

Teaching Israel Through Liturgy

Marilyn Z. Fine

**Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County
Grades 4-5-6 Hebrew and Prayer**



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Rationale

Jewish educators in supplementary school settings are challenged to address an array of issues. First, there is the matter of what to teach: Ours is a tradition that is millennia in the making, and there is no way that we can possibly even scratch the surface of each of its elements, even if all instructional materials are in English. So which subjects should we address?

We are typically mandated to help students acquire some proficiency in Hebrew reading and to familiarize them with a body of liturgical texts that they are likely to encounter as part of their Jewish experience. We long to make prayer, both the content and the act itself, meaningful, despite the fact that the students may not actually comprehend the words that they read or chant. This often occupies a major share of the available time. So how do we fit everything else in?

One way of merging these considerations, and thus getting the most out of instructional time, is to impart aspects of other subjects through the vehicle of liturgy. In so doing, we can afford students the opportunity to practice reading or chanting prayers in the original Hebrew while exploring and interacting with the concepts embedded in them.

Among the many subjects in the Jewish educational array, study of Israel typically occupies a key place during at least one year (often Fifth Grade) of Religious School. Yet we do not want the growth of our students' sense of attachment to Israel to be confined to that year. Fortunately, there is mention of Israel within many of the standard prayers taught at various grade levels of our school programs. Through exploring those prayers, we may not only teach liturgical proficiency and attachment to Israel; we may also expose our students to aspects of history, rabbinic literature, and more. These are the aims of this instructional unit.

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Grade: 4 Topic: Facing East During Prayer

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Articulate that traditionally, Jews face Jerusalem when they pray.
2. Provide reasons for facing Jerusalem.

Enduring Understanding: Israel, and specifically Jerusalem, have, for millennia, been a focal point for Jews.

Essential Questions:

1. What makes a place one's home?
2. In what ways is Israel the Jews' home?
3. Why might one face towards home when thinking about important matters?

Learning Activities:

1. Post a picture of a house on one wall of the classroom. Explain to the students that the picture represents their home. Then, stand a student in the middle of the room and blindfold him/her. Spin the student around several times in each direction, then challenge him/her to walk in the direction of "home."
2. Debrief: How would it feel if one truly wanted or needed to connect with home?
3. Introduce the Mizrach App: <http://digitalreligion.tamu.edu/mizrach-compass-> Allow students to try it out.
4. Discuss why one might want to know which way is east.
5. Introduce texts regarding facing towards Jerusalem when one prays. (See Page 4.) *(Note to teacher: The topic of directionality when praying is actually far more complex than this, but these passages were selected for their age-appropriateness. For a more complete exposition of the topic for your own reference, see "Has Judaism Lost its Sense of Direction? Orientation during Tefillah" by Rabbi Michael J. Broyde, Professor of Law at Emory University School of Law, Founding Rabbi of the Young Israel in Atlanta, and a Dayan in the Beth Din of America.)*
6. Show pictures of Mizrach plaques. (See Page 5.)

7. Allow students time to create their own Mizrach plaques. Hang them on the classroom's eastern wall. This can be done freehand on paper, or you may wish to utilize one of the following craft kits:

<https://www.tjssc.com/jerusalem-of-gold-jewish-arts-craft-kits/>

<http://www.headofthejewishclass.com/detail.cfm?ProductID=1392>

<http://www.artwithavi.com/workshops/mizrach.php?id=6>

(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)

WHICH WAY DO I FACE? ANSWERS FROM JEWISH TEXTS

1) “When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain . . . and they shall pray toward this place and praise Your name, and repent of their sin, so that You may answer them.”

—King Solomon, in I Kings 8:35

2) “The rabbis taught: ... One who stands outside the land of Israel should direct his heart to Israel... One who stands in Israel should direct his heart to Jerusalem... One who stands in Jerusalem should direct his heart to the Temple... One who stands in the Temple should direct his heart to the Holy of Holies... One standing at the Holy of Holies should direct his heart to the house of the ark-covering.... One who stands behind the house of the ark-covering should view himself as if he was in front of the ark-covering. One who finds himself in the east of Israel should turn his face to the west. One who finds himself in the west of Israel should turn his face to the east. One who finds himself in the south of Israel should turn his face to the north. One who finds himself in the north should turn his face to the south, so we find that all of Israel are directing their hearts to the same place.”

