

Name \_\_\_\_\_

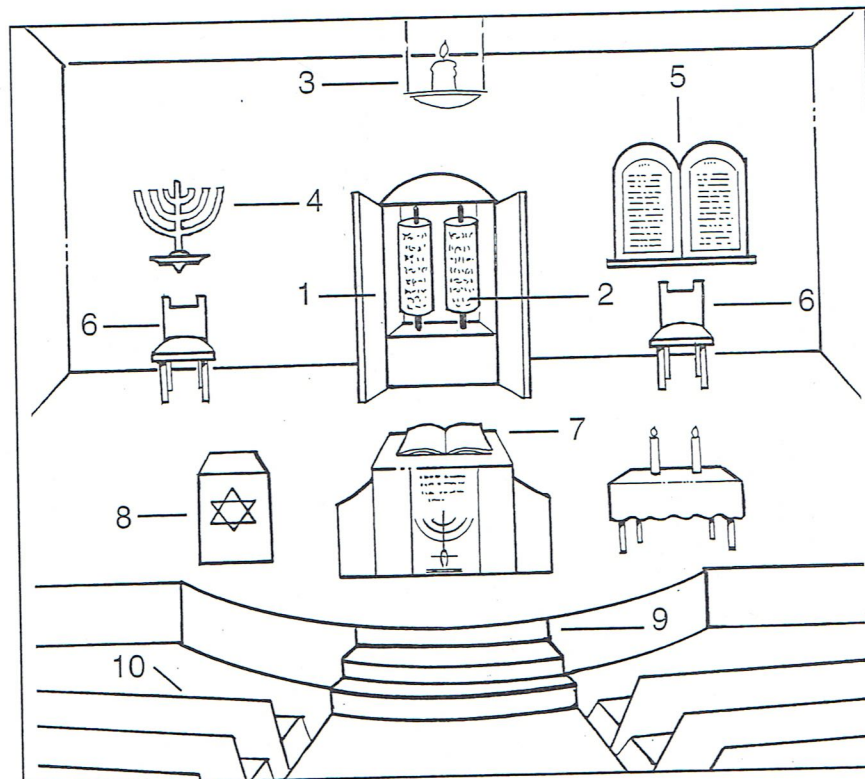
## The Synagogue

The Jewish house of worship is called a *Synagogue*. Many Reform synagogues (and some others) are also called temples. In addition to being a place where Jews gather to worship, the synagogue also serves as a community and education center. The main services each week are Friday night (especially at Reform Temples) and Saturday morning, although many synagogues have services every morning and evening.

The rabbi is the religious leader and teacher of a congregation and usually speaks about the weekly Torah portion during Sabbath services. Services are usually led by a cantor who leads the singing or chanting of prayers and reads from the Torah scroll. However, anyone who is familiar with the prayers and the melodies may lead a service or read from the Torah.

In the center of the *bimah* (raised platform) at the front of the sanctuary is the *aron kodesh* (holy ark), holding the Torah scrolls. Each Torah is handwritten in Hebrew on parchment (animal skin). Above the aron is the *ner tamid* (eternal light) representing the constant presence of God and reminding us of the *menorah*, the seven-branched candle holder that illuminated the Temple in Jerusalem. There is also a podium, from which the rabbi speaks, and a table, at which the cantor sings and the Torah is read.

Below you will find a diagram of a common synagogue and a list of features. Locate them on the diagram.



- A. Congregation seating
- B. Torah Scrolls
- C. Ten Commandments

- D. Menorah
- E. Rabbi's and Cantor's seats
- F. Bimah

- G. Ner Tamid
- H. Ark
- I. Rabbi's podium
- J. Cantor's and Torah reading table