



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

SESSION 4:

Breaking Barriers

FACILITATOR SESSION GUIDE

Preparing For The Session

GOALS:

- Explore how we can cross borders and overcome stigma just like Jesus did
- Understand the challenges/marginalization families with a child who has a disability face in Jerusalem and the West Bank
- Understand the cultural biases and beliefs that create barriers to families from seeking assistance for their child
- Understand what makes Jerusalem Princess Basma Center's (JPBC) Inclusive School unique
- Learn some of the reasons Muslim families are drawn to a Christian institution
- Learn why it's important in Palestine for parents to have the skills to advocate for their children with disabilities

Objectives: The ability to....

- Connect the story of the ten lepers being "healed" and JPBC's services to children with disabilities and their families
- Describe the ministry of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center and its impact on children with disabilities and their families
- Name several challenges facing families who wish to come to JPBC with their children
- Tell a story of hope that JPBC has given to a family
- Share how one's faith can overcome obstacles with a personal example as well as one from JPBC
- Describe the ministry of Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

Content Review

Get ready to lead Session 4: Breaking Barriers

Read and make notes about these documents:

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**

Watch and make notes about these videos:

Videos

Mira's Story from the Jerusalem Basma Center

<https://youtu.be/W2IBz1tnOzo>

Walk with a Child at Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

<https://youtu.be/QDldfsnyybs>

- SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS **Gospel Reflection**
- SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS **Life in Jerusalem**
- SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS **Christian Witness: Jerusalem Princess Basma Center**
- SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS **Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: St. James Episcopal Church, Montclair, NJ**

Several Days before the Session

- Send participants an email reminder for this upcoming session.
- Remind participants of the pre-work for Session 4 to be accomplished before the session. Encourage them to bring a digital or printed copy of their Session Guide.

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

<https://youtu.be/W2IBz1tnOzo>

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

<https://youtu.be/QDldfsnnybs>

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

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 4 Background

The Diocese of Jerusalem helps children and youth with disabilities and their families break down barriers and overcome obstacles to lead productive lives with dignity and respect. Opened in 1965 to serve families whose children were affected by polio, Jerusalem Princess Basma Center (JPBC) has expanded its mission to treat and empower children with a wide range of disabilities and offer support to their families by providing an array of therapies and rehabilitation services, a residential program for mothers and children, and a K-12 Inclusive School. The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (HLID) is a Diocese of Jerusalem institution located in Salt, Jordan, north of Amman, that provides educational and rehabilitation services to deaf, hearing-impaired, and deaf-blind children and young people from the ages of 3 to 20, as well as people with other sensory and physical disabilities. HLID's goal is to enable these children and youth to participate in the lives of their families and communities and to make valuable contributions to civic society.

The leaders and staff at these institutions provide expert care and therapy and they treat children and their families with dignity, respect, and compassion. They bring children with disabilities and their families out of isolation to live productive lives. These institutions point the way for others to recognize that all people are beautiful children of God, reaching across barriers – political, cultural, physical. They welcome all people to their Christian ministries offering love, hope, and justice.

This session begins with the study of Luke 17:11-19 (the healing of the ten lepers), followed by a video of the Reverend Canon Nicholas Porter, AFEDJ Board member and Executive Director of Jerusalem Peacebuilders. His reflection connects the gospel story to the Diocese of Jerusalem's institutions for children with disabilities. Participants will see and hear how Christian values are at the core of these ministries as they serve families by breaking down barriers and overcoming obstacles. They believe in a world in which all are seen as equal, both in the eyes of people and of the Lord our God.



Session 4: Breaking Barriers

SESSION OPENING

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for your unending power to heal the sick and cast out demons. We ask that you use that same power to demolish the obstacles that stand before the world today, the divisions in body, mind, and soul that create barriers between all God's people. Your light can drive out all the darkness that surrounds us. Your word can break the chains that hold us down. May we know the freedom we have in you and may we be filled with your love so we might live a life worthy of your wonderful name. Amen. (adapted from ConnectUSfund.org)

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 a time when you felt marginalized or "outcast" in your community,
workplace, school, or family*

or

Share an obstacle you have had to face or overcome in your life.

Introduce the Session (5 minutes)

Begin:

Jesus healed ten lepers who were considered outcasts from the rest of society. He crossed social, political, and geographic boundaries that divided those from Samaria and Galilee when he spoke to them. The Diocese of Jerusalem helps the disabled and their families break down barriers and overcome obstacles to lead productive lives to the best of their abilities, with dignity and respect.

JESUS' MINISTRY

Scripture Study

Facilitator Background Commentary

The compassion of Jesus is demonstrated again and again in the many healing stories in the gospels. In Luke's account of the healing the lepers (Luke 17:11-19) he shows compassion to the ostracized, the marginalized, and the outsider. Jesus makes it clear he is willing to cross geographic, social, religious, cultural boundaries to meet people, even to the point of breaking Levitical law (Lev. 13:45-46) by touching them. This story occurs as Jesus is physically crossing boundaries. On his way to Jerusalem, he must travel in the area between Samaria and Galilee, each occupied by different ethnic populations.

In scripture, leprosy is more often a general term for a variety of skin diseases. Those afflicted were subject to several social taboos and religious purification requirements (Leviticus 13-14). Because their condition was considered God's judgment against them, lepers were shunned as invisible people in society. The law stipulated that they remain isolated from the community, and they were to warn others not to come close as we hear in this healing. "When he saw them" (v. 14), Jesus *really* saw them. He recognized them as human beings, children of God.