—Talmud, Berachot 30A

3) “...the most important part of this commandment is to actually have focus on Israel rather than face it.

— Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, Orach Hashulchan, 94:9, in the late 1800s.

4) “So why is there such a prevalent conception that we face east? Because the cradle of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic cultures, France and Spain respectively, are roughly west of Israel.”

—www.chabad.org

MIZRACH PLAQUES



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Grade: 4 Text: Amidah, Birkat G'vurot- Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hagashem

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Identify the rainy season in Israel.
2. Relate the rainy season to the timing of Shemini Atzeret and Passover.
3. Explain why Jews world-wide add “Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hagashem” to the Amidah between Shemini Atzeret and Pesach.

Enduring Understanding: Wherever we may be, our thoughts turn to the well-being of Israel during prayer.

Essential Questions: 1. Why is rainfall such a vital concern for Israel?
2. Why should Jews around the world be concerned for Israel's rainfall?

Learning Activities:

1. Point out the line that is inserted into the Amidah, Gevurot. Ask students to identify the times of year when Shemini Atzeret and Pesach occur.
2. Distribute the chart of dates of the two holidays. (See Page 7.)
3. Ask what the line in the blessing is discussing.
4. Distribute the rainfall charts. (See Page 8.)
5. Ask students to correlate the information on the rainfall charts with that on the holiday charts.
6. Discuss why Jews around the world pray for rainfall in Israel.
7. Relate the importance of rain/water to the theme of the blessing (G-d as Life-giver).
8. Have students read the story of Honi the Circle-Maker. (See Page 9.)
9. Discuss the story and relate it to the rainfall patterns in Israel, the importance of rain coming at the proper time, and the timing of the insert into the Amidah.
10. Have the students act out or create a video of the story of Honi. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)*

WHEN DO WE ADD THE MENTION OF RAIN TO THE AMIDAH?

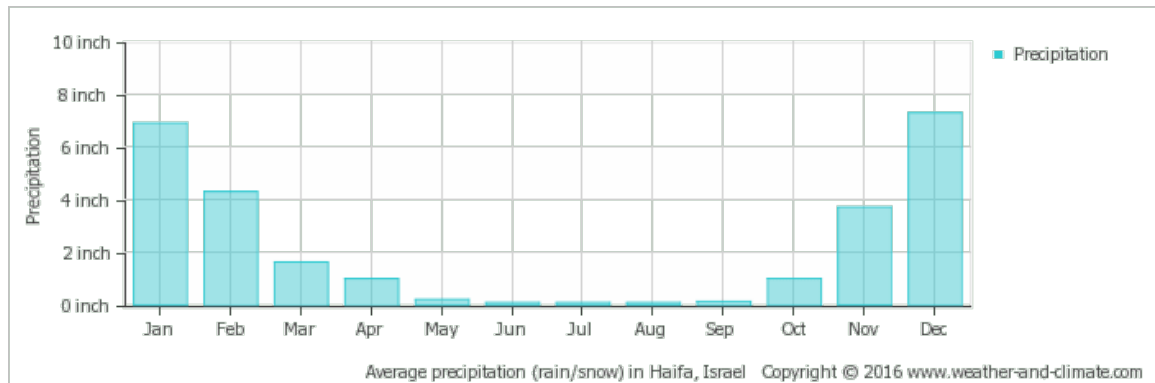
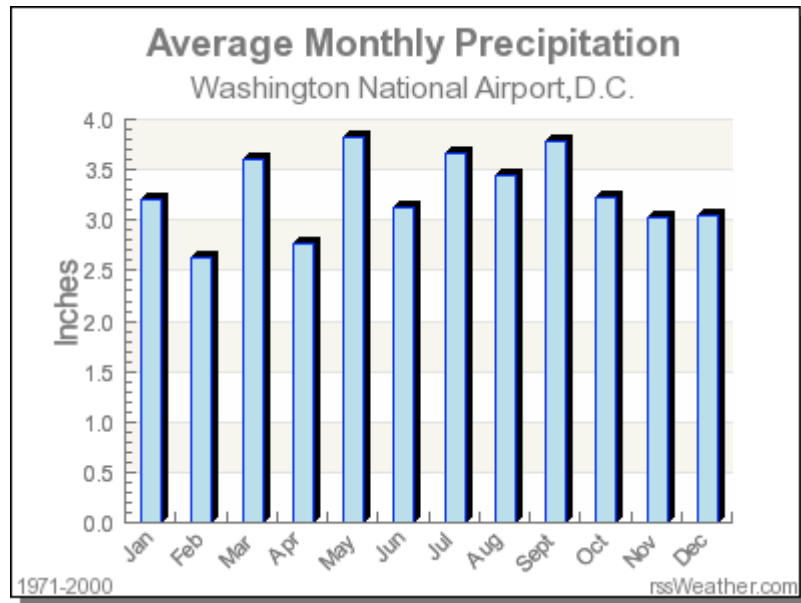
SHEMINI ATZERET- BEGIN ADDING THE MENTION OF RAIN ON THIS DATE:

