



St. Antony's Catholic College

Aspire - Believe - Achieve

Year 10 Religion

Instructions for the week beginning Monday 11th May

Watch

[What is Pikuach Nefesh? Intro to Jewish Principle of Saving a Life :](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-5hFUyxMTQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-5hFUyxMTQ>

Both links above are the same.

Read

The attached pages of the textbook

Listen to

Do

1. Read through the attached pages of the textbook.
2. Make notes based on the following.
 - a. Five bullet points on choose life
 - b. Simplify the spider diagram
 - c. Five points on Pikuach Nefesh including SOA
 - d. Ten points on the 613 Mitzvot
3. Now watch the two clips is there anything you can add to your notes?
4. Do the quiz questions on show my homework related to this task.

Life on earth

Choose life!

In Judaism the emphasis is on life not on death. God is the creator who has given life.

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth."

God [thus] created man with His Image. In the Image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1: 26–27

Not only should humans respect their life but they should live it to the full. It is the way that they live their life that will be judged. The Torah is described as the 'tree of life' as its mitzvot can only be followed in this world. Good deeds, like a tree, take root and sprout into other good deeds.

'It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and all who uphold it are blessed.'

Proverbs 3:18

The importance of life can be seen throughout Jewish worship and lifestyle:

- ▶ During celebrations, especially at weddings, 'L'Chaim' is said, meaning 'to life'. The word 'Chaim' is plural which some authorities say shows that life alone is impossible. It can only be when life is shared that it is truly lived.
- ▶ When someone has died, the relatives are wished 'long life'.

► The nature and importance of Pikuach Nefesh – saving a life

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth." God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

'For You created my veins, You covered me in my mother's womb. I shall thank You for in an awesome, wondrous way I was fashioned; Your works are wondrous, and my soul knows it very well. My essence was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, I was formed in the lowest parts of the earth.'

Psalms 139:13–15

God is the one creator of life and therefore life is sacred. Only he can give and preserve life.

'When I had not yet formed you in the womb, I knew you, and when you had not yet emerged from the womb, I had appointed you; a prophet to the nations I made you.'

Jeremiah 1:5

Saving of life should take priority over everything – even if this means breaking some of the mitzvot in the Torah. In the Talmud God says his people will ‘live by’ the Torah – as opposed to ‘dying by’ it. In Babylonian Yoma 84b descriptions are given as to how the observance of Shabbat as a rest day can be broken if someone is ill. So, the Torah is designed to promote life, and the saving of human life is more important than the observance of the law.

‘Pikuach Nefesh’ is the term used to describe the setting aside of certain mitzvot in order to save a life. To support life, all but three of the 613 mitzvot can be broken – idolatry, incest and adultery. This means, for example, that doctors are permitted to answer emergency calls on Shabbat, even though one of the Ten Commandments requires Jews to rest on Shabbat.

To preserve a life, it is permissible to remove organs from a dead body (otherwise, Jews are forbidden to disturb a body except to wash it, clothe it decently and bury it). To preserve a life one may travel on Shabbat or even break the fast on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

The 613 mitzvot

It is difficult to find a word in English that really translates 'mitzvot' as it has more than one meaning:

- ▶ Keeping the duties given by God to Moses
- ▶ Doing good deeds
- ▶ Being given an honour such as reading from the Torah.

The Talmud refers to the 613 mitzvot in the Torah. This number is represented by the number of knots on the **tallit**, which is worn by many Jews during worship.

Today it is impossible to keep all 613 mitzvot as many were connected with religious practices in the Temple, which has been destroyed. For Orthodox Jews, keeping the mitzvot is an important principle of Judaism. Although many Reform Jews also try to keep the mitzvot many consider that some are no longer compatible to twenty-first-century life. Decisions about which ones to observe are often based upon individual choices.

Just as with the Ten Commandments, the mitzvot either show how people should relate to God or how they should relate to other people.

Through both types of actions Jews believe they build a relationship with God. The Torah explains that the purpose of human existence is to achieve closeness to God. This is attained through observing the mitzvot as each is believed in its own unique way to build a relationship with God.

Is any one of the 613 mitzvot more important than another? A story in the Talmud story (Shabbat 31a) tells how **Hillel** was asked what was the central duty of the Torah. He replied:

'That which is hateful unto you do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole of the Torah, The rest is commentary. Go forth and study.'

This meant that although there are many mitzvot, it is through the practice of treating people with respect that Jews build their relationship with God.

I have studied

Although most Jews would consider the actual mitzvot in the Torah as important, how each mitzvah relates to modern-day developments may be interpreted differently. For example, one of the mitzvot states 'thou shall not kill', but this involves a number of issues:

- ▶ abortion?
- ▶ contraception?
- ▶ self defence?
- ▶ nuclear attacks?
- ▶ turning off life-support machines?
- ▶ killing animals?