



Exodus Magazine Holiday Companion

SHAVUOT

May 21 – 23, 2026



For JRCC community events, Passover info and an online version of this guide, visit jrcc.org/shavuot, or scan this QR code →

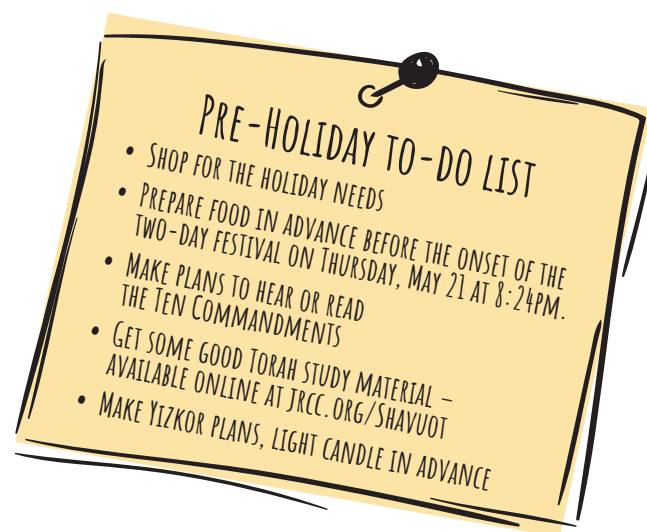


What is Shavuot?

Shavuot, which translates as “weeks,” celebrates the completion of the seven-week Omer counting period following Passover, and commemorates the day of the receiving of the Torah over 3,300 years ago. According to Jewish tradition, each year the Torah is given anew, and we prepare and celebrate accordingly in order to receive it.

Some Shavuot Customs:

- All night learning on the first night of Shavuot (Sunday night)
- Hear the reading of the Ten Commandments on the first day of Shavuot (Monday), preferable in synagogue
- Eat dairy foods – traditional cheese blintzes, quiches, casseroles and more (kids like ice cream)
- Read the Book of Ruth, since King David, whose passing occurred on this day, was a descendant of Ruth
- Decorate their homes (and synagogues) with flowers and sweet-smelling plants



Shabbat and Shavuot Candle Lighting

Shabbat and Holiday candles are lit by women and girls.

On the second evening of consecutive holy days, light from a pre-existing flame. Light a 48-hour candle before the onset of the festival (yom tov) on the first evening to be used for this purpose.

Candle Lighting times:

- Thursday, May 21 at 8:24pm
- Friday, May 22 at 8:25pm, *from a pre-existing flame*



Shabbat and Shavuot Eruv Tavshilin

When a festival day (Yom Tov) falls on a Friday – as Shavuot does this year – an “eruv tavshilin” (i.e., bread and some food for at least one “meal” that is set aside in advance for Shabbat) must be prepared prior to the festival, so that it should be permitted to prepare food for Shabbat during the festival.

For details, consult your prayerbook.



We're Here to Help. The JRCC is here to assist with all your Shavuot needs. See the back page for a variety of JRCC Shavuot programs and services being offered. For assistance in making your Shavuot plans or any other assistance, visit jrcc.org/Shavuot or contact the JRCC.



Ten Things The Torah is Compared To

Water. Torah quenches our thirst. Just as a fish cannot live out of the water, so too the Jewish nation, and the world at large, cannot exist without the Torah.

Wine. Torah gladdens the heart, and it becomes better with age.

Oil. Torah brings light into the world. And just as with olive oil, the more it is crushed the better it becomes, so too the more you go over any topic in Torah, the better the understanding becomes.

Light. Torah enlightens the person, shines a light regarding what we should do, and brings light into the world.

Milk. Just as milk keeps best in cheap utensils and spoils quickly in silver or golden utensils, so too the Torah remains with humble people and is repelled by the arrogant.

Honey. Torah is sweet like honey. And just as honey originates from a source that is not kosher (the bee) yet becomes kosher, the Torah can also elevate and purify us even when we are spiritually low. Also, like the bee, the Torah is a source of great sweetness, but sometimes it can sting.

Bread. Torah is food for the soul.

Fire. Torah is mystical and magical, and can be used to fuel your growth.

Bee. Torah can produce sweetness, but it can also sting sometimes.

Rain. Torah descends from above. And just as a steady rain can erode even a hard rock, so too diligence in Torah can soften even the hardest heart.

All Night Learning

When: Thursday night, May 21 - the first night of Shavuot

When the actual moment arrived to give the Torah, the Israelites were sleeping. Mystical teachings explain that it was an intentional attempt to connect to the subconscious, transcendent self in preparation for revelation of divine wisdom. Ultimately, it was not the right approach, so to rectify it we spend the entire first night of Shavuot studying Torah.

📄 Download and print some texts to study at jrcc.org/Torah



Yizkor

When: Shabbat, May 23

Yizkor is the remembrance prayer for departed loved ones, where we implore G-d to remember the souls of our relatives and friends that have passed on. The main component of Yizkor is our private pledge to give charity following the holiday in honor of the deceased. By giving charity, we are performing a positive physical deed in this world, something that the departed can no longer do, especially if our good deeds emulate theirs. Yizkor renews and strengthens the connection between us and our loved one, brings merit to the departed souls, and elevates them in their celestial homes.



Children and Shavuot

When G-d was about to give the Torah, He demanded guarantors who would ensure it would be purely preserved and authentically transmitted. The people made a number of suggestions – including their ancestors and their prophets – all of whom were rejected. When they declared, “Our children will be our guarantors,”

Why were the children chosen as the guarantors? There are many reasons given. Perhaps one of them is that children live in the present. They don’t dwell too much on the past, which hardly exists for them, or the future, which seems distant. To succeed in living a well-lived life according to the Torah’s vision, we need to focus the majority of our energy on the here and now – not to get overly obsessed with past regrets or reflections, or drawn too much into future plans. Both are necessary in moderation, but the real gift of life is developing the ability to live in the here and now – which sometimes required the simplicity of children, and the ability to tap into the inner child.

Bring your kids to hear the Ten Commandments in synagogue on the first day of Shavuot (Friday, May 22).

📄 Find great Shavuot content for children at jrcc.org/Kids



One Time

At Sinai, unlike the other experiences in the wilderness, the Israelites experienced an unprecedented level of unity – “as one man, with one heart” as the Sages teach. By virtue of this unity they received the Torah. In a sense, this is the purpose for which the Torah was given, to bring peace to the world – peace between people and within people, peace between materialism and spirituality.

Differences need not separate and divide. They complement and supplement one another. And on the soul level, we are all one, as the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, writes in Tanya, chapter 32. Joining and harmonizing the differing yet complementing aspects in everyone thus leads to a higher-ultimate-unity and perfection.

The Jewish people at Sinai sensed this ultimate and absolute unity joining them together. In that frame of mind, therefore, “as one man, with one mind,” they jointly desired and anticipated receiving the Torah, and that is when G-d gave it to them.

At Sinai, this was achieved temporarily. With the coming of Moshiach, it will become our regular state of being. Humanity will be occupied with attaining spiritual knowledge. By extension, since at the soul level we are all one, we will experience unity, and there will be no war or famine or strife.

We can help make that happen now by focusing on that which unites us, on the common denominator we all share, a Divine source and purpose, and help usher in the peace, prosperity and harmony we all need and crave.

📄 Learn more at jrcc.org/Moshiach

Shavuot concludes on Saturday, May 23 at 9:36pm.