

Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 17.A Engage A story

Read this short story from the Talmud - a collection of Jewish laws and traditions often told in stories



Two men were fighting over a piece of land. Each of them was certain that the land belonged to him, and each of them had important documents that each one believed proved that the land was his. They decided to go to the man of faith, the Rabbi and ask him to make the decision as to which one of them owned the piece of land. The rabbi listened very carefully and looked at their documents, but he simply couldn't decide which one of them owned the land. They both seemed to be right. Finally he said, "Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land." He put his ear to the ground, and after a moment he stood up and he said: "Gentlemen, the land says it belongs to neither of you – but that you belong to it."

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Sheet 17.B Engage Pictures of Israel/Palestine



Olive tree



Mountains and fields



Grandma and grandchild out for a walk.

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Sheet 17.C

Respond Four stories, information and activities for 9 – 12 year olds



Story 1. Yeara Shenhav painted this picture. She goes to the Democratic School in Kfar Saba. It is part of the Windows “Dreaming Peace” exhibition. Is it a window through which the two children are making eye contact? Or is it a mirror, each child seeing something of the other in themselves? Somehow it captures the spirit of the Windows project - www.windowsforpeaceuk.org/

Story 2. Mahdi Manastra and Guy Holdengerber.

Mahdi, aged 11, lives near Bethlehem. “I live in a village on the *Green Line – (the Green Line, which is only visible on maps, marks the border between Israel and a potential Palestinian state.). My father always talks to me about peace and co-existence. He talks with Jewish people. I always ask him: Are they Muslims? Do they always carry weapons when they are talking with you? Here we see only the soldiers that carry all kinds of weapons and the settlers are stealing our lands and they, too, carry weapons. I would really like to see the other side of our neighbours. I would like to meet nice people from amongst them. This is a wish that I hope would come true, so they will know I am a human being. I am young, but I understand a lot of things around us. I hope they will change for the better. I would like to open the window of my home to see those who carry olive branches in their hands.”

Guy, aged 15, lives in Gan Yosheia, Israel. “I want peace. I believe we have to evacuate the (Israeli) settlements, to build an independent Palestinian state with a clear border between the two states. In the framework of the school, we met with Israeli Arabs. Many were nice and showed a will to live in co-existence with us. But some painted swastikas and scared us. It is their right to think how they want, but I do not see how it is possible to live together with these people in the same country.”

Activity: Imagine, draw and write Mahdi and Guy meeting – what might that look like; what might they say.

Story 3. Raghda lives in Um-El-Fahem, which is within the border of Israel, but is a Palestinian city, so Raghda is what is known as a Palestinian Israeli. **Lev** lives in the village of Gan-Yoshiya, ten minutes drive away from Um-El-Fahem. In their daily lives they didn't have a chance to meet. They met through the organisation **Windows for Peace** that brings together children from Israel with children from Palestine, and Palestinian Israeli children.

‘**Lev** in your opinion, what prevents a Jewish Israeli boy from meeting you?’

Raghda - ‘Maybe the parents prevent it. They don't like the idea that youngsters will meet with Arabs. Maybe the parents are prejudiced about it.’

Lev – ‘Another thing that prevents Arabs and Israelis from meeting is the existence of a conflict.’

Raghda - ‘Another problem is that the rights Arabs get are not equal to those of the Jews.’

Lev – ‘Jews have a negative image of Arabs.’

Raghda - ‘It's the same with us: there is a negative image of Jews.’

Lev – ‘I think both the Palestinian leaders and the Israeli leaders are hampering the meetings. The surrounding society hampers them too.’

Raghda – ‘I think language is not a problem.’

Lev – ‘I think language is a problem. Arabic studies in Jewish schools should begin at the same age that Hebrew studies begin in Arabic schools in Israel, in the 3rd grade.’

Raghda – ‘We miss a lot because we don't meet.’

Activity: questions to discuss or write about: Are there people whom your parents would not like you to mix with? If so, why? How do you feel about that? Do you have negative images, or bad feelings about a group of people whom you do not know? If so, would you like to meet such people?and just one more:

What difference does it make if you do not know the language of people you meet?

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**Sheet 17.D Respond Four stories, information and activities for
9 – 12 year olds (continued)**

Story 4. Part 1. Racheli, aged 13, and living in Haifa, Israel.

“At the time of the suicide bombing, I was at home. When I heard about it, I knew that my brother was there ...My aunt tells me to come over. While I was at her place, my parents went out to look for my brother. Around two-thirty in the morning, my uncle woke me up to tell me. That moment I felt that it couldn't be true, that it couldn't be my brother, was added to the list of those murdered... For something like this, there is no forgiveness!”

