



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

# Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

SESSION 4:

## Breaking Barriers

PARTICIPANT SESSION GUIDE



# Breaking Barriers

## Before the Session

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### 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.

### Pre-Work

These *Bearing Witness* documents will give you background information as you prepare to attend Session 4. You should set aside thirty minutes to an hour prior to the session to read these materials.

#### PDF

- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Jerusalem**
- GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY LAND: **Jordan**
- EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES: **Rehabilitation Centers**

#### 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>

**SESSION OPENING****Opening Prayer**

*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)

**JESUS' MINISTRY****Scripture Study** Luke 17:11-19

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, <sup>13</sup>they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" <sup>14</sup>When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. <sup>15</sup>Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup>He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?" <sup>18</sup>Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup>Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

**Video Gospel Reflection:**  
**The Reverend Canon Nicholas Porter**

**Reflect**

- Who are the "lepers" of our contemporary culture – the invisible people we ignore?
- What are we called to do as the Church and as individuals to break barriers?

**THE REALITIES OF LIFE IN JERUSALEM****Video Life in Jerusalem**

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.

### Reflect

- Why is there shame or stigma associated with a disability?
- What obstacles do families and their children with disabilities who live in the West Bank face?

## THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF JERUSALEM PRINCESS BASMA CENTER

### Video Christian Witness:

#### Jerusalem Princess Basma Center

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.



### Reflect

- How does the Princess Basma Center break down barriers for parents and their children?
- How do the staff at Princess Basma bear witness to Jesus?

## OUR INVITATION

### Video Engaging with the Diocese of Jerusalem

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

### Reflect

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

## CLOSING PRAYER

*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

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.

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

## **PREPARE FOR SESSION 5** Building Hope

**Review for the next session:**

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

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

### **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>

### **PDF**

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

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