



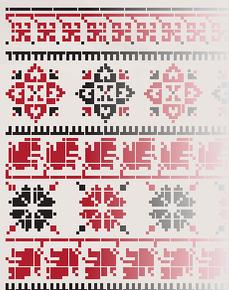
AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

FACILITATOR PROGRAM GUIDE



 **AFEDJ**
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Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians



CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 01
About <i>Bearing Witness</i>	p. 03
<i>Bearing Witness</i> Overview	
Program Session Parts	
Learning Resources and Facilitator Support	
Facilitating <i>Bearing Witness</i>	p. 07
<i>Bearing Witness</i> Implementation	p. 08
Facilitator Session Guides	On-Board Activity
Participant Session Guides	Guidelines for Scripture Study
The Videos	Video Reflection Questions
Resources	
Guidelines for Small Group Discussions	p. 11
Creating Group Norms	
Holy Listening	
Hospitality	
Communications	
Online Group Options	
Facilitating Adult Learners	p. 16
Characteristics of Adult Learners	
Characteristics of a Good Facilitator	
Ask Good Questions	
Helpful Websites	p. 20

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Introduction

Palestinian Christians are part of the unbroken Christian presence in the land of Jesus going back to the first church. Theirs is a journey of humanity in pursuit of dignity, justice, and peace. Sadly, the story and very existence of our Christian sisters and brothers in the Holy Land has been ignored or forgotten by most. *Bearing Witness* provides an opportunity to learn about this often-neglected part of Christendom.

All Christians are called to listen and learn from the small, dwindling Christian community who live, worship, and minister in the place where Jesus taught and ministered. They bear witness to Jesus today in a region of conflict, brokenness, and distrust. Today, Christians are only 1 percent of the population of Palestine – The West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem – and 2 percent of the population of the state of Israel. Yet, through their resilience and their humanitarian outreach to people of all religions, ethnicities, and economic circumstances, they have outsized influence in advancing peace and reconciliation in this volatile part of the world.

While the Christian presence in the Holy Land extends back to the first Pentecost, the Anglican Church has borne witness to Jesus in the Middle East since the middle of the nineteenth century. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem today includes twenty-seven parishes and thirty humanitarian institutions – schools, hospitals, centers for children with disabilities, clinics, and homes for the elderly – in Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Christians of all denominations have a responsibility to hold up the work of our Anglican sisters and brothers in the Diocese of Jerusalem. Their churches and humanitarian ministries are living out God’s expectations for the Holy Land, while operating in the basest human conditions.



Archbishop Hosam Naoum and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem uphold the historic Arab Christian presence in the Holy Land at great financial and personal cost. Archbishop Hosam reminds us, “We do this not for ourselves. We do this on behalf of every Christian in the world.” He’s also clear that the diocese’s witness in the Holy Land needs our help. “This is not something we could ever do alone. Our partnership depends on the entire body of Christ. We are witnesses together of Christ’s example of love and reconciliation in the Holy Land, a place that needs many prayers and much support.”

Bearing Witness provides Christian communities the biblical basis, the inspiration, and the tools to walk together with Christians in the Holy Land. The program is an invitation to individual participants and to church groups to be transformed. The program inspires us to seek ways to connect with and support the courageous ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem and their witness to Jesus in the land where he lived, died, and was resurrected.

The core of the program is professionally produced videos shot on location in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and Israel. These videos bring the places Jesus lived and ministered alive. They capture the diverse voices and perspectives of the people of the Holy Land today – Christians, Jews and Muslims, Palestinians living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, and Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel.

Bearing Witness is developed by the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ), a non-political, independent non-profit organization that raises awareness in the United States about the powerful Christian witness of the Diocese of Jerusalem and raises funds in support of the diocese’s humanitarian institutions. AFEDJ’s partners in program development are the Episcopal Church’s Standing Commission on World Mission and Jerusalem Peacebuilders, a Christian ministry of interfaith reconciliation whose programs focus on uniting Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans and providing them with the opportunities, relationships, and skills they need to become future leaders for peace in the global community.

We are grateful for the generous support of the Episcopal Church’s Constable Fund for financial support of this program’s development as well as generous individual donors.

