



Scottish Council of  
Jewish Communities

## A GUIDE TO **'JOES BOXES'**



**'Jewish Objects for Education in Scotland'**  
resource boxes  
for education about Judaism in schools



**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC 029438

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## ABOUT SCoJeC

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. SCoJeC advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, by providing information and assistance to educational, health, and welfare organisations, representing the Jewish community in Scotland to Government and other statutory and official bodies, and liaising with Ministers, MSPs, Churches, Trades Unions, and others on matters affecting the Jewish community.



SCoJeC also provides a support network for the smaller communities and for individuals and families who live outwith or are not connected with any Jewish community, and assists organisations within the Scottish Jewish community to comply with various regulatory requirements, and promotes dialogue and understanding between the Jewish community and other communities in Scotland, and works in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders to promote equality, good relations, and understanding among community groups.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge our thanks to Joe Goldblatt for the enthusiasm with which he undertook the sourcing of 32 sets of artefacts for the boxes. Various individuals and organisations on both sides of the Atlantic have contributed so generously, and we have honoured them on the inside back cover. We would also like to thank Joe Walker, Senior Education Officer for Religious and Moral Education at Education Scotland for his advice and support. It is fitting serendipity that they are immortalised by the acronym for “Jewish Objects for Education in Scotland”.

The vision for an educational resource that is “positive, memorable, and educational – in that order of importance” is that of our Education and Community Development Worker, Zoe Jacobs, who is also responsible for this Guide.

For those using the resource, I commend Zoe’s objectives for her own school visits: “It is vital that young people come out of the session having enjoyed it, and associating Judaism and Jewish people with something fun and interesting. I’d also like it to be memorable, so when a few weeks later the teacher refers to our visit, the children remember it as a real highlight. And lastly, I would, of course, be quite pleased if they learnt something from it!”

Our thanks to them all.

*Ephraim Borowski, Director*

*Scottish Council of Jewish Communities – January 2016*

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### Note:

*These are articles of religious significance and should be treated with respect. If an artefact is damaged, especially the Torah and siddur, please return it to us so we can dispose of it in the appropriate manner. Thank you for your understanding.*

## THE ARTEFACTS: CONTENTS

A web version of this booklet with additional resources designed to facilitate pupils' own research, is available from [www.scojec.org/joesboxes.html](http://www.scojec.org/joesboxes.html).

| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Quantity in box*</b> | <b>Usage</b>                   | <b>see page</b> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Shabbat candlesticks</b>                                   | <b>1 pair</b>           | <i>Shabbat</i>                 | 4               |
| <b>Kiddush cup</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Shabbat</i>                 | 4               |
| <b>Challah cover</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Shabbat</i>                 | 4               |
| <b>Havdalah candle</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Shabbat: Havdalah</i>       | 4               |
| <b>Spice bag</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Shabbat: Havdalah</i>       | 4               |
| <b>Shofar (online resource)</b>                               | <b>n/a</b>              | <i>Festival: Rosh HaShanah</i> | 5               |
| <b>Online resource</b>  | <b>n/a</b>              | <i>Festival: Yom Kippur</i>    | 5               |
| <b>Sukkah (online resource)</b>                               | <b>n/a</b>              | <i>Festival: Sukkot</i>        | 5               |
| <b>Flag</b>   | <b>1</b>                | <i>Festival: Simchat Torah</i> | 5               |
| <b>Chanukiah (including pack of chanukah candles)</b>         | <b>1</b>                | <i>Festival: Chanukah</i>      | 5               |
| <b>Dreidel</b>  | <b>3</b>                | <i>Festival: Chanukah</i>      | 6               |
| <b>Greggor</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Festival: Purim</i>         | 6               |
| <b>Seder Plate</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <i>Festival: Pesach</i>        | 7               |
| <b>Online resource</b>  | <b>n/a</b>              | <i>Festival: Shavuot</i>       | 7               |
| <b>Torah (including Velcro tie, fabric cover, and ribbon)</b> | <b>1</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 8               |
| <b>Kippa</b>  | <b>2</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 8               |
| <b>Tallit</b>   | <b>1</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 9               |
| <b>Mezuzah + shema print-out</b>                              | <b>1</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 9               |
| <b>Siddur</b>   | <b>1</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 9               |
| <b>Tzedakah Box</b>   | <b>1</b>                | <i>Daily Life</i>              | 9               |

\* Please note that the actual artefact in the box may not be identical with that shown.

