

A Jewish Home at the time of Jesus – what should we include in the home corner?

Firstly, a good place to start looking is in your school's **Jewish artefacts box**. Remember, not all of the items that you find were in use in the first century A.D. or perhaps would not have been in use in an ordinary village household such as Jesus' family home. These are ones you could use:

Items	Story to tell
<p>Mezuzah – this is the small container which holds a few verses of the Jewish scriptures and which is placed on the doorpost of a Jewish home. You could make one of these using e.g. a film canister or an old pritt stick as the base. The cover should be beautifully decorated, and inside a piece of paper saying “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” See http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/SocialStudies/RE/Database/Graphics/NotesJ/Mezuzah.html</p>	<p>The mezuzah contains a few significant verses of the Jewish law (Torah). Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to a teacher who asked him questions about how to obey God's law. Luke chapter 10 verses 25-37.</p>
<p>If you have Shabbat or Passover items these can go in the home corner as a display – not to be played with – these are very special items to be used on ritual occasions and would be kept very carefully in a Jewish home. You could make imitation havdalah candles for Shabbat using plaited blue and white art straws : http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/SocialStudies/RE/Database/Graphics/NotesJ/Havdalah.html</p>	<p>Jesus often got in trouble with the authorities for healing people on the Sabbath, as you were not supposed to work on this special day. Mark chapter 3 verses 1-5 – man with a withered hand</p>
<p>Tallit – the prayer shawl – see some information and pictures of tallits at http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/SocialStudies/RE/Database/Graphics/NotesJ/Tallit.html You can make a tallit for the home corner using cream or white fabric painted with stripes of blue or black fabric paint and fringing. Note the long knotted threads (shamash) which hang from each corner</p>	<p>A Jewish boy began to wear the tallit after his bar mitzvah when he was seen as a man. The story of Jesus in the Temple aged 12 probably shows him at this age. Luke chapter 2 verses 41-51</p>

And these are some items you could find or make together:

Items	Story to tell
<p>Clothing – what have you got in your nativity play collection? This should be simple cotton tunics sewn up the sides and the headpieces which are squares of material folded into a triangle and secured with a cord. Simple leather sandals (often colloquially called “Jesus sandals”) are always available – have you an old pair for the corner?</p>	<p>There is a famous incident when Jesus washed his disciples' feet – it was normally the job of the lowest servant to wash guests feet when they arrived dusty and tired after a journey. Jesus was trying</p>

	to show his disciples that it was important to be humble and serve people if they were to be his true followers. John chapter 13 verses 3-15
Food – make bread using an olive oil recipe. Have simple bowls (wooden if possible) with dried lentils and beans . Share the bread or perhaps some water melon to get a taste of Israel. Almonds or pistachio nuts were also eaten – but beware nut allergies. Buy matzahs. Have a mortar and pestle available – you could even have some red grapes to crush to make “wine”.	The bread can be used as a stimulus for telling the parable of the Sower . Luke chapter 8 verses 4-15 Or you can tell the feeding of the five thousand from Mark chapter 6 verses 35-44
Games – marbles and skittles were both played, although marbles would have been made from balls of painted clay, and the skittles would probably have been simple columns of wood with a painted clay ball. Dolls would have been very basic, so don't put a “normal” doll in.	Jesus welcomes children and loves their trust and enthusiasm. Mark chapter 10 verses 13-16.
Clay lamps – these can be made very easily - .see a picture at http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/8_16-21.htm	Jesus told a parable about ten bridesmaids and their lamps to remind people always to stay alert and ready for the coming of God's kingdom. Matthew chapter 25 verses 1-13
Bedding – this would have been a thin mattress which can be rolled up out of the way during the day.	The paralysed man was healed after being brought to Jesus, carried in his bedding. Mark chapter 2 verses 3-12
Animals – not real ones obviously! The family wouldn't have pets, but could share their home with some of the animals which provide food, such as hens for eggs and goats for milk.	Depending on the time of year – the shepherds at Jesus birth - Luke chapter 2 verses 8-20 – or Palm Sunday – Mark chapter 11 verses 1-11
Mat – used as a “tablecloth” on which the food is placed. Eat reclining on the floor around the mat.	Martha and Mary Luke chapter 10 verses 38-42
Musical instruments – you can put out instruments such as cymbals and recorders as the nearest equivalent to Palestinian instruments	John chapter 2 verses 1-11 has the story of Jesus' miracle at the wedding at Cana . Musical instruments are sure to have been used at the wedding.

When you tell the story which is attached to the artefact, in almost every case it is more appropriate to use a Bible story book rather than read directly from the Bible. The Bible references given above are for your information.