

Religious School...education and enrichment

Shavuot is a time for celebration. We recall the day that God gave the Ten Commandments to Moshe and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. It's one of the shalosh regalim, three pilgrimage festivals. The other shalosh regalim require us to prepare in major ways. On Sukkot we literally build booths. We eat there, socialize there and some of us even sleep there! It takes a lot of time and effort to prepare for Sukkot. Pesach involves the cleaning of our homes, ridding ourselves of chametz, endless hours of cooking for the Seder and much more. In contrast, there are no mitzvot, commandments, associated with Shavuot. However, many wonderful customs have developed over the years.

- Eating of dairy foods – Blintzes, cheesecakes and burekas. Tradition teaches us that we should consume dairy foods on Shavuot, but why? Several answers are provided for us. One reason may be that we are promised a “land flowing with milk and honey” in Exodus and the Song of Songs states that “milk and honey are under your tongue”. Another idea shows that gematria, Jewish numerology, explains that the letters that make up the Hebrew word for dairy, halav, add up to 40. That is the exact number of days that Moshe spent on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments and other teachings.
- Reading of Megillat Ruth – Ruth's story is of a Moabite woman whose husband dies. She then follows her Israelite mother in law into the Jewish people. As we celebrate accepting God's commandments, Ruth embraces her new faith and becomes a Jew.
- The study of Torah – According to a story in the Midrash, the night before the Torah was given, the Israelites retired early to be well-rested for the momentous day ahead, but they overslept and Moses had to wake them up because God was already waiting on the mountaintop. To rectify this flaw in the national character, many Jews stay up all night to learn Torah.

Take the opportunity to celebrate Shavuot at home! You can have Blintz Loaf for dinner (recipe below), learn about the importance of Ruth and her story and read some bible stories that you may never have heard before. Be sure to join us for our very own Tikkun Leil Shavuot on May 30 as we stay up late, learn from each other and enjoy a nosh.

Blintz Loaf recipe

1 lb. cottage cheese

3 eggs

½ cup flour

¼ cup sugar

1 tsp. baking powder

½ stick margarine, melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix melted margarine with cottage cheese, add everything else; mix well. Pour into a well greased loaf pan. Bake 40 minutes or until brown. Serve as is or:

- dust with powdered sugar
- serve with blueberry/cherry sauce
- serve with sour cream