## SHABBAT

### **Candle Sticks**

The Shabbat candles are lit every Friday evening at the start of Shabbat – the Jewish Sabbath and day of rest. In the Torah, the Jewish Bible, it tells the story of Creation: God works for six days and rests on the seventh, and thus the Jewish people work for six days and on Shabbat, the seventh day, they rest.

The Creation story also describes each day with the words, “it was evening and it was morning, the first/second/third/etc day”. So in Judaism days start in the evening, and Shabbat runs from Friday evening until Saturday evening.

Shabbat is traditionally very important in Judaism, and is a chance for the family to be together, enjoy each other’s company, reflect on the week, and enjoy a celebratory meal which is preceded by a short ceremony to welcome Shabbat into the home. This involves lighting two candles to represent the two slightly different versions of the commandment of Shabbat in Exodus and in Deuteronomy: (i) to remember it, and (ii) to keep it holy.

Some families have the custom of adding an extra candle for each child to symbolise the light children bring into the world. After lighting the candles, the meal starts with *Kiddush* (thanksgiving recited over wine) and eating special bread, *challah*.



### **Kiddush Cup**

The Kiddush cup is the cup from which we drink Kiddush wine. “*Kiddush*” literally means “sanctification” – setting apart or making holy. Shabbat is set apart from the rest of the week as a special, holy day to rest. We say a short prayer before drinking the wine, to give thanks for the wine itself, and for Shabbat.



### **Challah**

*Challah* is a special loaf of bread eaten as part of the welcoming of Shabbat.

We have two loaves of bread on the Shabbat table to remember the biblical story of the Jews in the wilderness after the Exodus, who received a miraculous supply of manna every day, but on Friday received double the amount so it would last throughout Shabbat, the day of rest. The loaves are often plaited or circular.

We cover the *challah*, often with a decorative cloth, while saying Shabbat prayers, and then uncover it, and say a short prayer of thanksgiving before eating it.



### **Havdalah set**

Just as we welcome Shabbat with a ceremony, we bid it farewell with a ceremony, called *Havdalah* (“separation”), on Saturday evening when it is dark enough to see three stars in the sky. We light a special candle with several wicks (usually plaited), drink wine, and smell spices which represent the sweetness of Shabbat – by smelling them and breathing them in we represent our hope of taking some of the sweetness of Shabbat into the week ahead. We say four short prayers of thanksgiving: for the wine, the spices, the candle, and for the difference between Shabbat and the rest of the week.



## FESTIVALS

### **Rosh HaShanah: See Online Resources**

The *shofar* (not included) is a hollowed out ram's horn. It is blown 100 times during the service on the Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah*, and once at the end of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. It is a call to prayer, a loud, beautiful noise of an alarm call reminding us of the importance of the day. There are three different calls of the shofar: *tekiah* (one long blast), *shevarim* (at least 3 medium blasts), *teruah* (at least 9 short blasts). The shofar is blown like a brass instrument – by blowing a raspberry into the mouthpiece.



See our online resources for suggestions about how to make and use a shofar.

### **Yom Kippur: See Online Resources**

Yom Kippur is the 'Day of Atonement', ten days after Rosh Hashanah. On Yom Kippur Jewish people fast for 25 hours, spend the majority of the day in the synagogue, and think about the errors they made in the past year, and how they can make better choices next year. It is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

### **Sukkah: See Online Resources**

*Sukkot* ("Tabernacles") is the seven-day harvest festival celebrated in the autumn. At Sukkot we remember the Jewish people as they travelled through the desert having escaped Egypt. They travelled for 40 years without permanent shelter, putting up a temporary dwelling called a *sukkah* whenever they stopped. At Sukkot, Jewish families traditionally build a sukkah in their garden and eat and sleep in it.