About Bearing Witness

One of *Bearing Witness's* objectives is to address the 17 resolutions approved by the Episcopal Church's General Convention that call us to learn about the Holy Land and to:

- Walk where Jesus walked and gain greater biblical insights on Jesus' transformative ministries
- Deepen our understanding of the significance of the Holy Land to the Abrahamic faiths
- Raise awareness of the inspiring and powerful Christian witness demonstrated by the community of Palestinian Anglicans in the region
- Gain insight into one of our world's most vexing struggles for peace and justice and build our capacity to draw informed and fair conclusions regarding present and future realities in the region
- Understand the conditions that necessitate the humanitarian response of serving all who live in the region and strive for a life of security, dignity, and freedom for all
- Commit to concrete actions and advocacy that will sustain our engagement in a mission of helping to bring understanding, healing, and reconciliation to the people in the Holy Land and to our own communities

Bearing Witness Overview

Bearing Witness is a 5-session program grounded in scripture readings focused on themes of Jesus' ministry:

SESSION 1 Belonging (*Luke 4:14-21*) – As with Jesus, understanding and claiming our identity is important to our well-being. In Israel and Palestine, one's identity and sense of belonging is often in conflict with the realities of the region or community in which one lives.

SESSION 2 Healing (*Luke 8:43-48*) – Jesus shows His compassion as a healer who turned away no one who asked for His help. The leaders and staff at the Diocese of Jerusalem hospitals show the same care and love to the most vulnerable in Gaza and the West Bank.

SESSION 3 Teaching (*Matthew 13:31-32*) – Jesus taught the marginalized and outcasts. He taught us to love everyone and to help one another. The Diocese of Jerusalem's schools are grounded in Christian values of love, service to others, and justice for all. Students in Diocese of Jerusalem schools grow into confident, compassionate leaders of the future.

SESSION 4 Breaking Barriers (*Luke 17:11-19*) – Jesus broke down ethnic, religious, gender, and socioeconomic barriers throughout his ministry. Today, Palestinians face discrimination and obstacles to leading productive lives, especially those with disabilities. Diocese of Jerusalem rehabilitation centers and schools help families overcome the stigma of disabilities and provide expert care and inclusive education to empower all children to reach their potential.

SESSION 5 Building Hope (*John 14: 12-14*) Palestinians face challenges and discrimination in employment, education, housing, economic opportunity, and almost every facet of their lives. As disciples of Christ, the Diocese of Jerusalem clergy and leaders of humanitarian institutions bring healing, hope, and empowerment to all who live in the Holy Land.

Program Session Parts

Bearing Witness sessions can be conducted in-person or virtually using a video meeting platform like Zoom. There are five parts to each 90-minute group study session. This Program Guide provides the activities, tools, and support you need to facilitate all parts of each session. Below are the main components in each of the five parts.

- 1. Welcome.** An opening prayer, introduction to the session, and an activity to engage all participants
- 2. Jesus' Ministry.** A scripture study based on a Gospel passage, including a video reflection by a Palestinian or American priest or bishop
- 3. The Realities of Life in Palestine and Israel.** The historical, political, social, and economic contexts in different cities and regions of Israel and Palestine that create the need for a Christian response, including video interviews with ministry leaders
- 4. The Christian Witness of the Diocese of Jerusalem.** One or two Diocese of Jerusalem ministries (hospitals, schools, rehabilitation centers) that respond to these needs, including video interviews with leaders of these current-day expressions of Jesus' ministry
- 5. Invitation to Engage.** Examples of U.S. church communities that have established enduring partnerships with the Diocese of Jerusalem, including interviews with church program leaders and tools for planning your own engagement

Learning Resources and Facilitation Support

All of the *Bearing Witness* materials are available online at www.afedj.org/bearingwitness. The heart of *Bearing Witness* are the 14 videos that were filmed on location in Palestine and Israel. In addition, we provide a wide range of resources and guides for you the facilitator and your participants. Most of these are downloadable PDF's. We also provide links to articles and videos for further study that we have selected.

DOCUMENTS

Facilitator Program Guide. Provides *Bearing Witness* background, adult learning best practices, and directions and resources for facilitating a small group of participants, meeting either in-person or virtually.

Facilitator Session Guides. The Facilitator Guide for each of the five program sessions provides you with detailed plans and guidance for leading each *Bearing Witness* session.

Participant Program Guide. Provides participants an overview of the *Bearing Witness* program and how they can fully participate in the program.

