

Engaging Jewish People with the Gospel

By Stuart Rothberg

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 and be prepared to share your answers to these questions: Is it possible for a Jewish person to be saved apart from faith in the Lord Jesus? Does God have a plan of salvation for Jewish people that differs from His plan of salvation for Gentile people?

Assignment Two

Click on the following link to find out about the Jewish holy day known as “Yom Kippur” or “The Day of Atonement”. Take note of what the High Priest did on this day and be prepared to share about it in your group. <http://chosenpeople.com/main/index.php/holidays-and-festivals/630-yom-kippur>

Assignment Three

Read Leviticus 17:11 and be prepared to share your answers to these questions: What did God require and provide, in earlier days, for the sins of Jewish people so that they could be forgiven? How does this apply to them today? Does this apply to Jewish people as well as to Gentile people?

Scripture to Memorize

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16

Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will be more motivated and better equipped to share the Gospel of Messiah Jesus with their Jewish friends.

Stuart Rothberg is a Teaching Pastor at Sagemont Church in Houston. He and his wife, Sue, met while he was a missionary in Germany with the Navigators. They have three boys, Tim, Grant, and Ben, the most wonderful daughters-in-love in the world, Crystal, Carrie, and Rachel, and grandchildren who are a rich blessing from the Lord. Stuart is from a Jewish background and has served with Jews for Jesus in seeking to take the Gospel to Jewish people. After graduating with an M.Div. in Theology and an M.A. in Counseling, Stuart served in a variety of church roles and as Chaplain in the United States Army Reserves. His passion and privilege is helping people to see the wonders of God’s Word and to live by what it says. You can connect with Stuart at stuart.rothberg@sagemontchurch.org

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

A new family has recently moved into your neighborhood. Two of the family members are your age and have already become your friends. They seem normal enough. In fact, you have many interests in common with them. But you have noticed that they are also a bit different. You were invited over for lunch one day and found out some of the foods they ate were unrecognizable. One of the kids said she doesn't eat any pork products. And then there was the time when your new friends were absent from school for a holiday you never heard of called "Yom Kippur". You see, the family is Jewish and, though you admire their devotion to their culture and religious traditions, you know they need the Lord. Would you share your faith with them? If so, how?

On Your Own

In the space below write down some of the reasons why you might be reluctant to share your faith with a Jewish friend. When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now answer the questions, based on John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Is it possible for a Jewish person to be saved apart from faith in the Lord Jesus? Does God have a plan of salvation for Jewish people that differs from His plan of salvation for Gentile people?

Here are some reasons why we might be hesitant to share our faith with Jewish people:

- 1) They are saved another way. Not true. See John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
- 2) They know the Bible, especially the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures), much better than I do. Sadly, most don't. Many Jewish people rarely read the Old Testament.
- 3) They would be offended. Maybe, but some would listen and be saved.

Read Leviticus 23:27-32 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 27-32

One of the feasts (holy days) of Israel, as mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). It is the holiest day in the Jewish religious year. It is a time of serious reflection and repentance.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share with the group what he learned about what the High Priest did on this Day of Atonement.

Verse 27. the day of atonement. On this day the Jewish people would seek to make things right with God. They knew they had sinned in the previous year and this was a time to remove the guilt of their sin. Jewish people around the world still observe Yom Kippur today.

humble your souls. This is one of the things they were required to do on this solemn day of repentance. Today, many Jewish people fast in order to show God their sorrow for the sins they have committed.

present an offering. This is a second thing required of them on the Day of Atonement. The offering was the blood of a sacrificed animal. God is holy and demanded a penalty for sin. But God is also so very merciful that He provided the atonement (covering) for sin. It was the blood of an unblemished lamb. You can see this in Leviticus 17:11.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now answer the questions, based on Leviticus 17:11. What did God require and provide, in earlier days, for the sins of Jewish people so that they could be forgiven? How does this apply to them today? Does this apply to Jewish people as well as to Gentile people?

