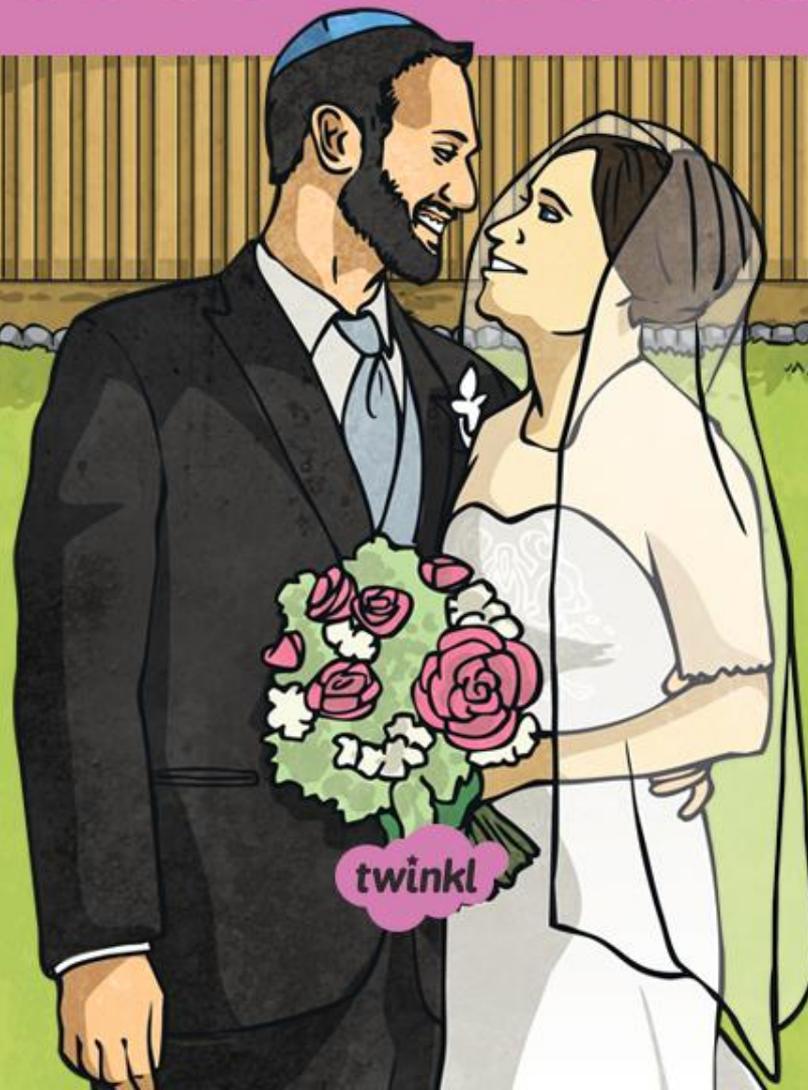


A Jewish Wedding



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A Jewish wedding is a great celebration of joy and happiness. It unites two people together in front of God and all their friends and family. There are many traditions in a Jewish wedding ceremony and during the weeks before the actual day.



The Bride and Groom

Traditionally, Jewish parents had help from a matchmaker called a 'shadchan'.

The 'shadchan' would suggest a suitable match for a girl or boy.

The groom would then ask the bride's father if he could marry his daughter.



The groom is the chatan which is Hebrew for 'groom' and the bride is the kallah.

Did You Know...?

Tena'im

When the engagement is agreed, there is a special ceremony. This is known as 'tena'im'. This ceremony includes the breaking of a plate to represent the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem as mentioned in the Jewish Bible.



The purpose is to remind those present that even in the joy of the celebration, there is sadness for the loss of the temples in Jerusalem.

Aufruf

Traditionally, the bride and groom do not see one another in the week before the wedding day.

There will be a ceremony called 'Aufruf' where the groom will go to the synagogue and take part in the service. During this service, sweets are showered on him and then food and drink are served to continue the celebrations.



A synagogue is a Jewish place of worship.

Mikveh

Often, a Jewish bride-to-be will take part in a ritual bath called the 'mikveh'. As the bride-to-be enters the water, she says a special prayer. Traditionally, this represented her being spiritually cleansed before beginning the marriage.



Kabbalat Panim

On the day of the wedding, the bride and groom will traditionally fast. This is to show that they have cleansed themselves of all past mistakes and are entering into the marriage in a pure state.

