



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

# Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

SESSION 2:

## Healing

FACILITATOR SESSION GUIDE

# Preparing For The Session

## GOALS:

- To learn what makes the Diocese of Jerusalem's hospital ministries in the Occupied Palestinian Territories unique
- To understand what life is like for Palestinians in Gaza, including issues that affect their health
- To understand why Christian medical ministries are needed to serve everyone in the Palestinian Occupied Territories

## Objectives: The ability to....

- Connect the Gospel story of the healing of the bleeding woman with the Diocese of Jerusalem hospitals' open access to all people
- Identify with the people in scripture and the people of Gaza who seek healing
- Describe the living conditions in Gaza and how they can affect one's physical and mental health
- Appreciate how Christian faith sustains and motivates healthcare professionals working in Gaza, where there are fewer than 1,000 Christians in a population of 2.2 million
- Identify where hope is alive amid violence, poverty, and separation in the region
- Describe what a church-sponsored hospital offers to its patients as opposed to a government hospital

## Content Review

Get ready to lead Session 2: Healing

Read and make notes about these documents:

### PDF

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Gaza**
- EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Hospitals**
- PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 2: Healing**

Watch and make notes about these videos:

### Video

- **Remember Ahli Arab Hospital and Gaza** (AFEDJ video)  
<https://youtu.be/wFxK7bdJRI0>
- SESSION 2: HEALING **Gospel Reflection**
- SESSION 2: HEALING **Life in Gaza**
- SESSION 2: HEALING **Christian Witness: Ahli Arab Hospital**
- SESSION 2: HEALING **Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: St. John's Episcopal Church Norwood, Chevy Chase, Maryland**

## Several Days before the Session

- Send participants an email reminder for this upcoming session.
- Remind participants of the pre-work for Session 2 to be accomplished before the session. Encourage them to bring a digital or printed copy of their Session Guide.

PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 2: Healing**

GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Gaza**

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Hospitals**

**Video** Remember Ahli Arab Hospital and Gaza by AFEDJ

<https://youtu.be/wFxK7bdJRI0>

### SUPPLIES

- name tags
- markers
- tape
- easel with newsprint or whiteboard
- R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Respectful Communications Guidelines) newsprint
- laptop / projector / speakers or amplification system / TV or screen
- refreshments (if provided)

## Day of Session

- Gather needed supplies.
- Set up the room.
- Post the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Respectful Communication Guidelines) agreed upon during Session 1 so they are visible to all participants.
- Tee-up all videos on your laptop or other device so that they will be ready to play at the proper time. Test all your equipment in advance to make sure everything is working, including the sound.

## Session 2 Background

Today's Christians engaged in healing ministries in the Diocese of Jerusalem follow Jesus' example by providing compassionate and respectful medical care to all people in the Holy Land, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or ability to pay for services. Jesus drew crowds because people were attracted to the incarnation of love, acceptance, and compassion he demonstrated just as they are drawn to the care provided at Diocese of Jerusalem hospitals. St. Luke's Hospital is the only Christian hospital in the northern West Bank city of Nablus and Ahli Arab Hospital is the lone Christian hospital in Gaza. In both Nablus and Gaza, the Christian community is tiny and shrinking. The hospitals serve, almost exclusively, indigent Palestinian Muslim families, many of whom are Palestinian refugees. They seek out these hospitals for the expert care they receive and because they are treated with dignity and respect.

This session begins with the study of Luke 8:43-48 (Jesus' healing of the bleeding woman), followed by a video of Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina (retired) and AFEDJ Trustee reflecting on this gospel passage and relating it to the Diocese of Jerusalem's hospitals and institutions.

In the videos about Gaza and Ahli Arab Hospital participants will see and hear what life is like in Gaza and learn how these institutions are helping to heal those who live in appalling, desperate conditions in Gaza.

The leaders and staff at Ahli Arab Hospital embody the same deep care and compassion as Jesus and the most vulnerable recognize it. Stepping through the gates at Ahli Hospital is like touching the hem of Jesus' outer cloak. You don't need to be an insider, disciple, or someone rich or important to receive care.

This care does not come without cost. The "power" drained by offering such a high level of care is replenished by the support the Diocese of Jerusalem and the hospital receive from their brothers and sisters around the world, including The American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Financial support and prayer reassure the leaders of Ahli Hospital that their Christian witness is not forgotten by the world.