The sukkah is often made of natural materials and has a roof made of leaves and branches. Although this should be thick enough to form a proper cover, many people have the custom to leave gaps to see the stars. In some Jewish denominations, there is specific focus on helping homeless charities at this time as we are able to empathise with their need for shelter and safety.

There isn't room for a sukkah in the box, but it's an easy for children to make one using a cardboard box and leaves or branches. See our online resources for more information.

### **Simchat Torah: Flag**

The end of Sukkot is technically a separate festival called *Simchat Torah* – "Celebration for the *Torah*" (see "*Torah*" below). Simchat Torah is celebrated by parading the Torah around the synagogue 7 times, usually accompanied by singing, dancing, and waving flags. We then read the very last portion of the Torah, and immediately return to the beginning and read the first chapters, beginning the cycle again so that there is no break in its continuity.



## Chanukah: Chanukiah

The *chanukiah* is a candelabrum (also called a *menorah*) used at the festival of Chanukah – a festival of lights, celebrated for eight days in December.



At Chanukah we remember the story of the Maccabees. After the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was split. Israel came under the rule of the Syrian faction and their king, Antiochus. He conquered the country, installed Greek idols in the Temple, and decreed that Jewish people were forbidden to practice their Judaism. Fighting for religious freedom, the Maccabees defeated the King's troops, reclaimed the Temple, and enabled Jewish people to worship there again. However, the *Ner Tamid* – the eternal flame – had been extinguished, and only a very small amount of oil was left. Miraculously, this oil lasted for eight days until new supplies could be obtained, and thus the Chanukiah has eight lights to remember the miracle. There is one additional candle, either in the middle or standing out in some way from the others, called the *Shamash* ("attendant") that is used to light the other candles. On the first night of Chanukah, it is used to light a single candle, on the second night two candles, on the third night three, etc, until all eight candles are lit on the last night. We add candles from right to left (the same direction in which Hebrew is written), but light them left to right, so that the first candle to be lit is the new one.

We also eat *latkes*, potato pancakes, deep fried to commemorate the miracle of the oil lasting eight days. Doughnuts and other fried products have also become a popular Chanukah food. Recipes for latkes can be found in our online resources.

Traditionally, Chanukah is a relatively minor festival but because it happens to fall during the "festive season", new traditions such as giving and receiving presents are common.



## Chanukah: Dreidel

A *dreidel* is a spinning top that is used in a game traditionally played at Chanukah. When it was forbidden to practice Judaism the Maccabees studied Torah in secret, but if anyone saw them they would pretend to be playing with dreidels. We remember the persecution they suffered by playing dreidel today.

On each of the 4 sides of the dreidel there is a Hebrew letter:

|        |                                   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Nun    | נ                                 |
| Gimmel | ג (looks similar but with a tail) |
| Hay    | ה                                 |
| Shin   | ש                                 |



standing for the Hebrew phrase "*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*" which means "a great miracle happened there". In Israel, dreidels have one letter different to create the phrase "*Nes Gadol Hayah Po*" – a great miracle happened here – as the Temple was in Jerusalem in Israel.

The dreidel is used to play a game of luck, where small items (sultanas, chocolate coins, etc) are won and lost: each player starts the game with a small pile of items, and there is a larger pile in the middle. Each player takes turns to spin the dreidel and carry out an action: landing on Gimmel means you take everything that is in the middle, landing on Nun means nothing happens, landing on Shin requires you to put in half of your portion, and Hay means you take half of the middle portion. While there are many variations to the rules, these are one of the simplest options. The player who ends up with all the items wins! (Beware, this can take a long time!)

See our online resources for more information on how to play dreidel.

