



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

SESSION 3:

Teaching

FACILITATOR SESSION GUIDE

Preparing For The Session

GOALS:

- Understand how Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem schools impact the future of Palestine youth
- Learn how a religiously diverse school population is a gift as well as a challenge
- Discuss the political and economic realities that will affect the current and future leaders of Palestine
- Understand the challenges facing Palestinian teachers and students in the West Bank

Objectives: The ability to....

- Connect the parable of the mustard seed with the potential of students and the impact of Diocese of Jerusalem schools
- Describe what a church-sponsored school in the West Bank offers its students as opposed to a government school
- Name ways that the Diocese of Jerusalem's teaching institutions help students grow into strong, competent young people
- List the difficulties students have in traveling to school and either enrolling in university or finding employment upon graduation
- Describe the economic barriers that Palestinians face when they graduate from school in different parts of the region (West Bank, Israel)
- Understand the expectations of Palestinian parents and the opportunity vocational education provides for at-risk students

Content Review

Get ready to lead Session 3: Teaching

Read and make notes about these documents:

PDF

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

Article

Israel Tampers with Palestinian Education in Occupied East Jerusalem

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

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

Watch and make notes about these videos:

Video

- SESSION 3: TEACHING **Gospel Reflection**
- SESSION 3: TEACHING **Life in the West Bank**
- SESSION 3: TEACHING **Christian Witness: Episcopal Technological and Vocational School**
- SESSION 3: TEACHING **Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Washington D.C.**

Several Days before the Session

- Send participants an email reminder for this upcoming session.
- Remind participants of the pre-work for Session 3 to be accomplished before the session. Encourage them to bring a digital or printed copy of their Session Guide.

PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 3: Teaching**

GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **The West Bank and Ramallah**

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **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>

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 3 Background



The educational ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem follow Jesus' teachings that out of small beginnings can come great things. The Arab Evangelical Episcopal School (AEES) in Ramallah started as a small orphanage for girls in 1954 and the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (ETVTC) began in 2000 in one classroom with a single computer. Both have grown through the persistence, passion, and vision of their leaders and staff. Both offer a safe, peaceful, nurturing environment. Many of the students at ETVTC have been discovered growing in the "wild," young people who have not flourished in more academic settings. Neither school represents a perfectly manicured garden but rather one that adapts to the needs of the students who represent multiple faiths and economic backgrounds, meeting them where they are so they can thrive and grow.

This session begins with the study of Matthew 13:31-32 (the parable of the mustard seed), followed by a video of Fr. Fadi Diab, rector of St. Andrew's Church, Ramallah and St. Peter's Church, Birzeit in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. His reflection on this gospel relates to the Diocese of Jerusalem's schools. Participants will see and hear how Christian values are infused in the pedagogy and culture of these schools that allow for the growth of these students ("tiny seeds") into confident, compassionate, bridge-building Palestinian leaders of the future.

Session 3: Teaching

SESSION OPENING

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 820)

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 the schools (and their locations – city, state/country)
you attended from childhood through adulthood.*

or

*Share the name of a teacher who had an impact on you
or made a difference in your life and why.*

Introduce the Session (5 minutes)

Begin:

Jesus was often called “rabbi” or teacher. His teachings often included the telling of parables, especially ones with images of seeds, growth, and harvest. This session will connect the parable of the mustard seed with the educational institutions associated with the Diocese of Jerusalem, particularly the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School (AEES) and the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (ETVTC) in Ramallah. Both began as humble organizations and have grown into highly regarded educational institutions.

JESUS' MINISTRY

Scripture Study**Facilitator Background Commentary**

In the Gospel passage for Session 3 (Matthew 13:31-32), Jesus uses a parable, a favorite device of Jewish teachers. Parables may be a story, a brief metaphor, or a proverb designed to illustrate a single point of teaching. Jesus' parables rely on the commonplace experience of the hearers, inviting them to make a judgment on an ordinary situation, then transfer it to a spiritual setting. The parable of the mustard seed is a proverbial example of smallness. Mustard seeds grow into bushes, not trees. The three features of the mustard plant found in the Middle East are the small size of its seed, the large size of the plant in relation to the seed, and its rapid growth.

Jesus, who himself deals with life on a small scale in the villages and with individuals, may be suggesting that we do not need to import an impressive tree from elsewhere to further God's kingdom. God can create wonderful things from inauspicious beginnings. How tiny and insignificant seems the tiny seed – yet how powerful its effect!

Discipleship Based Bible Study (10 minutes)

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

1. Invite participants to find Matthew 13:31-32 in their Session 3 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?

Matthew 13:31-32

³¹He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

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

Introduce the video:

Video

SESSION 3: TEACHING

Gospel Reflection:

The Reverend Fadi Diab (15 minutes)

Fr. Fadi Diab, rector of St. Andrew's Church, Ramallah and St. Peter's Church, Birzeit (both in the West Bank) offers his reflection.



1. Play the video.

2. Discussion prompts:

- Fr. Diab says that this parable is subversive from a Palestinian perspective: They (Palestinians) are seen as small and insignificant compared to those who hold power and wealth in the region. But the smallest can be the greatest through education. What do you think he means?
- How are educational institutions “nests” for their students?
- How does Fr. Diab connect the church’s ministry of education to a ministry of hope?
- How is education important to a child’s identity and future? How is it transformational?
- What significance do you see in God’s desire to work through human agents, such as the Diocese of Jerusalem’s educational institutions?



