

Looking through the Policy Window: Steps toward the Creation and Sustainment of Modern Israel

Objective: Develop an understanding and knowledge about the Modern State of Israel that leads to a lifetime connection for our students.

Audience: High School students who attend religious school once a week during the school year.

Class Time Per Week: One hour

Length of Course: 10 one-hour sessions culminating in a Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration.

Framework: Using John W. Kingdon's policy window model, which establishes that three 'streams' must be aligned for an issue to be addressed through public policy arena: the problem stream (Is there a problem?), the policy stream (What is the problem's solution?) and the political stream (Can the policy solution become policy?). When these three streams merge, a window of opportunity is open and action can be taken on the subject at hand. Students will discuss and discover the

policy windows of opportunity that occurred during four key stages of Israel's development: Peoplehood, State Seeking, State Building, and State Keeping.

Peoplehood (Two Sessions): During these two classes the Students will begin to understand the development and pronounce the "Problem" that will need to be addressed. "How to return to the land of our people?"

State Seeking and Building (Four Sessions): During these four classes the Students will seek the "Solution" to the stated "Problem" that opens the "Window for Action." Tracking both the ideals of the Zionist Congress with the realities and challenges of building a state in hopes for a full return, the students will learn about the Zionist Movement, the Aliyahs to Palestine (as defined pre-Israel), the impact of WWI, the Balfour Declaration, The Jewish Agency, the impact of World War II, and the lead up to the historic United Nations Resolution 181. The window was opened that provided the opportunity for a sovereign State of Israel for the Jewish People. On May 14,^{*} 1948, the Jewish people solved the Problem and returned home.

State Securing (Two Sessions): Now that the Problem had been solved, how do we ensure Israel survives.

During these last two classes, before the Yom Ha'atzmaut planning, the students will look at problems facing Modern Israel both internally and externally and look for new solutions and windows of opportunity. Reviewing the causes and issues surrounding the current Arab/Israel crisis, public opinion on Israel around the world, and how they see Israel. The final class will ask: If Israel is the solution, how do we ensure that we do not make it the problem?

Yom Ha'atzmaut (Two Sessions): Having spent the past eight weeks learning about the reason, purpose, and hope that is Israel, the class will create the Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration for the entire religious school. Using their new knowledge, the students will be tasked with creating sessions that integrate the connection to Israel into fun activities for all ages. Students will name stations after locations in Israel and provide facts about that area or its historical significance. Israel/Jewish games will be played to show unity and tasks will be provided to show our journey. Stations can include a Gaga Pit competition, dancing to Israeli music, cookie decorating in the shape and colors of the flag, a simulated Kotel that students can insert notes that will be delivered to the actual Kotel by a congregant, an obstacle course showing the many challenges Jews had

getting back to Israel, a marble maze challenge showing the need to work as a unified people to achieve our goal of returning home, Israeli-focused Kahoot!, based on each grade to test the students' knowledge and the teachers, and Twelve Tribes connected to one land (Pics Below).

The Day is to celebrate and connect. While the Irish have St. Patrick's Day, the Italians celebrate Columbus Day, the Jews celebrate Israel's Independence—our ultimate problem solved.

*John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 19.