# Session 2: Healing

## SESSION OPENING

### Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

*God, Son, and Holy Spirit, meet us in this space, whatever space we find ourselves in. Help us to learn more about who you are through Holy Scripture and the people of our Holy Land. Help us to see your image in the stories we will encounter through Bearing Witness. Help us to understand and empathize with the lives of people living in the Holy Land. Give us wisdom and gentleness with ourselves as we witness those who yearn for healing in a broken land. In your name we pray, Amen.*

### Reminder of Group Norms (2 minutes)

Review the *Respectful Communication Guidelines* that your group constructed during Session 1 by looking at them posted on the newsprint in your gathering space (or reviewing them on screen if meeting online). Ask if there are any questions or changes to be made. Adjust as necessary. Distribute name tags if needed.

### Ice-Breaker Activity (5 minutes)

Using *Mutual Invitation* (found in the Facilitator Program Guide) ask the participants:

*Share the name of a doctor or medical facility that has had an impact on you or made a difference in your life and why.*

or

*Very briefly share a time when you sought medical care for yourself or someone else: Where did you go? How far? How long did it take for someone to see you? Did the caregivers treat you with dignity and respect?*

### Introduce the Session (5 minutes)

#### Begin:

*Jesus drew crowds because people were attracted to the incarnation of love, acceptance, and compassion he demonstrated. Today's Christians engaged in healing ministries in the Diocese of Jerusalem follow Jesus' example by providing compassionate and respectful medical care to all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or ability to pay for services.*

**JESUS' MINISTRY****Scripture Study****Facilitator Background Commentary**

In the Gospel passage for Session 2 (Luke 8:43-48) Jesus arrives in Galilee where he is welcomed by a crowd who press around him. Suddenly he identifies a special need from a particular individual who touches the hem of his cloak, a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years. The fearful reluctance of this woman to reveal herself may be based on her awareness that she is unclean according to Jewish law (Leviticus 15:25-30). Her very presence in a large crowd would be frowned upon, with her normal existence spent watching others from a distance to avoid the possibility of contact with another person. Her reaching out to Jesus is an act of desperation even though she expects rejection and embarrassment. Instead of rebuking her, Jesus addresses her as “daughter,” commending her act of faith. He acknowledges her as a person. Her physical healing restores her as an individual to the community, no longer an outcast.

This story demonstrates that the compassionate healing offered by Jesus is available to all – unclean, outcasts, those outside his close circle of followers. Of all the kinds of miracles that Jesus performed, healing is the one most told in all the gospels – 26 times! He healed the blind, paralyzed, possessed, and sick in both body and mind freely. Jesus instructed his apostles to “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment” (Matthew 10:8).

**Discipleship Based Bible Study** (10 minutes)

Lead Bible Study following *The Discipleship Based Bible Study*<sup>2</sup> method or another approach your group may prefer. Use *Mutual Invitation* for steps #5 and #7.

1. Invite participants to find Luke 8:43-48 in their Session 2 Participant Guide.
2. Read the scripture passage aloud.
3. What word(s), idea(s), or sentence(s) stand out to you in this Gospel passage?
4. Invite another person to reread the passage.
5. What is Jesus (the Gospel) saying to you?
6. Invite another person to reread the passage.
7. What is Jesus (the Gospel) calling you to do?

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/indigenous\\_disciples\\_prayer\\_book\\_eng.pdf](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/indigenous_disciples_prayer_book_eng.pdf)

**Luke 8:43-48**

<sup>43</sup> Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her.

<sup>44</sup> She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. <sup>45</sup> Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you." <sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me." <sup>47</sup> When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Introduce the video:

**Video**

**SESSION 2: HEALING**

**Gospel Reflection:  
Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple**

(15 minutes)

Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple offers her reflection on the passage from Luke. Feel free to write notes or your observations in your notebook.



**1. Play the video.**

**2. Discussion prompts:**

- What is the significance that the merest physical connection with Jesus makes the bleeding woman whole?
- What are the forces that keep us from being healed today?
- What does it mean for you to be seen and heard by someone else when you are in need?
- What estrangements do we need to overcome in our community for healing to occur?
- Who is the bleeding woman today in the Holy Land and among us?

**THE REALITIES OF LIFE IN GAZA****Facilitator Background and Notes:**

Remind the participants of their pre-reading material: Getting to Know the Holy Land: Gaza. Give them a chance to quickly review

Introduce the next video:

**Video** **SESSION 2: HEALING****Life in Gaza** (20 minutes)

Living conditions for the more than 2 million Palestinians living in the tiny Gaza Strip are appalling. Gaza has been described as an “open-air prison.” Since 2007, when the militant Hamas party was elected to power, Gaza has been under a land, sea and air blockade imposed by Israel. The threat of violence and war is ever present.