### **Purim: Gregger**

The *gregger* is a rattle, often the same style as a football rattle, used at the festival of Purim. At Purim we read the story, the *Megillah*, of Esther. In ancient Persia the Prime Minister, Haman, persuaded the King to pass a law to kill all the Jews. The King was married to a woman named Esther, who was Jewish but hadn't told the King or Haman.



When she heard the plan, she bravely stood up to the King, told him the truth about her heritage and about Haman's planned genocide, and helped the King realise that he had been misled. As a result, Haman was hanged and the Jewish people survived.

At Purim, Jews go to synagogue to hear the story read from a parchment scroll (the *Megillah*). They wear fancy dress, commemorating the part of the story where Mordechai, the uncle of Esther, is dressed in the King's garments. The story is often told in a pantomime-like fashion, where people greet Haman's name by booing, stamping their feet, and using the *gregger* in the hope of wiping out the sound of his name. It is a particularly positive and vibrant atmosphere.

As well as reading the *Megillah*, Purim is observed by giving gifts to friends, charity to the poor, and (of course) eating a hearty meal.

### **Pesach: Seder plate**

The *Seder plate* is used at the festival of *Pesach* (Passover), which lasts 7 or 8 days, in the spring, usually in April. *Pesach* commemorates the Exodus from Egypt when the Jewish people, who had been enslaved by Pharaoh, escaped, and crossed the Red Sea into the desert. During the whole week, we only eat *matzah* (unleavened flat bread) and all fermented grain products, such as bread or beer, are prohibited, in order to remember the hurry in which the Jewish people left Egypt, with no time to let their bread rise.

On the first two nights of Passover, Jewish people attend a *Seder* (meaning "order" because there is a standard sequence), a special meal that includes the telling of the exodus story using special foods to dramatise aspects of the story. At different parts of the ceremony we drink four cups of wine and three pieces of *matzah*.

The *Seder plate* is used to present the various foods used to represent and commemorate different aspects of the exodus story. The plate will have separate segments that contain the following foods:



- *Maror*: a bitter herb, often horseradish, to represent the bitterness of slavery
- *Karpas*: a green herb, often parsley, which represents springtime. It is dipped in ...
- Salt water, which represents the tears of the slaves.
- *Charoset*: a paste of chopped apples, dates, raisins, and grape juice (recipes vary between families, countries, traditions etc!) to represent the mortar used by the slaves.
- Bone: a small meat bone representing the lamb sacrificed by the Jews in Egypt for their last meal before the Exodus.
- Egg: a burnt egg representing the sacrifice that was offered at the Temple at Passover, and also, because an egg is round, a general symbol of renewal.

See our online resources for more information on how to make these in the classroom.

## Shavuot: See Online Resources

*Shavuot* (meaning “Weeks”, because it falls seven weeks after Passover) commemorates the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is the second harvest festival in the Jewish calendar. It is often celebrated by eating dairy products, remembering the description of Israel as “a land flowing with milk and honey”, and many Jewish people spend the whole night studying the Torah.



## DAILY LIFE

### Torah scroll

The *Torah* (meaning “teaching” or “instruction”) is the Jewish Bible, and contains the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It tells stories from the creation of the world through the generations until the end of Moses’ life. The last part of the Torah tells of Moses looking over Israel, the land he has brought the Jewish people to. Moses dies before the Jewish people go into Israel.

Some Jews believe the Torah is the word of God and regard the laws in it (traditionally 613) as binding and unalterable; others take guidance from it and the stories in it, believing it to be inspired by God but written by people. We read one portion of the Torah every Saturday morning during the synagogue service, so that by the end of the year we have read the entire text.

The Torah is written by scribes, who must not make any mistakes at all! They write with a quill on parchment made from animal skin, which is sewn together piece by piece. Each end of the scroll is then sewn on to a wooden rod, and the parchment is wound around these. The Torah is decorated with a fabric cover (traditional in European communities) or wooden or metal case (traditional in Oriental communities), bells and a silver breast plate – these show the importance and specialness of the Torah and also recall the decorations worn by High Priests in the Temple. See our online resources for instructions on how to make your own Torah.



