



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

# Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

SESSION 3:

## Teaching

PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE

# Teaching

## BEFORE THE SESSION

### 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 respective 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.



### Pre-Work

These Bearing Witness documents and a related article will give you background information as you prepare to attend Session 3. You should set aside thirty minutes to an hour prior to the session to read these materials.

#### PDF

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **The West Bank and Ramallah**
- EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Schools**

#### 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>



## SESSION OPENING

### Opening Prayer

*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)*

## JESUS' MINISTRY

### Scripture Study Matthew 13:31-32

<sup>31</sup>He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup>it 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."

#### Video Gospel Reflection: The Reverend Fadi Diab

#### Reflect

- How are schools (educational institutions) "nests" for children and youth?
- What significance do I see in God's desire to work through human agents, such as the Diocese of Jerusalem's educational institutions?



## REALITIES OF THE HOLY LAND

#### Video Life in the West Bank

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 the 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 after your schooling are so limited?

**Reflect**

- How would I handle the daily challenges faced by people living in the West Bank?
- What did I hear that will stay with me or I will remember five years from now?

**DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES**

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**Video The Christian Witness of the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center**

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 three of these 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.

**Reflect**

- How are the Diocese of Jerusalem's education and vocational institutions seeds of success?
- Where do I see God at work in these schools?

**OUR INVITATION**

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**Video Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem**

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.

**Reflect**

- What inspired me?
- How can I (or my church) change the narrative of "the small" being helpless victims to becoming individuals who have confidence in themselves and their future?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

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*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 territories of Palestine 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/>

## **PREPARE FOR SESSION 4** Breaking Barriers

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**

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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.

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