down, don’t worry – we’ll go through each section again after the activity to ‘re-teach’ ourselves)
The Tenakh (Hebrew Bible)

Judaism is a religion of the book, as are Christianity and Islam. Its divine revelation is manifest in written form. The Hebrew Bible (which Christians refer to as the Old Testament’) records the words of God to the Children of Israel. The Bible is traditionally divided into three sections: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings.

The initial Hebrew letters in the names of the three parts of the Jewish scripture (Torah, Nevi’im, and Ketuvim) make up the acronym ‘TeNaKh’. Tenakh is a common term for the Hebrew Bible.
The Torah

The most important part of the Jewish scripture is the Torah (teachings, Laws). In the most restricted sense, the Torah is made up of the first five books of the Bible, which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. This group of books is sometimes called the Pentateuch (‘Five Scrolls’). Also, because tradition says they were written by Moses, they are called the Five books of Moses. Orthodox Jews believe that these five books are the literal word of God, as heard and recorded by Moses himself.

Genesis tells the story of the creation of the universe and early civilisation. Exodus recounts how the Hebrews were rescued from captivity in Egypt. Leviticus gives the main provisions of the Jewish Law. Numbers contains a range of further stories and ordinances. Deuteronomy contains a summary of the material in the four receding books. Historically these texts were written over a long period of time in different places by various people. They were collected, edited and arranged into their present form at the time of the Exile in Babylon in the sixth century.

The Torah is the rule of Jewish life. It gives a detailed set of practical guidelines and ideals of the type outlined in the Ten Commandments, which are found in the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy.
The Nevi’im

The part of the Bible termed Nevi’im (or ‘The Prophets’) consists of nineteen books, most of which bear the name of the prophet who is said to have written them. The word ‘prophet’ means ‘one who speaks on behalf of another’. In the religious context, the ‘other’ is God.

During a thousand years of Hebrew history the prophets sustained the development of Jewish religion and culture by speaking to the people on behalf of God. They gave instructions to the Hebrews about standards of conduct and goals to pursue, and they gave warnings about likely outcomes. The first and greatest of the prophets was Moses himself who lived in the thirteenth century BCE.

The Prophetic books are usually subdivided into the Earlier Prophets (c. eighth century): Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; the Later Prophets (c. sixth century): Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and the twelve minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Ohadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The works of the twelve minor Prophets are conventionally taken as one book. In that way the three sections of the scriptures can be said to total twenty-four books.
The Ketuvim

The Ketuvim (or writings) are usually arranged in the following order: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. They also include the five scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther, each of which is recited annually on special Jewish festive or commemorating days.
So...

the Torah, Nevi’im and Ketuvim are the three sections that make up the HEBREW BIBLE

But what is the TALMUD???
In a wider sense of the term, ‘Torah’ refers to a combination of the Pentateuch (Hebrew Bible/Tanakh) and the Talmud. The Talmud is the second most important source of Jewish Law and lore. It is a compendium of faith which includes stories, traditions, customs and laws that develop and interpret the Torah by applying it to the situations of everyday life. The Talmud comes in two versions: the Jerusalem Talmud (c. fourth century CE) and the Babylonian Talmud (c. fifth century CE).

The earlier part of the Talmud is the Mishnah (‘Repetition’) which records the opinions of the Tannaim (learned rabbis of the second century CE) who interpreted the original Torah in light of the circumstances of their own time. These discussions of the Law were compiled and systematised (into six sections) by Rabbi Judah the Prince (135-217) and Rabbi Meir.

The Mishnah covers a wide variety of subjects, including the seasonal festivals, the rights of the poor, the laws governing marriage and divorce, and civil and criminal law.

The Mishnah, in its turn, was much discussed by a further group of rabbis called the Amoraim. Their understandings were collected into the Gemara (‘Compilation’) which forms the later portion of the Talmud.
What did I Just Say?

QUESTIONS

1. What does Torah refer to? The section in the Tenakh AND law in the Talmud
2. What is the Talmud a source of? Jewish law and lore.
3. What are the two parts of the Talmud? Mishnah and Gemara
4. What sorts of things does the Talmud explore? seasonal festivals, rights of the poor, marriage and divorce, criminal law, etc.
We now have a basic understanding of what the Jewish sacred texts actually are...