### Mezuzah

A *mezuzah* is a small parchment scroll with the words of the Shema that is fixed to the doorpost, usually in a decorative case. In the Shema it says that there is only one God, and that we should always remember this. It says we should “write it on the doorposts of your home and on your gates” – so we do! The prayer is written on parchment by a scribe, and then put in a case. The case is then nailed to the doorframe of every door in a Jewish house, particularly the front door. There is a special ceremony when a Jewish person moves house and puts up their first mezuzah.



### Kippah

The *kippah* (meaning “cover”; also called by the Yiddish term *yarmulkeh*) is a head covering worn by Jewish men and some Jewish women. In most communities it is worn in synagogue or during prayers, and many Jews choose to wear a kippah all the time. It is a sign of respect, recognising that God is above us. *Kippot* come in many different shapes, sizes and colours, inspired by the different cultures and countries across the world.



### Tallit

A *tallit* is a prayer shawl worn by Jewish men and by women in some denominations. It is a rectangular piece of fabric with tassels at each corner. The way the knots and loops of the tassels are tied is intended as a reminder of the 613 commandments.

The *shema* is one of the most important prayers in Judaism. It consists of three paragraphs of the Torah and, amongst other things, it commands Jewish people to put tassels called *tzitzit* on any garment with four corners. Some Jewish people wear tzitzit on a small tallit under their clothes every day, while others choose to wear them on a tallit only while praying. Tallitot are often black and white or blue and white, and are usually made of silk or wool. Jewish men and some Jewish women are buried in a tallit. See our online resources for instructions on how to tie your own tzitzit.



### Magen David

The “Star of David” is an ancient Jewish symbol, although nobody knows why. It appears in archaeological remains and on the modern Israeli flag and many other Jewish and Israeli symbols, such as the *Magen David Adom* (“the red Star of David), the Israeli equivalent of the Red Cross. Many Jewish people wear a Magen David on a necklace.



### Siddur

The *siddur* (meaning “order”, as in “order of service”) is a prayer book used during services at the synagogue and at home. The prayers are written in Hebrew, though often there is a translation, and some Jewish denominations recite the prayers in the language of the country. The Siddur contains daily prayers, prayers read at the synagogue, in the home, on Shabbat, and on festivals.



### Tzedakah boxes

“*Tzedakah*” means “justice” or “righteousness”, but is often translated as “charity”. It is mandatory for Jewish people to give to charity, and traditionally Jewish people should give at least a tenth of their earnings to those less fortunate than themselves. Many families put money in a tzedakah box before Shabbat, to remember those who cannot afford a good meal, and in the hope that one day there will be a Shabbat when no one is in need.