Participant Session Guides. Each of the five session guides provides introductions to the session videos, suggested session pre-work (selected articles and videos), the session's scripture reading, prayers, reflection prompts, and additional curated resources that they may wish to watch or read to personally "go deeper" into the session's theme.

Getting to Know the Holy Land. These six documents provide background on the cities and regions where the featured Diocese of Jerusalem institutions are located and the videos were filmed: Jerusalem; Nazareth, Israel; Ramallah, the West Bank; Jordan, and Gaza. The sixth "Getting to Know" is about the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. They include maps, regional history, and information that help participants understand daily life in Palestine and Israel.

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem Ministries. These three documents provide background on the Diocese of Jerusalem's key areas of ministry – healing (hospitals), teaching (schools), and breaking barriers (rehabilitation centers). They give participants a view of the remarkable diversity and impact of the Diocese of Jerusalem's humanitarian institutions – those that are featured in *Bearing Witness* and others.

VIDEOS

Program Introduction Video. Archbishop Hosam Naoum; Nicholas Porter, Executive Director of Jerusalem Peacebuilders and AFEDJ trustee; and Sharon Ely Pearson, one of the *Bearing Witness* writers, speak about the Diocese of Jerusalem, AFEDJ, and the purpose and goals of the *Bearing Witness* program.

Scripture Study Videos. Palestinian and American priests and bishops reflect on a Gospel story about Jesus' ministry and the Diocese of Jerusalem's current-day expressions of that ministry.

The Realities of Life Videos. These five videos, filmed on location in Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel, explore every-day life in the Palestinian Occupied Territories and Nazareth, Israel and the conditions that create the need for Diocese of Jerusalem ministries.



Christian Witness Videos. These three videos in Sessions 2 (Healing), 3 (Teaching) and 4 (Breaking Barriers) focus on the powerful Christian witness of Diocese of Jerusalem institutions – Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza; the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School and the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, the West Bank; and The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center in East Jerusalem.

Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Profiles and group interviews with five U.S. church communities that are actively engaged with the Diocese of Jerusalem beyond contributing financial support. They provide inspiration for participants to engage their own church with AFEDJ and the Diocese of Jerusalem’s institutions.

Resources for Further Study

The *Bearing Witness* team has selected articles and videos about the history of the region, the Israel/Palestinian conflict, the Abrahamic faiths, and stories told by inhabitants of Palestine and Israel about their struggles and achievements. These are optional resources for those who wish to “go deeper” in their learning.

Facilitating **Bearing Witness**

The *Bearing Witness* curriculum and facilitation resources will prepare you to be a facilitator ready to lead and encourage an active response that goes beyond discussion, beyond mere comprehension, into an experience that brings participants into closer communion with the Gospel and the people of the Holy Land.

All the *Bearing Witness* materials are available for free on the AFEDJ website. Any individual can view the videos and read the materials. However, *Bearing Witness* is designed to be a group learning experience and you, the Program Facilitator, are central to the program's successful implementation with your group of participants, ideally consisting of 8 to 12 adults. By coalescing as a group, the members will be inspired to act on behalf of the Diocese of Jerusalem institutions, engage in AFEDJ's mission, and find ways to extend the mission in their own community.

The facilitator's role is to provide an environment of hospitality and safety so that all can participate comfortably. It is important that you try to stay as "neutral" as possible during discussions. As the facilitator you are not the "teacher" per se, but a companion to the participants as together you learn and discover what it means to "bear witness" to the Good News of Jesus Christ and how the Diocese of Jerusalem exemplifies the ongoing ministry of Jesus in the Holy Land today.

As the facilitator, you need to be very familiar with all the components and content of each session. Set aside at least two hours well in advance of each session to read all the documents and preview all the videos associated with the session. Your familiarity with the session's content in advance will help your planning and preparation, offering a successful outcome to each session.

Bearing Witness **Implementation**

There are a variety of ways you can successfully implement the *Bearing Witness* program. It works well as an Advent, Epiphany, Lenten, or Pentecost evening adult formation program that could be bracketed by a meal and worship. It also lends itself to a Sunday study series or a mid-week program.

Each of the five *Bearing Witness* sessions is designed to last 90 minutes. You need to make certain that all participants can make the commitment of this time every session. You also need to ensure that the space you've arranged to meet in is available for the full hour and a half and that there will be no interruptions or people coming in and out of the meeting space.