THE REALITIES OF LIFE IN THE WEST BANK

Facilitator Background and Notes:

Remind the participants of their pre-work reading material: “Getting to Know the Holy Land: The West Bank and Ramallah.” Give them a chance to quickly review.

Introduce the next video:

Video SESSION 3: TEACHING

Life in the West Bank (20 minutes)

Living under occupation in Occupied Palestinian Territories, in a West Bank city like Ramallah, is very hard. Children and youth are frequently exposed to and may even experience violence. Living conditions are not conducive to learning and it can be a hardship simply trying to travel from home to school and back home again due to checkpoints. Many grow up separated from family and friends due to political, economic, or social conflicts. The Palestinian economy is fragile and the unemployment rate is high. These conditions contribute to a sense of hopelessness. Why get an education and make plans for the future when opportunities are so limited?



1. Play the video.

2. Discussion prompts:

- How do the economic and political challenges of parents effect the education of their children?
- What are the forces working against children and youth and their teachers attending school in a part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories such as Ramallah?
- Why is the presence of the Christian community along with its ministries and institutions important in Palestine?
- What causes you to pause and rethink your previous assumptions about Palestine?
- What cries out to you?
- Where do you see God?
- What did you hear that will stay with you or you will remember five years from now?

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

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF THE EPISCOPAL TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

Facilitator Background and Notes:

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

Introduce the next video:

Video

SESSION 3: TEACHING

Christian Witness: Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (15 minutes)

This video introduces us to the leaders and students at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School and Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, and Christ School in Nazareth. The parable of the mustard seed applies to all of the Diocese of Jerusalem schools. Despite the challenging living conditions and obstacles to gaining an excellent education, these schools give students the skills and opportunity to grow into confident, compassionate, bridge-building Palestinian leaders of the future who will contribute to a world where all people can live together in peace.

1. Play the video

2. Discussion prompts:

- What are the characteristics of these schools that help them provide students the skills, attitudes, resilience, and motivation they need to live productive lives despite living under occupation?
- Why is offering vocational training an important educational option for young people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?
- How does ETVTC give its students hope for the future?
- How are the Diocese of Jerusalem's educational and vocational institutions tiny seeds of success?
- Where do you see God at work in these schools?

OUR INVITATION

Introduce the next video:

Video **SESSION 3: TEACHING**

**Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem:
St. Alban's, Washington, D.C.** (13 minutes)

Hear how St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. has responded to the needs of the Saviour's School in Zarqa, Jordan through AFEDJ.

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

- What gives you inspiration?
- What transformative ministries does your church engage within your community or the greater world?
- What is calling to you?
- How can we change the narrative of "the small" being helpless victims to becoming individuals who have confidence in themselves and their future?

Invite participants to name any personal observations or questions they may have about this session. Write them on newsprint or whiteboard.

Review for the next session:

Video **Mira's Story from the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center**

<https://youtu.be/W2lBz1tn0zo>

Video **Walk with a Child at Holy Land Institute for the Deaf**

<https://youtu.be/QDldfsnnybs>

PDF

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Jerusalem**
- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Jordan**
- EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Rehabilitation Centers**
- PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 4: Breaking Barriers**

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Lord God, help us to remember those who minister to the children and youth across the world who seek education. We pray for those who wake up early and come home late to go to school, facing checkpoints and harassment on their journey. Give us more of your compassion for their plight, soften our hearts to their situation, and help us follow your lead in seeking justice and mercy on their behalf. We pray for an end to the wars, poverty, and human rights abuses that make life difficult for people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories so that they can live with dignity and hope. We give thanks for people who teach children, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or Jew. In the name of your Son who was himself a teacher. Amen.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

These websites and resources will help you learn more about life in the occupied territories as well as the ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Website Palestinian Education: Barriers to access

From Friends of Birzeit University. Palestinian schools, universities, and informal institutions have contributed to sustaining Palestinian national life for a geographically fragmented people while also providing the skills for personal development and growth. Yet there are still barriers.

<https://fobzu.org/education-in-palestine/>

Article and Video

A Muslim Among Israeli Settlers: What Happens When a Pakistani American Writer Goes Deep into the West Bank? by Wajahat Ali

This article and the accompanying video, titled **Israeli Settlers in the Occupied West Bank**, ask the question: “Why would an Israeli Jew choose to live in the West Bank?” The author embarks on a personal quest to understand the perspectives of some of the 500,000 Israeli Jews who live in the occupied territory in defiance of international law – and to hear from the Palestinians who oppose them. In his travels through the West Bank, Ali visits the family of a Palestinian terrorist, ventures into the heart of one of the most radical settlements and speaks to the leader of an NGO focused on creating a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/06/a-muslim-among-the-settlers/559145/>

Copyright © 2023 by American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

“Discipleship Based Bible Study” was developed by Native Episcopalians and is offered for use by The Episcopal Church’s Office of Indigenous Ministries.

“Respectful Communication Guidelines” and “Mutual Invitation” developed by Eric H. F. Law are used with permission from the Kaleidoscope Institute.

The discernment process used in Session 5 is adapted from The Episcopal Church’s Sacred Ground curriculum by the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers with Katrina Browne and is used with permission.

Bearing Witness funding provided by: The Constable Fund of The Episcopal Church and Carol and David Myers

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
25 Old King’s Highway N. Suite 13
Darien, CT 06820
www.afedj.org

Authors: Sharon Ely Pearson, Heidi Shott, John Lent
Design: Peg Golden Arrington
Video: Five Pebbles Productions
Images: AFEDJ and Shutterstock.