

My
JEWISH
Ancestor



A **Zap** The Grandma Gap Activity Book

By Janet Hovorka

How To Use This Book

This activity book is designed to help create stronger bonds in modern families by encouraging the whole family to learn about their ancestors together. Greater knowledge about family history especially strengthens and empowers youth by creating self-esteem, resilience and a greater sense of control over their lives. Studying the family's past also strengthens the relationships between living family members by creating a shared experience and core identity that no one else in the world can duplicate. Young people can take the lead to accomplish the activities in this book with their family members.

It is my hope that learning about your family's past together can be a fun and exciting adventure and that this book will help all of your family members discover joy in the quest to find out more about your ancestors.



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Introduction



If you have Jewish ancestors, you can be proud of your amazing heritage. Jewish history is a long and multi-faceted story. Jewish people trace their family back to Abraham, the ancient patriarch, and the kingdom of Judah formed by his descendants. When Judah was conquered by Assyria in the 6th century BCE and again by the Romans in 70 CE, the Jewish people were scattered throughout the world but they maintained

their traditions wherever they lived. The Jewish family is one of the oldest groups in the world with their cultural identity still intact from ancient times.

Judaism is an ancient religion still practiced by many people today, but you don't have to be religious to be Jewish. A Jew is traditionally someone who descends from a Jewish mother or someone who converts to the Jewish religion. People can be ethnically or religiously Jewish.

If you have one Jewish ancestor, you probably have several Jewish ancestors. For this book, you may want to focus on the one you know the most about or the one most interesting to you, but feel free to add other pages in the back with more information about other ancestors.



Sections of this Book

The workbook starts with pages to fill in what you know about your ancestors and instructions on where to look for more information. Then there are pages with common cultural experiences which will help you as you search for more information about your family. These cultural pages work like puzzle pieces to help fill in what the day to day lives of your ancestors were like and are marked at the bottom of the page with puzzle pieces. While you may not be sure that your ancestors experienced all of the details of this cultural knowledge, these are common experiences shared by many Jewish people in the past and they very likely apply to your family.