Years of conflict and the blockade have left 80% of the population dependent on humanitarian assistance to survive. Ninety-five percent of Gazans don't have access to clean water, and there is an ongoing power shortage which impacts essential services like health, water, and sanitation. Almost half of Gaza's people do not have enough food, around 35% of young children are anemic and many children suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition. The poorest families in Gaza depend on Ahli Arab Hospital's ministry of mercy for free quality healthcare and medical services.

**1. Play the video.****2. Discussion prompts:**

- What surprises you?
- What gives you pause?
- What are the forces working against the people of Gaza?
- Only 1,000 or so Christians live in Gaza, out of a population of 2.2 million. What hardships and challenges do you think they encounter?
- Almost 70% of the residents of Gaza are Palestinian refugees, many living in abysmal refugee camps, with little hope of ever returning to the homes they fled in 1948. How do you imagine this fact impacts life for everyone in Gaza?

*Your group may wish to take a stretch break at this point if not done earlier.*



**THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF AHLI ARAB HOSPITAL****Facilitator Background and Notes:**

Remind the participants of their pre-reading material: “Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem Ministries: Hospitals.” Give them a chance to quickly review.

Introduce the next video:

**Video****SESSION 2: HEALING****Ahli Arab Hospital** (15 minutes)

Overcoming obstacles on many fronts is a daily routine for the leaders of Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City. Recent years have offered up some particularly daunting challenges, including violent clashes at the border and war with Israel, the effects of U.S. cuts in aid to the U.N. agency that serves Palestinian refugees and the continued degradation of infrastructure and living conditions for most Gazans. This video will show how the leaders and medical staff of Ahli Arab Hospital work with dedication to help their patients cope with appalling living conditions, including widespread water contamination, food insecurity, psycho-social trauma from poverty and war, limited medical supplies, lack of fuel for heating and cooking, and much more.

**1. Play the video****2. Discussion prompts:**

- Dr. Maher Ayyad shares, “Where there is poverty there is injustice.” What are your reactions to his statement?
- Where do you see God at work?
- What questions arise for you?
- What touches the hem of Christ in Gaza? How does this affect you?
- In light of the gospel story of the bleeding woman, how might we understand the healing ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem?

**OUR INVITATION**

Introduce the next video:

**Video** **SESSION 2: HEALING****Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem:  
St. John's Norwood, Chevy Chase, MD** (13 minutes)

*Bearing Witness* helps us understand the Diocese of Jerusalem's Christian witness as a response to conflict and human suffering and calls us to discern how we as a church and as individuals can engage with the Diocese of Jerusalem ministries. The program intends to provide us the biblical basis and the inspiration to walk together with our Christian sisters and brothers in the Holy Land. One of the important tools *Bearing Witness* provides are examples of church engagement with the Diocese of Jerusalem that offer possible model for building our own connections to these ministries.

Listen to how St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood in Chevy Chase, MD has responded to the needs of St Luke's Hospital in the West Bank by working with AFEDJ.

**1. Play the video****2. Discussion prompts:**

- What gives you inspiration?
- What transformative ministries does your church engage with in your community or the greater world?
- What is calling to you?
- What possibilities do you see for your church to connect with and support the humanitarian ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem?

Invite participants to name any personal observations or questions they may have about this session. Record them on newsprint or whiteboard. Save the newsprint (or take a photo of the whiteboard) to use in Session 5.

Review for the next session:

**PDF**

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **The West Bank and Ramallah**
- EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Schools**
- PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 3: Teaching**

**Article** **Israel Tampers with Palestinian Education in Occupied East Jerusalem**

by Najla M. Shahwan (Turkey's Daily Sahba, 8/11/22)

<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/israel-tampers-with-palestinian-education-in-occupied-east-jerusalem>

**CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)**

*Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(BCP p. 826)

**RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

These websites and resources will help you learn more about life in Gaza and the West Bank as well as the healing ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

**Video, Graphics, and Articles** **Palestine Divided**

**Palestine Divided** is a rich website from the news organization Aljezeera. It provides videos, maps, graphs and articles describing life for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Covers 1947-2014. It is sometimes confusing to navigate, but the content is relatively balanced and deeply informative.

<https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/palestine-divided.html#/27>

**Video** **AFEDJ interview video: Suhaila Tarazi**

Suhaila Tarazi, general director of Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, talks with John Lent, former executive director of American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ), about the mission of the hospital and current conditions in Gaza.

<https://youtu.be/DLhEA7f45UE>

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