Each session has required "pre-work" for the participants. The time required for the pre-work is between 45 minutes and an hour for every session. Convening the group once a week for five weeks will work, as long as participants confirm that they'll be able to complete the pre-work every week. If that appears to be a challenge, you might consider scheduling your meetings once every two weeks. We don't recommend an interval between sessions of more than two weeks. The content in each session builds on the previous session, and you'll start to lose continuity if there's too much time between sessions.

Bearing Witness can be successfully implemented online, using Zoom or another video meeting platform.

It is hoped that groups that come together to learn about the Holy Land will not experience it as a short-term study, but one that becomes a life-long commitment toward working for a more hopeful and just society in their local community and beyond.

Facilitator Session Guides

In addition to this Facilitator Program Guide, we provide five comprehensive Session Guides to help you facilitate the group sessions. Each Facilitator Session Guide includes the following components to help you plan and lead each session:

FACILITATOR PLANNING TOOLS

- **Session Goals** – Implementation and learning goals that lead to the desired results of *Bearing Witness*
- **Session Objectives** – Participant outcomes that lead to reaching session goals
- **Session Background** – Background information about the theme of the session, the region(s) featured, the scripture passage, and the Diocese of Jerusalem institutions that are covered in the session
- **Facilitator Pre-Session Work** - The documents and videos the facilitator needs to read or view to prepare for facilitating the group session

- **Participant Pre-Session Work** – The documents and videos that participants should watch or read in advance of the session. These could include downloadable materials created especially for *Bearing Witness* or links to online articles or videos
- **Prayers** – Opening and closing prayers for each session
- **“Icebreaker” activity** – a question based on the session’s theme to bring the group together
- **Supplies** – list of items needed for the session
- **Step-by-step directions** – specific prompts for leading an activity or discussion, including an estimated timeframe of how long a segment may take
- **Reminders for next session** – reading and viewing participants should complete before the next session is convened

Participant Session Guides

Participants will have access to a downloadable Participant Guide for each session. These include the session’s opening prayer, scripture passage, prompts for reflection to the videos, the closing prayer, and links to additional resources if they choose to “go deeper.” These guides provide ways for them to share in the group’s work together (such as leading prayer or reading scripture) and support those learners who need to process content internally as well as build upon each session. Participants may choose to download these guides for adding personal notes or view them on a tablet or other device during the session. Participants can also be encouraged to have a notebook or personal journal to write in.

The Videos

Each session will have three or four short videos, most filmed on location in the Holy Land. As many participants will not have been on a physical pilgrimage to visit the locations discussed in each session, the videos bring alive the sights and sounds of the regions and the people who are actively engaged in (or with) the ministries and institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem. These videos will be found on the *Bearing Witness* website www.afedj.org/bearingwitness.



On-Board Activity

A question is provided for the facilitator to ask the participants as an icebreaker to begin the session. We suggest using “Mutual Invitation” (described later in this Guide) as a process that gives everyone a chance to answer without “going around the circle” and encourages deeper listening.

Guidelines for Scripture Study

Each session of *Bearing Witness* offers scripture for reflection related to the theme of the session. This Bible study offers a means for personal reflection and group insights that will be helpful as the group prepares to watch and discuss the session’s video. *Discipleship Based Bible Study*¹ is offered to fit the 90-minute time frame of each session. This form of Bible study was developed as part of *A Disciple’s Prayer Book*, written by Native Episcopalians in collaboration with The Episcopal Church’s Office of Indigenous Ministries. It was created to be used on The Episcopal Church’s journey together toward becoming a church of disciples in mission to all of God’s creation. We believe this makes it fitting to use in *Bearing Witness*. You may wish to use a different approach that may be more familiar to you or your group.

If your group is larger than twelve, you may want to break into pairs or triads for sharing. Note that this portion of the session should be no more than 15 minutes as there is a lot to accomplish in 90-minutes and a study of these rich Gospel passages could take up that much time itself.

DISCIPLESHIP BASED BIBLE STUDY

1. Read the scripture passage aloud.
2. What word(s), idea(s), or sentence(s) stand out for you in the Gospel passage?
3. Invite another person to reread the passage.
4. What is Jesus (the Gospel) saying to you?
5. Invite another person to reread the passage.
6. What is Jesus (the Gospel) calling you to do?

VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After watching each of the session’s videos, there is a time for group or personal reflection. The questions below can be a starting point for personal thoughts or group discussion for any of the sessions. These are in addition to the questions included in each Facilitator Session Guide that are focused on the specific video’s content. As the facilitator, you may wish to add one or more of these to your Facilitator Session Guide as you deem appropriate.

1. Where is your story in this story?
2. Where do you see God?
3. What causes you to pause and rethink your previous assumptions?
4. What cries out to you?
5. What calls to you?
6. What did you hear that you will remember in five years?

¹ https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/indigenous_disciples_prayer_book_eng.pdf

Guidelines For Small Group Discussion

Bearing Witness explores a region of our world that is home to deep-rooted geographical, political, economic, and spiritual issues such as ethnicity, religion, poverty, class, and violence. Creating a safe space for such conversations is essential for individuals to be fully engaged and participate at a level that promotes growth and action.

Creating Group Norms

Group norms should be agreed upon at the beginning of the first session of the program. You can simply use newsprint to record a list of agreed upon “rules” for everyone to abide by during each of the sessions or you can employ an established set of group norms.

According to Eric Law of the Kaleidoscope Institute, “Communication is one of the most important elements in building a more inclusive community. People of different backgrounds bring with them different communication styles. Sometimes these differences can cause conflicts among members of a community – often in an unconscious way.”² Law has developed the following guidelines that have been used successfully in numerous groups on a variety of topics worldwide:

Respectful Communication Guidelines

- R** = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others.
- E** = use **EMPATHETIC** listening.
- S** = be **SENSITIVE** to differences of communication styles.
- P** = **PONDER** what you hear and feel before you speak.
- E** = **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions.
- C** = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- T** = **TRUST** ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

During Session 1, an important step will be for you as the facilitator to work with the group to establish group norms. These can be the RESPECT list noted above or a list started from scratch together as a group. You should note these on newsprint and have them posted visibly at each session. As a reminder, establishing and reviewing norms is noted in each Facilitator Session Guide.

If your group is meeting online, it is suggested that the facilitator (acting as the online meeting host), share their screen with a document of the RESPECT guidelines for all to review.

² <https://www.kscopeinstitute.org/free-resources>

Other norms could include these guidelines for group members:

- **Respect speakers and listeners** – limit side conversations; let one person speak at a time. One ball game is better than two going on at the same time.
- **Speak from personal experiences, thoughts, feelings** – use “I” statements, speak for and about self, not others.
- **Honor differences** – listen respectfully and try to understand differences. Do not interrupt unless a person is too long-winded.
- **Discuss issues, not individuals.**
- **Honor other people’s privacy** – you are free to talk about your own thoughts and feelings with others, but not those of others; keep other people’s stories confidential.
- **Take care of your comfort needs as appropriately as possible** – such as a break to get coffee, lavatory, stretch, etc.
- **All group problems should be solved by the group.**
- **Be present for every session** – if unable to be present, notify the facilitator.
- **Be on time** – time is negotiated, so honor it.
- **Prepare for each session** – read or watch any pre-work assigned for the session.
- **Come to the session with an expectation that it will be profitable.**
- **Plan to offer something to the discussion.**
- **If you are a naturally talkative person**, put on the brake and speak third or fourth or late. **If you are a naturally quiet/reserved person**, use the accelerator and speak first or second.
- **Wait for other members to get into the discussion** – silence is okay. It doesn’t mean that nothing is happening. Sometimes it is when the Spirit enters in!
- **Speak loudly enough to be heard by the whole** – direct what you say to the group more than to the facilitator.
- **Keep to the point** – if any member wanders too far afield, time is wasted and puts a heavy burden on the facilitator, so help the process compassionately. Hold your contributions down to one point and speeches to one minute if possible.
- **Leave the session with some perfectly good speeches left unspoken.**

Holy Listening

There are several models for creating an environment for open discussion. Parker Palmer's "circles of trust" as explored in *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994) is "a space between us that honors the soul." He shows how people in settings ranging from friendship to organizational life can support each other on the journey toward living "divided no more."

Eric H. F. Law has a wonderful technique for active listening in his work, *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993) called "Mutual Invitation."³ The technique is presented as a tool for multicultural conversation and dialogue, but it is valuable for any number of settings and circumstances, so it is recommended that groups using *Bearing Witness* follow the practice during all group discussions. This can be used during introductions or when posing a reflection question following a video for discussion. The facilitator's role in a group setting also includes providing an environment in which all have an opportunity to share their thoughts if desired. Some groups have individuals who can dominate or always speak first, and this method gives everyone a chance to be heard, having the full attention of the group with everyone practicing active listening.