“...I want there to be peace and the solution will come, and the solution will be that there will be no suicide bombings if there is to be peace.”

Part 2. Laila is 14 and lives in a refugee camp in the Palestinian town of Tul Karem.

“At four o'clock in the morning, while we were asleep, more than 20 soldiers surrounded our home. The soldiers began forcibly knocking on the door with their guns and screamed: 'Open the door'...The soldier aimed his gun at my grandfather. The soldiers forced everyone out of the house. ..They made us sit on the street. ...One of the soldiers opened the fridge and threw on the floor flour, eggs, oil, plates etc. Not one of the soldiers objected to what was happening, on the contrary, other soldiers broke the kitchen cupboard with the gun and threw on the floor plates and cups. If a Palestinian soldier came into your house and treated you like he treated me, what would you do?”

Part 3. Ilay is 15 and lives in Tel Aviv, the biggest Israeli city.

Laila. “Suicide bombings come in response to things the army is doing...To the Palestinians, there is no choice but to defend themselves.”

Ilay. “So in your opinion it's OK?”

Laila. “This hurts both sides, it's not good for peace.”

Laila said that if she met the soldier she would kill him. She then asked the Israeli children she met:

“Teach me how to deal with this situation – how not to want to kill the soldier and to control myself when something like this happens to me.”

Activity:

Ask wondering questions. ‘I wonder what would you do? I wonder what you feel about the situation these girls are in? What would you do?’

Ask if anyone has any ideas about how to answer Laila?

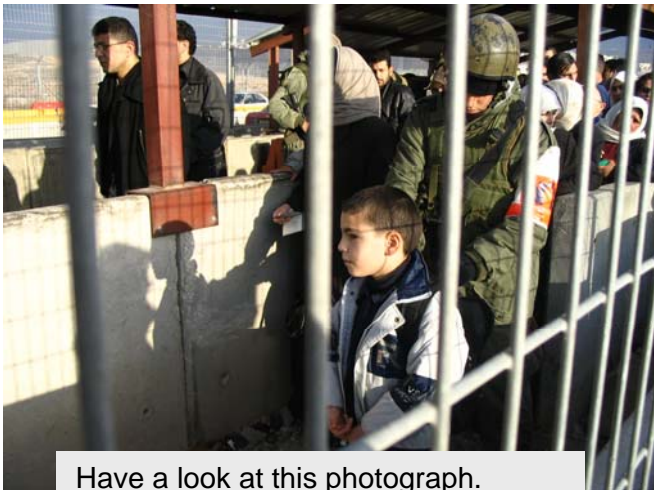
Later **Laila** said: “ I came in order to talk about peace. I didn't come to kill, but soldiers are destroying houses and kill people. “

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Sheet 17.E Respond More pictures and some questions for all ages



Have a look at this photograph. Imagine you are the child, and then the soldier in the photograph – I wonder how you might be feeling. What do think the soldier is doing?



The wall that Israel has built to keep Palestinians in their villages out of Israel. Sometimes it cuts people off from their fields. What might Palestinian and Israeli people feel about this wall?



Palestinian teenagers plant a new olive tree. How do you think they feel?

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Sheet 17.F Respond Information and activity for 4 – 7 year olds

Print the card below for everybody in Meeting. Children can then write or draw a message or a picture in a card or cards about being or feeling peaceful or kind. A question to help with this is: 'I wonder what being peaceful or kind is like for you?'



"Shalom" (in blue) and "Salaam" (in green) mean "peace" in Hebrew and Arabic

A Topical activity

Hlekweni in Zimbabwe

A banana now costs a billion Zimbabwe dollars. Just now people in Hlekweni are having a very scary time. See 'The Friend' magazine June 27th 2008 for a picture of what life is like there now.

Want to do something to help? You could raise money for the feeding programme at the school, write letters or emails or draw pictures to go either to the trainees at Hlekweni or to schoolchildren at Samathonga school. Or you might have better ideas. If you are interested, get in touch with Lee Taylor (Milton Keynes LM) leetaylor2020@aol.co.uk Letters and emails (if there is enough electricity to receive and print them) are pinned up to cheer everybody up. Every little helps. Hlekweni postal address is on the website: www.quaker.org/hlekweni/



Face painting!

Hlekweni means 'place of laughter'.

Hazel Morris and her daughter Blossom (Bognor Local Meeting) have been out twice to run art programmes at the school, and paint murals in typical Ndebele style to brighten up the buildings.



A mural

Search the Internet or an atlas for a map of Zimbabwe to show.