## APPENDIX: Calendar of Jewish festivals

| Festival                                |            | (Secular year /Jewish year)<br>2016 / 5776 | 2017 / 5777              | 2018 / 5778              | 2019 / 5779              | 2020 / 5780              |
|---|------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Purim</b>                            |            | Thu 24 Mar                                 | Sun 12 Mar               | Thu 1 Mar                | Thu 21 Mar               | Tue 10 Mar               |
| <b>Pesach</b><br>(Passover)             | from<br>to | Sat 23 Apr<br>Sat 30 Apr                   | Tue 11 Apr<br>Tue 18 Apr | Sat 31 Mar<br>Sat 7 Apr  | Sat 20 Apr<br>Sat 27 Apr | Thu 9 Apr<br>Thu 16 Apr  |
| <b>Shavuot</b><br>(Pentecost)           | from<br>to | Sun 12 Jun<br>Mon 13 Jun                   | Wed 31 May<br>Thu 1 Jun  | Sun 20 May<br>Mon 21May  | Sun 9 Jun<br>Mon 10 Jun  | Fri 29 May<br>Sat 30 May |
| <b>Tisha b'Av</b><br>(Fast of Av)       |            | Sun 14 Aug                                 | Tue 1 Aug                | Sun 22 Jul               | Sun 11 Aug               | Thu 30 Jul               |
| <b>Rosh HaShanah</b><br>(New Year)      | from<br>to | Mon 3 Oct<br>Tue 4 Oct                     | Thu 21 Sep<br>Fri 22 Sep | Mon 10 Sep<br>Tue 11 Sep | Mon 30 Sep<br>Tue 1 Oct  | Sat 19 Sep<br>Sun 20 Sep |
| <b>Yom Kippur</b><br>(Day of Atonement) |            | Wed 12 Oct                                 | Sat 30 Sep               | Wed 19 Sep               | Wed 9 Oct                | Mon 28 Sep               |
| <b>Succot</b><br>(Tabernacles)          | from       | Mon 17 Oct                                 | Thu 5 Oct                | Mon 24 Sep               | Mon 14 Oct               | Sat 3 Oct                |
| <b>Simchat Torah</b>                    | to         | Tue 25 Oct                                 | Fri 13 Oct               | Tue 2 Oct                | Tue 22 Oct               | Sun 11 Oct               |
| <b>Chanukah</b>                         | from<br>to | Sat 24 Dec<br>Sun 1 Jan                    | Tue 12 Dec<br>Wed 20 Dec | Sun 2 Dec<br>Mon 10 Dec  | Sun 22 Dec<br>Mon 30 Dec | Thu 10 Dec<br>Fri 18 Dec |

***NB: All the above begin at sunset on the evening before the date shown.***

### **NOTES**

The Jewish calendar counts years from the Creation, which, according to the Biblical account, would correspond to 3760 BCE in the secular calendar. Consequently, the year 2015–16 corresponds to the Jewish year 5776.

The Jewish calendar is based on lunar months, so the dates of festivals in the secular calendar change each year. With a system of leap years, we ensure festivals stay in the same season.

Jewish Law prohibits ‘work’ on Shabbat and Festivals. In Orthodox Jewry, this is interpreted as any kind of creative activity, writing, spending or handling money, operating equipment (even a telephone), travelling (other than on foot), engaging in commercial transactions, sitting examinations, and many other activities that may not be considered as “work” in ordinary conversation. Reform and Liberal Jews reinterpret ‘work’ in a more modern sense, and will often drive, use technology, and cook on Shabbat. All these rules *must* be set aside in order to save a life.

## Acknowledgements:

### JOES Boxes Honour Roll of Donors

(as of 16 November 2016)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) would like the following people for their assistance with “JOES Boxes”, an educational resource to increase the quality of Jewish education, deepen understanding, and make abstract ideas and people, real and living.

Prof Joe Goldblatt, who championed the boxes and enthusiastically sourced many of the items, commented: "The Pirke Avot teaches us that whilst we are not expected to complete the work we are neither free to refrain from starting the task. The *Jewish Objects for Education in Scotland* programme was launched in 2015 to combat antisemitic behaviour in Scotland through education.

Thanks to the strong and generous support from our donors in North America, Scotland, and beyond, this pioneering new programme has grown from strength to strength. We thank you for helping us start this important work and please accept our heartfelt thanks for you sharing your time and treasure. Through education we believe we are together building a more just world, one child at a time."

|                                 |                             |                                |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sandra Aaron                    | JHub                        | Shari Press                    |
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| Ricky Hogg                      | Mary and Joseph Niedzwiecki | Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers      |
| Lorna Jacobs                    | Marsha and David Perman     |                                |

In some cases, we couldn't source enough original Jewish artefacts. So, with the generosity and artistic skills of the children of Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community, and Interfaith volunteers from Falkirk, we created our own Tzedakah Boxes and Kiddush Cups. In many Jewish families, items that have been decorated by their children, often at a Cheder (Hebrew classes) are indeed used in place of more traditional items, as they have a greater personal connection. We thank everyone who offered their time and skills in helping us create these items.



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