Mutual Invitation

The process is a discipline for the group that allows everyone to share the responsibility of making sure everyone's voice is heard. This creates a space for everyone to be able to speak and one person does not dominate or always talk first. It also takes away the "go around the circle" process which can be anxiety-producing for some. Be patient with one another. Allow time between invitations to hear what has been said. A person may wish to pass on speaking, but no one should be allowed to pass on inviting. No one should invite for another. If the person who is supposed to invite forgets to do so, remind them that they have the privilege of selection. Mutual Invitation can be used for Session 1 introductions, responding to the ice-breaker question, or offering thoughts following any of the videos. It does not take long for a group to get used to the process if it is used regularly:

1. The facilitator or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, they then invite another to share. Whom you invite does not need to be the person next to you.
2. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.
3. If that person is not ready to share yet, they say, "I pass for now" and they will invite another person (with an opportunity to share later). If they don't want to say anything at all, they simply say "pass" and proceed to invite another to share.
4. This is done until everyone has been invited.
5. Invite everyone to listen and not to respond to someone's sharing immediately. There will be a time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

2 <https://www.kscopeinstitute.org/free-resources>

Framing Your Group's Engagement

It is helpful to aid participants when the group gets off topic or has trouble staying with the dialogue appropriately. You may want to share this list of questions and statements at your first gathering, inviting participants to keep it handy (or refer to it when needed):

- Am I honoring my own experience as valid, or am I feeling defensive about it?
- Can I trust others to respect our differences, or do I suspect others of trying to force me to change?
- Can I trust myself to see that there is value in someone's counter idea and keep my integrity, without feeling I am weak or wishy-washy?
- Am I willing to open myself to the pain of others and my own, or am I resisting all pain, not realizing that I have the strength to face the pain?
- Am I open to seeing Christ in all others, or do I view others as "the enemy"?
- Remember that each person has a piece of the truth, so we listen to each other to hear if someone else's truth is congruent with ours or adds to ours.
- We dialogue with each other; we do not debate. When we dialogue, everybody wins. In a debate there must be a winner and a loser.
- Each person's opinion is valuable, and we honor it as being true for them. There is a chance it might inform our opinion. So, keep an open mind.

Hospitality

Welcome and hospitality set the tone and atmosphere for a successful program. Your meeting space should be accessible to all with appropriate seating, good lighting, and comfortable temperature. Gathering chairs in a circle is optimal for group conversation; if tables for writing are needed, put tables in a U-shape with chairs on the outside so all can see one another with a focus toward one portion of the room where you can display a white board or easel with newsprint, monitor for viewing, and any other materials needed. The use of nametags at your first few sessions is important, especially if everyone is meeting for the first time as a group.

An area where light refreshments are available is also welcoming. Enlist volunteers to provide a light snack, put on coffee or tea, or bring cold beverages and paper goods. The facilitator should arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of a session to make sure everything is in order and to greet participants as they arrive.

Communication

It is recommended that the facilitator regularly communicate with participants. It may be a weekly email reminder or text about the upcoming session, noting the time, location, and materials to review in advance. It could also be to follow-up a session, recapping ideas that the group generated for future engagement. At your first session, let participants know to check their email (or text) regularly for announcements.

Online Group Options

If your group chooses to meet remotely, make sure the invitation link is sent to all in advance. Use your screen share option when showing a video or document, having these queued up in advance on your desktop. Encourage participants to put their names on their screen and not use a digital background, as that can distort a participant if they move or try to show something. Encourage the use of the mute button for those who are not speaking, especially during the watching of videos. Most of the content in the *Bearing Witness* sessions is easily transferrable to a digital platform.

Facilitating **Adult Learners**

There are many elements of an effective educational process for adults. The creation of a sense of community in which people help one another develop and grow their faith and values is foundational. As much as possible, engage participants' life experiences as occasions for spiritual insight and apply faith to political and social issues: "What would Jesus do?" Respect the importance and uniqueness of each person's faith journey as well as experience. Encourage independent thinking and questioning. As a facilitator, you do not always need to know the definitive answer to a question.

