

CEREMONIES ASSOCIATED WITH BIRTH

Judaism Practices

1. Which of the following is the name of a trained circumciser? [1 mark]
A) a schochet B) A mohel C) a Rabbi D) a sandek
2. Give two facts about a Brit Milah ceremony. [2 marks]
It is for boys/ the child is circumcised by a mohel/ a sandek holds the child/ it happens in the home/ it happens on the eighth day/ the boy's name is announced
3. Describe two aspects of a Brit Bat ceremony. [4 marks]
It is for Jewish girls/ it mirrors Brit Milah for boys
The girl is often wrapped in a tallit to show she is under the covenant
There are songs sung/ prayers and blessings said to thank God for the girl and pray blessings over them
Their name is announced and the reasoning behind the choice explained
4. Explain why many Jews think it is important to procreate. [5 marks]
"Be fruitful and increase in number" Genesis 1:28> God's first command to humans.
Family incredibly important to Jewish culture> most worship is performed as part of a family. > It is a special Mitzvah to marry and have children> Parents then have the responsibility to teach their children how to be Jewish
The covenant with Abraham includes to have many descendants> Some Jews see this as obligatory

5. 'Jews should not be allowed to circumcise their children.'

[12 marks]

Reasons to agree:

The child has no choice in the matter> the process cannot be reversed later in life> It is forcing a culture, religion and set of rules on someone without their consent. It is painful> therefore unloving> you shouldn't put your child through unnecessary pain. Some have compared it to FGM (female genital mutilation)

Reasons to disagree:

It is part of the covenant with Abraham> Jews must do this on the eighth day – you cannot wait> This covenant shows that they are God's chosen people
It starts them off as a Jew> it immediately enters them into the covenant with God. It has been practiced for thousands of years and it is safe. Mohels are specially trained and can carry out the procedure with as little pain and discomfort as possible. Judaism is more than a religion, it is a heritage that is passed on. Vaccinations are also painful but parents make their children endure the pain for the greater benefit – just like with circumcision.
There are no downsides to having a circumcised penis and many do it for health reasons