Jesus then instructs them to present themselves to the priest as outlined in the law (Lev. 13:2-3, 14:2-32). On their way they are healed. After discovering his cleansing, one of the lepers turns back. By his action he acknowledges Jesus as the true priest, the one through whom comes real restoration to wholeness and community. It is interesting that Luke points out that the one who turns back is a foreigner, a Samaritan, one who is despised by the local community. Jesus commends and affirms his faith.

This story clarifies and further reveals Jesus' mission. Through his daily travels from place to place and in his decisions and activities we see an important role for service toward others. We are neighbors to one another because of God's loving plan for this world. The Arabic words *Allah Kariem*, meaning 'God provides,' bind us together. The way God cares for us, so we care for each other.

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 Luke 17:11-19 in their Session 4 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?

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

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.

¹² As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?” ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”

¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

Introduce the video:

Video

SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS

Gospel Reflection:

The Reverend Canon Nicholas Porter

(15 minutes)

Fr. Nicholas Porter offers his reflection on this gospel and how it relates to the ministry of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center in East Jerusalem.



1. Play the video.

2. Discussion prompts:

- Who are the “lepers” of our contemporary culture – the invisible people we ignore?
- What were the barriers to the lepers? What are the barriers faced by people today who may have a “stigma” or disability?
- How does Fr. Porter make a connection between the divisions of Samaritans and Jews in the Gospel with today’s Palestinians and Israel citizens?
- Fr. Porter states, “Sometimes it feels like there are more outsiders than insiders” in the Holy Land. What do you think he means?
- What are we called to do as the Church and as individuals to reach out to people who are considered “less than” and welcome them into our communities?

THE REALITIES OF LIFE IN JERUSALEM

Facilitator Background and Notes:

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

Introduce the next video:

Video SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS

Life in Jerusalem (20 minutes)

Since 1967, those who live in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem) face incredible obstacles to find healing and a chance at a new life for their children who have disabilities. There are no other institutions in Palestine that offer the range and level of services of JPBC. So families with a child with a disability must find a way to get to the Center in East Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. If they live in the West Bank they must apply for a permit to enter East Jerusalem to receive services, which is not always approved. They need to go through checkpoints and often are stopped by Israeli soldiers along the way. They must wait in long lines with a young person who struggles under any circumstance with physical, emotional, educational, and/or social issues, including mobility. If they live in Gaza, there is little chance they will be able to travel to Jerusalem for care.

During the COVID pandemic, JPBC instituted a comprehensive virtual therapy program, using online video. The Center continues to offer virtual services, which are most effective for follow-up care and supervision, after in-person diagnosis and therapy. There is no substitute for onsite rehabilitation services and the barriers for many families to reach the Center are hard for us to imagine.



1. Play the video.

2. Discussion prompts:

- Why is there shame or stigma associated with a disability?
How is that a barrier for families?
- What obstacles do parents in East Jerusalem (and the West Bank and Gaza) face in trying to find specialized medical care, rehabilitation, and education for their children?
- How do poverty and war effect families in the occupied territories?
- Where do people in East Jerusalem and the West Bank see hope?

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

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF JERUSALEM PRINCESS BASMA CENTER***Facilitator Background and Notes:***

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

Introduce the next video:

Video**SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS****Jerusalem Princess Basma Center**

(15 minutes)

The Diocese of Jerusalem breaks down barriers to provide services to those who have cognitive and physical disabilities and assists families in providing dignity and hope for their children no matter their religious beliefs or where they live.

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

- How does Princess Basma Center break down barriers for parents and their children?
- Why is the presence of the Christian community in Palestine important for those who are disabled or have children with special needs?
- According to Violette Mubarak, the Director of JPBC, what are the services JPBC provides and how does the Center reach families in need?
- Fr. Nicholas Porter says, "... mothers and children come seeking that love, that medical care, that emotional and social support that only the Center can provide . . . there is restoration through love." How is this accomplished?
- How is the Princess Basma Center bearing witness to the message of Jesus?

OUR INVITATION

Introduce the next video:

Video**SESSION 4: BREAKING BARRIERS**
**Engaging with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem:
St. James Episcopal Church, Montclair, NJ** (13 minutes)

Hear how St. James Episcopal Church in Montclair, NJ has responded to the needs of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center through AFEDJ.

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

- What transformative ministries does your church engage within 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.

Review for the next session:

Video**Palestinian Students Share Their Dreams for the Future**

<https://youtu.be/I9JMKsE-bRo>

PDF

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Israel and Nazareth**
- PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE: **Session 5: Building Hope**

Article**Mapping Hope in the Israel-Palestine Conflict** by Allen Hester

<https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/articles/mapping-hope-israel-palestine-conflict/?location=israel-palestine&theme=culture-media-advocacy>

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Lord, help all those with disabilities know they are loved and they matter to you and the world. Through your Spirit, help workers train parents and community leaders to walk in humility to eliminate destructive stigma toward people with disabilities. May children with disabilities be afforded improved access to basic services, healthcare, and education and may we reach across physical, political, and spiritual barriers to bring about the coming of your Kingdom. In the name of the great healer, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(adapted from World Vision).

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

These links and resources will help you learn more about serving those with disabilities in the Holy Land as well as the ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem that are breaking barriers:

Article **Gratitude Versus Children's Rights: An Exploration of Mothers' Attitudes Towards Disability and Inclusive Education in Palestine**

by Alison MacKenzie, Christine Bower Mohammed Owaineh

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666374020300017>

Shame, stigma, and prejudice about disability, and general ignorance about the rights of children are significant barriers to inclusion in Palestine. This research report focuses on the inclusion of children and young adults with disabilities in educational and vocational training centers in Palestine.

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

<https://youtu.be/QDldfsnnybs>

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) invites individuals and churches to learn more about being a companion to a deaf or deaf-blind student at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan.

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