The groom will wear black tie or morning suit and the bride will wear a white wedding dress.

Before the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom will usually greet their guests separately, which is called 'Kabbalat Panim'. The bride will be seated on a throne; the groom will stand and be surrounded by the guests who will raise a toast to him.

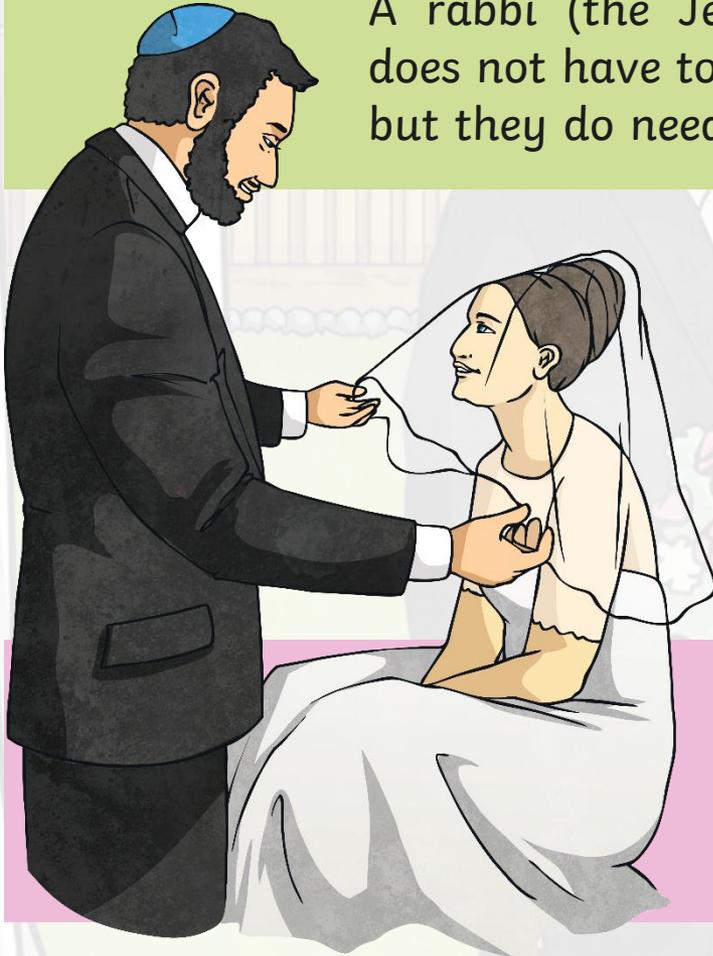
Did You Know...?



The wedding day can be held on any day except between sunset on a Friday and before sunset on the Saturday, as this is the Jewish Sabbath.

Bedeken

A rabbi (the Jewish spiritual leader) does not have to conduct the ceremony but they do need to supervise it.



Bedeken is the part of the ceremony where the groom places a veil over the bride's face. Traditionally, this showed the groom's promise to clothe and protect his wife.

In the Torah, there is a passage that explains how when a lady called Rebecca married Isaac, she covered her face before the wedding.

Chuppah

The ceremony takes place beneath the chuppah. This is a small, white canopy and represents the home the couple will share together.

Traditionally, the bride walks to the chuppah with her father. She then walks around the groom seven times. Seven is a symbolic number in the Jewish faith. It represents the completeness which the couple will find together.

Traditionally, the ceremony beneath the chuppah takes place outdoors but it can also take place indoors.



The Wedding Ceremony

The groom then gives the bride a gold ring. It should be a plain band with no stones or patterns. This represents the simple beauty of married life.



As he gives the ring to the bride, the groom says, **“Behold you are betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel.”**

The bride and groom then sign the ‘ketubah’. This is a marriage contract and explains the groom’s responsibilities to look after and care for his wife. It is signed in front of four witnesses.



Blessing the Marriage

The rabbi or person conducting the ceremony, will then bless the couple's future. The ceremony ends when the groom stamps on a glass. This is a time when Jews remember how Jerusalem was destroyed in the past.

Guests will shout, "Mazel Tov!" which means congratulations or good fortune.

The bride and groom are then taken to a private room, where they have some time together and eat something for the first time that day.

They will then rejoin their guests and celebrate with a special meal, music and dancing.