Characteristics of Adult Learners⁴

Adults are hungry for assistance and support in putting their faith into action in the world outside of the church – at work, at home, and in the community. It's important for you to know something about your participants: their needs, patterns of behavior, characteristics, and qualities.

Many adults today:

- are experienced
- are independent
- have established values, beliefs, and opinions
- have a deep need to be self-directing
- tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning
- look for practical consequences
- want to be respected
- are relatively mature and responsible
- participate for many reasons
- expect physical comfort
- might not always attend
- sometimes resist change



⁴ Adapted and updated from *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage* by Eugene Roehlkepartian (The Search Institute, 1993), 148.

Characteristics of a Good Facilitator

- Prepares for the session in advance and knows the material enough (one does not need to be an expert) to provide guidance for all participants
- Sets a mood or climate of trust and openness for the group
- Elicits and clarifies the purposes (why they came) of the individuals and the purpose of the group as a whole (why it exists)
- Relies on the inner motivation and needs of the participants to guide the group
- Organizes and makes available the resources for learning (or guides them to find them on their own)
- Sees his or her role as a flexible resource to be used by the group
- Accepts both intellectual content and emotional attitudes that arise in the group process and works with the group to establish group norms, reviewing them as needs arise
- Participates more actively in the group as it becomes more established, expressing views as an individual who is part of the group
- Expresses his or her own feelings and thoughts in ways that model honesty and sensitivity
- Remains alert to expressions that indicate deep or strong feelings, then sensitively discerns whether to elicit those feelings for constructive sharing and understanding
- Recognizes his or her own limitations, both in knowledge and comfort in sharing himself or herself

Ask Good Questions

- **Ask open-ended questions:** For example, instead of “Where is the Princess Basma Center?” ask “How do you think the location of the Princess Basma Center makes a difference to its clientele?”
- **Ask follow-up questions:** What do you mean by ...? What reasons do you have? How did you decide ...? What has been your experience regarding ...? Tell me more about ...
- **Wait for the answers:** Establish “think time” – a few moments of silence for participants to think about the question, for shy participants to muster the courage to respond, for those who are bolder to wait before they speak; invite participants to write their answers first; wait until most have thought of a response before letting anyone answer.
- **Avoid evaluating discussion responses:** Discussion is just that – discussion. To encourage all to talk, their responses should not be judged. To affirm everyone in a discussion, offer a summary of what you’ve heard around the table or room. It forces you (and everyone) to pay attention and it’s a way to check in and make sure the opinions given have been understood.
- **Encourage questions:** Yes, yes, yes! They’re not interruptions, but “teachable moments.” Every question is valid and important. Modeling imaginative questions brings about more questions.
- **“Chills and Kills” vs. “Sparks and Embarks”:** “Yes” or “No” questions chill conversation; A “Why” question opens up more conversation.
- **Jesus provoked questions:** Jesus wanted people to think. In Matthew, Jesus is a teacher who opened the scriptures. He told a story and then posed a question. We are not biblical scholars, just learners asking questions so that all can learn together.

Helpful Websites

We recommend the following websites as reliable, relatively balanced resources that can deepen your understanding of the Holy Land. For concepts or words that may be unfamiliar, Wikipedia is recommended.

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/>

American Friends of the
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem <https://afedj.org>

The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center <https://www.basma-centre.org>

MIDDLE EAST NEWS AND ANALYSIS

AL-Monitor <https://www.al-monitor.com/>

Foundation for Middle East Peace <https://fmep.org/>

UCLA Younes & Soraya Nazarian
Center for Israel Studies <https://www.international.ucla.edu/israel/home>

TIMELINES

Al Jazeera / Palestine Remix https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/timeline_main.html

Balfour Project <https://balfourproject.org/a-timeline/>

MAPS

Al Jazeera Remix https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/maps_main.html

Palestinian Academic Society for
the Study of International Affairs
(PASSIA) (Jerusalem) <http://passia.org/maps/37?page=2>

PASSIA (Palestinian camps, water,
annexation of land) <http://passia.org/maps/39>

PASSIA (West Bank & Gaza Maps) <http://passia.org/maps/38?page=4>

TERMINOLOGY

PASSIA <http://www.passia.org/terms/>

Vox <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18079996/israel-palestine-conflict-guide-explainer>

While each Facilitator Session Guide will have all of what you need to lead a session, you may wish to refer back to portions of this Program Guide as your group becomes a community and digs deep into the program.