



Jewish Community Relations Council Calendar of Major Jewish Holidays

JCRC
#12 Millstone Campus Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63146

MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS	GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNIZING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
<p>SHABBAT (shah bott'), the Jewish Sabbath, commemorates God's day of rest on the 7th day of creation. It is observed shortly before sunset on Friday to an hour after sunset on Saturday. Shabbat is a day to refrain from work and to spend in rest, prayer, and study for traditional Jews.</p>	<p>How to handle religion in the public school classroom is one of the most controversial issues in society today. The Jewish Community Relations Council recommends that all school districts have a written policy on the subject. The JCRC offers these guidelines:</p>
<p>ROSH HASHANAH (rosh' hah shah nah') marks the beginning of the Jewish year and begins a ten-day period of prayer and repentance, which ends on Yom Kippur. The holiday may be observed for one or two days.</p>	<p>1. It is important to teach <i>about</i> religion, but <i>not</i> teach religion itself. This distinction is critical. It is appropriate to acknowledge the role religion has played in history, civics, the arts and culture, and our lives in general. But this must be done in a secular manner. The approach should be academic, not devotional. Schools may make the students aware of religion, but not impose acceptance of religion. The classroom should promote study about the role of religion, but not sponsor the practice of religion.</p>
<p>YOM KIPPUR (yom kee poor') is the most solemn day of the Jewish year, observed by prayer, meditation, and fasting, and asking for God's forgiveness.</p>	<p>2. Sensitivity is crucial. The age, diversity, and sensitivities of the students must always be a prime consideration.</p>
<p>SUKKOT (soo kote') is a festival of thanksgiving, marked by erecting booths as Jews did in ancient times during the harvest. It may be observed for seven or eight days, but only the first two and last two days are full holidays. The last day is known as SHEMINI ATZERET (sheh min' ni atz air' et).</p>	<p>3. Context is everything. When determining the appropriateness of a classroom lesson or remark, some important factors to consider are the subject of the class, the age of the students, and not only <i>what</i> is said but also <i>how</i> it is said.</p>
<p>SIMCHAT TORAH (sim' chat to' rah) marks the completion of the yearly cycle of reading the first five books of the Bible, known as Torah, or Jewish law, and starting the cycle over again.</p>	<p>4. Religious holidays provide opportunities for teaching about religion, which may be appropriate during discussions of different cultures and communities in civics, geography, history, art or music. Teaching about the holidays is permissible, celebrating the holidays is not. Proselytizing or promoting or denigrating any religion is strictly prohibited.</p>
<p>PESACH (peh' sach), commonly called Passover, commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. It may be observed for seven or eight days, but only the first two and last two days are full holidays. On both of the first two nights, a special dinner called a seder is held to tell the story of the Exodus.</p>	<p>5. Information on religious holidays may focus on how and when they are celebrated, and their origins, histories, and generally agreed-upon meanings. If done objectively and sensitively, neither promoting nor inhibiting religion, the study of religious holidays can foster understanding and mutual respect.</p>
<p>SHAVUOT (shah voo ot') commemorates Moses receiving the Torah (law) from God on Mt. Sinai. It is often the day of confirmation (graduation) from weekend religious schools, usually while in the 10th grade in public school. It may be observed for one or two days.</p>	<p>6. Religious symbols may be used as a teaching aid if displayed temporarily as part of an academic program. Religious art, drama, music, or literature may also be permissible if it serves a sound educational curriculum, is not used as a vehicle for promoting religious belief, and does not dominate a play, concert, or presentation.</p>
<p>PURIM (pur' reem) commemorates the rescue of the Jews in ancient Persia from a plot to exterminate them, and celebrates religious freedom.</p>	<p><i>Adapted from "Religious Holidays in the Public Schools: Questions and Answers" published jointly by several national organizations.</i></p>
<p>YOM HA'SHOAH (yom' ha show' ah) is a day in memory of the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust.</p>	
<p>YOM HA'ATZMAUT (yom' ha atz' ma oot) is Israel Independence Day, celebrating the establishment of Israel in 1948.</p>	
<p>CHANUKAH (cha' nu kah), sometimes spelled "Hanukah," is the eight-night "festival of lights," marking the rededication of the second Temple after the Jews were victorious against the Syrians in 165 B.C.E.</p>	

OVERVIEW

This calendar is presented to help schools and employers in developing schedules so that members of the Jewish community will not miss significant opportunities because of their religious obligations. No person should be penalized because of his or her religious observances or beliefs.

