



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

January 2016 Issue 101



An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting About Accompanying the people of Palestine and Israel

Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a couple of minutes are good. This outline is based on a 45 minute children's meeting. Read the Getting Ready section of *Journeys in the Spirit* issue 101.

Gather:

Journey to school. After welcoming everyone ask the children about their usual journey to school. How do they travel to school? Who accompanies them? How do they make sure they stay safe on the way to school? Are there dangerous roads to cross or places they feel less safe? If the group is large or has some children who talk more than others, you might like to pass around an object, such as a stone or a stick and ask the children to wait until they are holding the object for their turn to share. Explain that it is fine to pass the object on if they don't want to speak.

Share the pictures of Palestinian school children in *Additional Resources 101.A*. Explain that because of the conflict in their country, children often have a scary journey to school with the safest way being closed. They have to pass through checkpoints where soldiers, with guns and sometimes dogs, check their bags. Sometimes the older boys get into trouble as they get angry with the soldiers and throw stones. Sometimes people known as settlers throw stones at the children.

10 minutes

Engage

Read this simple story taken from the *Bible, Numbers – chapter 13, verses 17-27*. You could use puppets or act the story to bring it to life.

“A very long time ago there were some people, the Israelites, who didn't have houses to live in. They lived in tents and kept taking them down, travelling around and putting them up again. But they were tired of moving around. They wanted to find a good place to live, where they could build houses and farms, where there was grass for their sheep and cows. They knew that that their ancestors had come from a special place and they wanted to find it and return home.

Their leader was a man called Moses. One day when the people were very tired of travelling, he told them to rest and sent some men over the next hill to see what it was like. He said ‘Bring something back to show us what the land is like’.

When the men came back forty days later they were hot and dusty but very excited. They said, “We have found a wonderful place. Look at what we have brought.” They had huge bunches of grapes, dates and pomegranates.

Moses and his people believed that God had given them a special place. Thousands of years later, their descendants still live there. They call the land Israel. But there was a problem. There were already people living in the land and they believed that God had given the land, which they call Palestine, to them. This caused a lot of disagreement and fighting.

Over the years, there have been peaceful times and there have been times of war. Sometimes people have had to flee their homes. Sometimes other countries have got involved and made things worse. Today, different groups of people still don't want to share the land and there is still fighting”.

Pause for a moment and then ask the children what they think about this story and if they have any questions.

10 minutes

Respond:

Read the text and show the pictures about the separation barrier in *Additional Resource 101.B* and build a model of the barrier, using bricks, cardboard or papier mach. As you build, talk about: -

How do you think it feels to live close to the wall? Explain how some people might feel protected, whilst others might feel imprisoned.

Why do you think the Israelis started to build the wall? Explain how awful experiences can lead to fear. Fear can make us forget that other people are just like us.

You might like to add some artwork to your barrier, as Banksy has done on the Palestinian side of the wall.

20 minutes

Reflect:

Have enough time to come together and share as a group before the end of children's meeting.

Questions to think about:-

How did finding out about the lives of Palestinian and Israeli children make us feel?

What have we decided to do about sharing what we have learned with other people?

Encourage the children to share their thoughts and make firm plans to share with others.

5 minutes