World Religion
Judaism: The Patriarchs

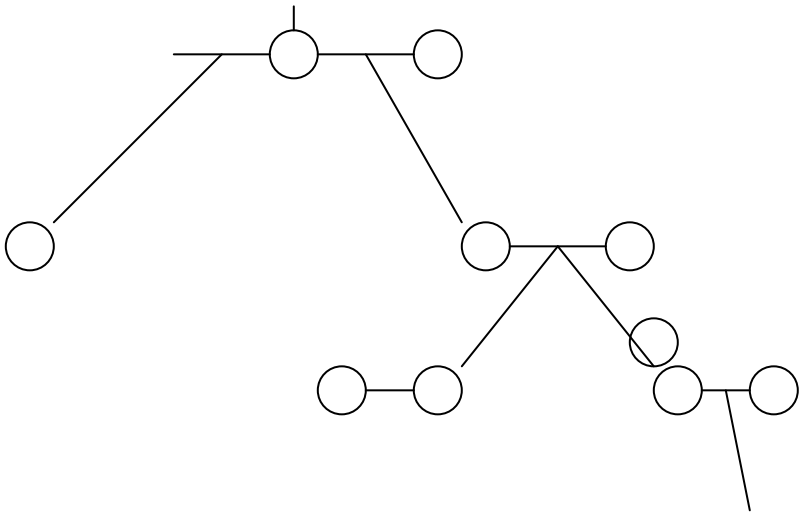
The Patriarchs are known as the founders of Judaism. Particularly, Abraham becomes the father of the Hebrew tribes. First, read the handout titled, "The Age of the Patriarchs." Then read about one of the patriarchs. You will form a group with those who have read about the other patriarchs to develop a family tree and answer the following questions:

1. Describe the covenant between Abraham and g_d. What is the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac? How is each important to our understanding of the middle-east today?

2. How does the story of Sarah's life reflect the status of women in the ancient middle-east? Why did she want Hagar and Ishmael sent away?

3. What is the most surprising thing about g_d's request that Abraham sacrifice Isaac to the people of that time? How is the story of Isaac and Rebekah similar to that of Abraham and Sarah?

4. Describe the relationship between Esau and Jacob. Why does Isaac, in the end, make Jacob his heir? How does this conflict with later Jewish law.

5. Explain how and why Jacob's name changed. Why does Esau eventually accept Jacob's place in the family?

6. Explain the importance of Rachel to the Patriarchy and the history of Judaism.