This calendar can assist teachers and school administrators in scheduling events and activities such as tests, athletic events, performances, field trips, parent-teacher conferences, graduations, proms and open houses. Businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and legislative bodies may also find this calendar helpful when planning meetings and events.

During major Jewish holidays, work is traditionally prohibited. Some Jewish individuals will therefore not be at school or places of employment on these days. Most Jews observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and will be absent these "High Holy Days." Some branches of Judaism observe Rosh Hashanah for one day; others observe it for two days.

Jewish parents and students are asked to let school officials know in advance of planned absences for Jewish holidays. Educators are reminded that students should be given excused absences to meet their religious obligations, and that reasonable accommodations should be made to allow the student to make up lessons and assignments that are missed.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **JEWISH HOLIDAYS ALWAYS BEGIN SHORTLY BEFORE SUNSET THE EVENING BEFORE THE DATE NOTED, AND END AN HOUR AFTER SUNSET ON THE DATE NOTED.**
- The observance of Jewish Sabbath begins shortly before sunset each Friday and concludes an hour after sunset on Saturday.
- Jewish holidays fall on different dates each year because the Jewish calendar follows the lunar cycle.

JCRC CALENDAR OF MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS (2007-2011)

NOTE: HOLIDAYS BEGIN PRIOR TO SUNSET OF THE PRECEDING EVENING AND END AFTER SUNDOWN ON THE DATE NOTED.

<i>Spring Holidays</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Pesach (Passover)	Tue./Wed., Apr. 3, 4	Sun./Mon., Apr. 20, 21	Thu./Fri., Apr. 9, 10	Tue./Wed., Mar. 30, 31	Tue./Wed., Apr. 19, 20
Concluding Days of Pesach	Mon./Tue., Apr. 9, 10	Sat./Sun., Apr. 26, 27	Wed./Thu., Apr. 15, 16	Mon./Tue., Apr. 5, 6	Mon./Tue., Apr. 25, 26
Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)	Wed./Thu., May 23, 24	Mon./Tue., June 9, 10	Fri./Sat., May 29, 30	Wed./Thu., May 19, 20	Wed./Thu., June 8, 9

<i>Fall Holidays</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Rosh Hashanah (New Year)	Thu./Fri., Sept. 13, 14	Tue./Wed. Sept. 30, Oct. 1	Sat./Sun., Sept. 19, 20	Thu./Fri., Sept. 9, 10	Thu./Fri., Sept. 29, 30
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	Sat., Sept. 22	Thu., Oct. 9	Mon., Sept. 28	Sat., Sept. 18	Sat., Oct. 8
Sukkot (Harvest, Thanksgiving)	Thu./Fri., Sept. 27, 28	Tue./Wed. Oct. 14, 15	Sat./Sun., Oct. 3, 4	Thu./Fri., Sept. 23, 24	Thu./Fri., Oct. 13, 14
Shemini Atzeret (8th Day of Sukkot)	Thu., Oct. 4	Tue., Oct. 21	Sat., Oct. 10	Thu., Sept. 30	Thu., Oct. 20
Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Law)	Fri., Oct. 5	Wed., Oct. 22	Sun., Oct. 11	Fri., Oct. 1	Fri., Oct. 21

OBSERVANCE OF PURIM MAY INVOLVE SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE ON THE EVE OF THE HOLIDAY AND ON THE MORNING OF THE HOLIDAY ITSELF.

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Purim	Sun., Mar. 4	Fri., Mar. 21	Tue., Mar. 10	Sun., Feb. 28	Sun., Mar. 20

OBSERVANCE OF THE FOLLOWING JEWISH HOLIDAYS DOES NOT INCLUDE ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL OR WORK.

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)	Sun., Apr. 15	Fri., May 2	Tue., Apr. 21	Sun., Apr. 11	Sun., May 1
Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day)	Mon., Apr. 23	Thu., May 8	Wed., Apr. 29	Mon., Apr. 19	Mon., May 9
Chanukah	Wed., Dec. 5- Wed., Dec. 12	Mon., Dec. 22- Mon., Dec. 29	Fri., Dec. 11- Fri., Dec. 18	Wed., Dec. 1- Wed., Dec. 9	Tue., Dec. 20- Tue., Dec. 27

Jewish Community Relations Council

Phone: 314/442-3871, Fax: 314/989-1361