

## Vocabulary for Unit 3

**ark of the Covenant:** The sacred chest that housed the holy presence of God, as well as the tablets containing the Decalogue.

**Commandments of God (*Mitzvot*):** The ten laws, or Decalogue, given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai as the fundamental rules of conduct for the Chosen People. *Mitzvot* is the Hebrew term for “commandments.”

**consecrate:** To declare or set apart as sacred or to solemnly dedicate to God’s service; to make holy.

**Decalogue:** The ten sayings, or instructions. Another name for the Ten Commandments.

**Nazirite:** A person in the Hebrew tradition who is consecrated to God. As a sign of dedication to God, the person would abstain from alcohol and unclean food and leave her or his hair uncut.

**Passover:** This is the Jewish festival that memorializes the Exodus from Egypt. This festival commemorates the creation of a new people, a society of justice based on a sacred trust between Yahweh and Israel.

**Pentateuch:** The Greek name for the first five books of the Old Testament means five-part writing. These books are also called *Torah* in Hebrew.

**plague:** A painful affliction, disease, severe calamity, or judgment by God.

**prophet:** Interpreter or spokesperson. A person chosen by God to communicate a salvific message. Not necessarily one who predicts the future, but a messenger of God’s word.

**sacrifice:** “To make holy.” This word refers to an offering made to God by a priest on behalf of the people as a sign of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and communion. In the Old Testament it was needed to atone for infractions from the law and reconcile the covenant relationship with God.

**tabernacle:** A portable tentlike structure in which the Israelites kept the ark of the Covenant in a special curtained-off section called the Holy of Holies. This was where the Israelites worshipped and made their sacrifices. It was the “dwelling” of God among his people.

**theophany:** An experience of God that alters human life. God breaks into the human dimension to deepen or change the individual or communal understanding of God.

**Yahweh:** The most sacred of the Old Testament names for God, which he revealed to Moses. It is frequently translated as “I AM” or “I am who am.”

**Yom Kippur:** A Jewish holy day referred to as the Day of Atonement. It is observed on the tenth day of Tishri and is observed with prayer and fasting. Repentance is symbolized by a scapegoat driven in to the wilderness to repent and atone for the sins of the previous year (see Leviticus, chapter 16).

