

# NON-CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### How to Use Role-Play

Role-play is a type of simulation that enables participants to step into the shoes of an historical or other figure and gain insight into the world in which they lived. For students or participants, assuming the role of another person allows for evaluating that individual's ideology and viewpoint in the context of a specific moment in time as learners internalize key concepts. In addition, role-play can shed light on the emotional and psychological aspects of heroism and defeat and the struggles in decision-making at critical junctures.

When working with students and assigning them roles, the more information that is learned about the individual's experiences and views before the role-play commences, the better that person can be represented. Using this technique, participants will have the opportunity to identify with the individual and to make emotional connections with history.

#### How does one facilitate role-play?

If working with a group of participants for a role-play session or classroom activity such as a Mock Zionist Congress etc. where the participants will take in part in the role play:

1. First, identify the individuals who played a major role in shaping history in the period being studied. Then, determine sources of information that would inform a role-play (biographies, documents they authored such as diaries, memos or books, documents about them such as newspaper articles or memoirs, photos, etc.)
2. Assign each participant an individual to portray. That participant should research the individual in-depth to determine characteristics, views, experiences that influenced their expertise or opinions, etc. If doing as a classroom activity, class periods before the activity and homework can be used to achieve this; if doing as a one-time program, resources can be sent to participants prior to the program or provided upon their arrival.

It is not always necessary to have participants prepare in-depth to role-play – often times, providing participants an opportunity to react and interact as if they were involved in a certain moment of time instead of assigning specific individuals from history, i.e. the Drafting of Israel's Declaration of Independence can also be an effective use of this technique.

3. Conduct the role-play. This could take place in different formats.
  - a. For example, individuals could pair up and have a dialogue about a certain issue (such as David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin discussing the [Peel Partition Plan](#)).
  - b. Groups of individuals could come together "over dinner" for a conversation about a specific theme (such as Herzl and Zionist thinkers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to discuss streams of Zionism).
  - c. Or, one could "transport one individual in time" and explore how that individual would react to a new reality (such as what Herzl would say if he saw Israel today).
4. For any of the above applications of this technique, after the role-play, participants and students should reflect on the ways that the individuals, opinions, experiences, views and expertise shaped history.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### CASE LEARNING ACTIVITY

#### *ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTERS*

#### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Since its creation on May 14, 1948, eleven men and one woman have served as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, with five of them serving non-consecutive terms. In its short history, each of these leaders has dealt with a variety of challenges ranging from foreign policy issues like, recognition, war and peace, and domestic issues, like economic growth and combatting terrorism. In this program, the Prime Ministers of Israel have been convened to form a special advisory cabinet to debate the merits of launching a pre-emptive strike against Iran.

This program can be done either as a classroom activity, where students research the viewpoints, life experiences, and decisions faced by each of the prime ministers or as communal role-play activity where participants receive short biographies about the leaders and then convene a role-play activity based on the information that they have been given. This would work well as a youth group activity or adult education program.

#### **ENDURING UNDERSTANDING**

In its short history, Israel's prime ministers have had to deal with a wide variety of domestic and foreign policy decisions that required them to think strategically and make informed decisions.

#### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- What factors into the decision-making of an Israeli leader?
- What types of decisions do Israeli leaders need to make that are similar or different to others world leaders?
- How has Israel's evolution from a nascent state to a developed democracy changed the type of decisions that its leaders must make?

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

Participants will:

- Learn about the Israeli Prime Ministers
- Participate in a role-play simulation taking on the roles of the prime ministers and debating a contemporary issue
- Understand through empathy why each prime minister developed the viewpoints that they did during their lives
- Reflect on an experience

#### **TIME RECOMMENDED:**

1-2 hours

#### **GRADE LEVEL:**

Grades 5-12 (If doing as a classroom activity); adults

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

Students will engage in a role-play simulation.

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**ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:**

**Activity One:**

This activity is designed for those doing this project as a classroom learning activity or for a camp or youth group that is incorporating more research into the role-play. If you are putting this on for a group of participants strictly as a role-play, skip to Activity Two.

1. Assign each of your students or participants one of the Israeli prime ministers. If you have more than 12 students, you may want to assign the prime ministers who served non-consecutive terms to different participants and have the participants role-play as that leader during one specific time period, or have your participants work in small groups.

**The Prime Ministers are:**

David Ben Gurion	1948-1954	Yitzhak Shamir	1986-1992
Moshe Sharett	1954-1955	Yitzhak Rabin	1992-1995
David Ben Gurion	1955-1963	Shimon Peres	1995-1996
Levi Eshkol	1963-1969	Benjamin Netanyahu	1996-1999
Golda Meir	1969-1974	Ehud Barak	1999-2001
Yitzhak Rabin	1974-1977	Ariel Sharon	2001-2006
Menachem Begin	1977-1983	Ehud Olmert	2006-2009
Yitzhak Shamir	1983-1984	Benjamin Netanyahu	2009-present
Shimon Peres	1984-1986		

2. Each participant should create a character card for their prime minister that includes the following:
  - a. The picture of the individual
  - b. 1-2 sentences about their early life
  - c. 1-2 sentences about a specific decision they made while they were in office
  - d. A quote
3. Questions to think about as they prepare their character cards:
  - a. When would you favor a military operation against nuclear installations in foreign countries?
  - b. How would you deal with state-sponsored terrorism?
  - c. What do you think the UN should do?
  - d. Is the UN effective?
  - e. Should Israel always seek the support of the United States before acting against another state?
  - f. Is there a hope for peace between Israel and hostile Arab countries?

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### CASE LEARNING ACTIVITY

#### ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTERS

#### ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

##### Activity Two: Setting up the role-play

1. In an historic moment, the prime ministers of Israel have been convened to form a special advisory cabinet to debate the merits of launching a pre-emptive against Iran. This program will have 3 components: a 15-20 minute "research" period, a 15-20 minute role-play discussion, and a 15-20 minute reflection session. If doing this activity with a class of students, more time will be spent on the research component in class before the role-play.
2. Divide participants into 12 or 17 small groups (there have been 12 Israeli prime ministers but 5 have served non-consecutive terms) and assign each one of the prime ministers (if using 17 groups, then divide them using each prime minister's terms, i.e. One group as David Ben Gurion from 1948-1954 and one from 1955-1963)
3. If the activity has been done with a group that did the research in **Activity One** either as a class, youth group, or other project then skip to #4. If the group is participating in a one-time program, then have each group prepare their own character cards for the activity (see Activity One above). Materials can be made available for participants to get information about each prime minister, or if working with a technically advanced group of participants give each group 10-15 minutes to "research" about their assigned prime minister using their smartphone or mobile device.

Questions to think about as they prepare:

- When would you favor a military operation against nuclear installations in foreign countries?
  - How would you deal with state-sponsored terrorism?
  - What do you think the UN should do?
  - Is the UN effective?
  - Should Israel always seek the support of the United States before acting against another state?
  - Is there a hope for peace between Israel and hostile Arab countries?
4. The moderator of the program will convene the prime ministers and ask each of them to introduce themselves and welcome them and thank them for coming to help discuss this very important issue. Facilitators usually set the tone for a successful role-play, and it is recommended that the facilitator "get into character" as much as possible by using an accent, etc.
  5. Using the above questions as a discussion starter, ask each prime minister to comment based on the experience(s) that the role-players uncovered in their research.
  6. Once the discussion has ended, spend time reflecting on the experience – what did the participants learn about the prime ministers? How has Israeli perspective in regards to national security evolved over time? What are some other suggestions for having this type of program? What further questions and or research are they interested in?