**Students learn about:**
- Sacred Texts and Writings
- the Hebrew Scriptures
  - the Hebrew Bible
  - the Talmud

**Students learn to:**
- identify the importance of the:
  - the Hebrew Bible
  - the Talmud
- examine extracts from the Hebrew Scriptures which demonstrate the principal beliefs of Judaism
We now have a basic understanding of what the Jewish sacred texts actually are...

We can move onto here!

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Students learn to: identify the importance of the:

- the Hebrew Bible
- the Talmud

Addressed Outcomes:
P6 selects and uses relevant information...
P7 undertakes effective research about religion...
P3 investigates religious traditions and belief systems

P4 examines significant aspects of religious traditions
P9 effectively communicates info.

1. INTERVIEW A JEW
Excursion to the Great Synagogue, Sydney or in-class visit by a Jewish adherent to outline the importance of both the Hebrew Bible and Talmud to the Jewish faith. Questions should be encouraged.

2. IN-CLASS DEBRIEF
After the visit, students form small discussion groups in class to share what they learnt, took down in notes or perhaps share pamphlets collected at the Synagogue. Class to then re-group and have an informal discussion about what was learnt, and to address any further questions. Further written material should be distributed to students.

3. PRACTICE EXAM QUESTION
Students should be told next lesson that they will answer a question under exam conditions as part of informal assessment. Question could be: “Identify the importance of the books of the Tanakh in the life of modern-day adherents of Judaism”.

THIS TASK WOULD BE MOST SUITED AFTER AT LEAST 3 INTRODUCTORY LESSONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE TALMUD
## WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

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<th>Sacred Book in Tanakh</th>
<th>Importance</th>
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| **Torah**             | • Torah is the most important part of the Tanakh because it contains the expression of the **Covenant between God and the people of Israel.**  
• **Sets out the law** which Jewish people are obliged to follow.  
• **613 mitzvot** regulate all aspects of the day to day life  
• The highest mitzvot is the study of the Torah. |
| **Nevi’im**           | • Nev’iim contains the books of the Prophets. **Prophets remind Jewish people of the importance of remaining faithful to the Covenant.** |
| **Ketuvim**           | • The most significant parts of the Ketuvim are the books of Psalms and Proverbs.  
• The book of Psalms contains a mix of hymns of praise and lament. They are extremely important for their role in adherents’ worship and prayer.  
• The Proverbs are collections of short pithy statements expressing practical wisdom that adherents can turn to in personal prayer. |
Students learn to: examine extracts from the Hebrew Scriptures which demonstrate the principal beliefs of Judaism

Addressed Outcomes:
P6 selects and uses relevant information...
P7 undertakes effective research about religion...
P3 investigates religious traditions and belief systems

CREATION OF A CLASS WIKI

1. Each student in class allocated one previously studied principal belief (eg. the Covenant, Moral Law, God is pure spirit, etc).
2. Independent Research (scaffolded) on where the principal belief appears in Hebrew Scriptures (More than one lesson & personal study time).
3. Each student creates and uploads a half page summary.
4. From the information on the wiki, students compile personal notes in their preferred form (table, visual representation, written...)

PRECEEDING THIS TASK WOULD BE A REVISION OF THE KEY PRINCIPAL BELIEFS OF JUDAISM. THE TASK WOULD SPAN OVER SEVERAL LESSONS AND BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH NOTES AND CLASS DISCUSSION.
## WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

<table>
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| Covenant                | • *Genesis chapter 17* - the Covenant with Abraham.  
                          • God promises that Abraham will become "the father of a host of nations" (*Genesis 17:4*).  
                          • The Covenant also includes the promise of land  
                          • "I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now staying, the whole land of Canaan as a permanent possession" (*Genesis 17:8*). |
| God is Eternal          | "It was I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens; I gave the order to all their host" (*Isaiah 45:12*).  
                          • Affirms the role of God as creator.  
                          • Reminds the Jewish people of the eternal character of God during a time when they were suffering in exile. |

YOU MUST GO HERE:
SOR I & II: Comprehensive Guide and Notes

YOU REALLY SHOULD GO HERE:
Education Website of the Jewish Board of Deputies in NSW:
Teacher Resources.

YOU SHOULD GO HERE:
Complete Guide

YOU COULD GO HERE:
Textbook Option