

TEMPLE EMANUEL

Introduction to Israel for 4th graders

Prepared for Temple Emanuel of Kensington, MD, by Marc Hershkowitz

Goal: To provide a basic introduction to Modern Israel as the Jewish Homeland to 4th graders in an effort to prepare them for their 5th grade Israel curriculum. Total Time for Program is 50 minutes.

Materials needed: map of the Middle East, map of the world, two laptops programmed to show the two videos (links included below), large screen tv for introduction (have the below text from Bereshit on the screen for introduction, followed by video of Declaration of Independence). Three facilitators are required (for round robin).

Introduction (15 minutes):

Explain that next year, the 5th grade will be learning about modern Israel and that this is meant to serve as a short introduction for next year.

Begin by asking students what they know about Israel and what it means that Israel is the Jewish Homeland. Do we have to live somewhere for it to be our homeland?

Review the text from Bereshit:

1Now the LORD said unto Abram: ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee.

2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing.3And I will bless them that bless thee...

With these words, G-d made a promise to Abraham. G-d sent Abraham to Israel and in exchange for the Jewish people worshiping G-d, G-d would make this land (Israel) the homeland of the Jews and G-d would protect them as long as they continued to worship him.

Obviously, this is the short version. But the Jews went to Egypt to avoid a famine, eventually became slaves there and Moses later led them to Freedom giving us the story of Passover: 40 years in the desert, 2 Temples were built (and destroyed) in Jerusalem, and for the next 2000 years, the Jews were without a homeland.

Now, we jump forward 2000 years.

Declaration of Independence

What is a declaration of independence? Which ones are you familiar with? When did the US declare independence? From whom? Israel?

Show video of Ben-Gurion declaring Israel's independence.

<https://youtu.be/jdnxZMI2G6o?list=EC6B6F13259147939D>

Divide group into four subgroups and send each group to one corner for mini lesson as below. Each group should take about 10 minutes. One facilitator is needed to be a timekeeper and keep the groups moving.

The stations are:

1) National Anthem

2) Geography of Israel and the Middle East

3) Where do Israelis come from?

4) Food

1) National Anthem

What is a National Anthem? What is America's National Anthem? Do you know any others? What is Israel's National Anthem?

What does it mean?

Distribute words on paper (in Hebrew and English). Read the words first in English and then play video of *Hativka* (with lyrics) and have the students sing along. Discuss the meaning.

2) Geography of Israel and the Middle East

Map of Israel: Review map of Israel and its neighbors

Show map of Israel and the Middle East.

Point out Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Beersheva, Eilat, Sea of Galilee, and Hermon. Give a brief synopsis of some of the talking points of each city/town above.

3) People: Where do Israelis come from?

Ask students where their ancestors came from. Make a list. Review where Israelis came from. (Have a map of the world with a laptop and projector.)

Point out Eastern Europe, Russia, Yemen, South Africa, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, and Ethiopia.

4) Food: What is Jewish food? What is Israeli food? (have samples)
What Israeli foods do we know?

Humus

Felafel

Shwarma

Israeli Salad

Have samples of Israeli snacks (Krembo or Bisli) (Bazooka Joe gum with Hebrew comics).

Bring all four groups back together at front of room.

Talk about how Israel has become a "salad bowl:" a mix of cultures with tastes of each contributing to the whole. Show video, 3-5 minutes.

[Israeli Diversity Video](#)

Thank the students and ask them what they are looking forward to learning more about next year.