The blood of an innocent living thing was provided for the forgiveness of sins. This has been God's means of atonement for all people and at all times.

When the Jewish people had a Temple in Jerusalem and an altar of sacrifice, the blood of lambs were shed to provide atonement for their sin. They would put their hands on the animal and recite a prayer which would essentially say, "O God, please accept the sacrifice of this innocent living thing in my place for my sin."

But the Temple, which once stood in Jerusalem, was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Since then, there has been no altar of sacrifice on which to offer substitutes for sin. This leads to a great question you may one day have an opportunity to ask a Jewish friend: With no Temple and no altar of sacrifice, how are the sins of Jewish people forgiven today?

Most Jewish people might answer the question this way: "We do good things (mitzvot) and we try to be good people and we hope our good deeds exceed our sinful deeds when we stand before God to give an account."

Of course, we know that no matter how hard we try, none of us can be good enough to live up to God's holy standards. You can use this verse, Ecclesiastes 7:20, from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) to help your Jewish friend see that our sin problem cannot be overcome even by our best efforts.

After asking your Jewish friend how, without Temple or place of sacrifice of lambs, his sins are forgiven today, you can show him John 1:29. This will point him to the Messiah Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died for the sins of all people, Jewish and Gentile.

Studying the Passage, v. 28

Verse 28 Neither shall you do any work. This is the third requirement God commanded for the Jewish people on the Day of Atonement. Do no work. You can see this again in **Verse 31. You shall do no work at all.** So then, on Yom Kippur, the people were to:

- 1) Humble themselves
- 2) Stop working
- 3) Accept God's provision for their sin

Discussion Question

How would you help a Jewish person see how these three requirements, given to them by God on Yom Kippur, apply to the way they must be saved today?

You can now show your Jewish friend that nothing has changed. God still has these three requirements:

- We must humble ourselves before God by confessing our sin.
- We must cease from working for salvation from the penalty of our sin.
- We must rest in the finished work of the Messiah Jesus for our sin.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Each disciple give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

God has a long history of involvement with the Jewish people. He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, He chose them to be the recipients of His Law given on Mount Sinai, He led them through the wilderness for 40 years, He brought them into the Land He promised to them, and He swore He would never turn away from them (Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 7:6; Jeremiah 31:35-36).

He has blessed the Jewish people with many spiritual privileges (see Romans 9:1-5). Yet, in spite of all this, most of the Jewish people have hardened their hearts to their own Messiah. He would be justified in turning away from them but that is just not the way He is. In fact, He has a wonderful plan for the salvation of Jewish people (see Romans 11:25-27).

He has not given up on them. In fact, much as a loving and caring father would extend himself to his wayward son or daughter, so too our heavenly Father has continued to extend Himself to the Jewish people. (See Romans 10:21)

I hope you are willing to do the same. Please pray for the Jewish people and, specifically, for the Jewish friend God may give you. Jewish people are attracted to the Lord when they see the difference He has made in people's lives. (See Romans 11:11)

Most Jewish people believe that turning to the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer would mean they would be betraying their Jewish identity and people. You can help your Jewish friend to see this is not true. Accepting Jesus, the Jewish Messiah is, in fact, a very Jewish thing to do.

When a Jewish person accepts the Lord Jesus, he hasn't moved away from his Jewishness; he has moved away from separation from God through his faith in the Jewish Messiah.

There are about 13 million Jewish people in the world today. Less than one percent of them are followers of the Lord Jesus. In the last few decades, however, more Jewish people have placed their faith in the Lord than at any time since the first century. Many of them have been redeemed through the faithful witness of a Gentile friend just like you.

Parent Question

What are some of the important things to keep in mind in reaching out to Jewish people with the Gospel?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to teenagers who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.

For more information about the entire Making Disciples series, see www.disciple6.com.
For more information about Southwestern Seminary, see www.swbts.edu.