- Monday, October 5, 2015
- Monday, October 24, 2016
- Thursday, October 12, 2017
- Monday, October 1, 2018
- Monday, October 21, 2019
- Shabbat, October 10, 2020
- Tuesday, September 27, 2021
- Monday, October 17, 2022
- Shabbat, October 7, 2023
- Thursday, October 24, 2024

SECOND DAY OF PESACH- STOP ADDING THE MENTION OF RAIN ON THIS DATE:

- Sunday, April 24, 2016
- Tuesday, April 12, 2017
- Sunday, April 1, 2018
- Sunday, April 21, 2019
- Friday, April 10, 2020
- Monday, March 29, 2021
- Sunday, April 17, 2022
- Friday, April 7, 2023
- Wednesday, April 24, 2024
- Monday, April 14, 2025

RAINFALL IN WASHINGTON, DC AND ISRAEL





THE STORY OF HONI THE CIRCLE-MAKER

Once there was a terrible drought in the land of Israel. It was already the month of Adar, which usually marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of spring, but no rains had fallen all winter long.

So the people sent for Honi the Circle-Maker. He prayed, but still no rains came. Then he drew a circle in the dust and stood in the middle of it.

Raising his hands to heaven, he vowed, "God, I will not move from this circle until You send rain!"

Immediately a few drops fell, hissing as they struck the hot white stones. But the people complained to Honi, "This is but a poor excuse for rain, only enough to release you from your vow."

So Honi turned back to heaven and cried, "Not for this trifling drizzle did I ask, but for enough rain to fill wells, cisterns, and ditches!"

Then the heavens opened up and poured down rain in buckets, each drop big enough to fill a soup ladle. The wells and the cisterns overflowed, and the wadis flooded the desert. The people of Jerusalem ran for safety to the Temple Mount.

"Honi!" they cried. "Save us! Or we will all be destroyed like the generation of the Flood! Stop the rains!"

Honi said to them, "I was glad to ask God to end your misery, but how can I ask for an end to your blessing?"

The people pleaded with him, and he finally agreed to pray for the rain to stop. "Bring me an offering of thanksgiving," he told them, and they did.

Then Honi said to God, "This people that You brought out of Egypt can take neither too much evil nor too much good. Please give them what they ask so that they may be happy."

So God sent a strong wind that blew away the fierce rains, and the people gathered mushrooms and truffles on the Temple Mount.

--The Classic Tales: 4,000 Years of Jewish Lore, Ed. Ellen Frankel

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Grade: 4 Text: Birkat Hamazon- Birchot Ha-aretz and Yerushalayim
(In abridged version)

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Identify two Israel-related ideas that are themes of Birkat Hamazon.
2. Explain the flow of ideas in Birkat Hamazon from food in general to Israel to Jerusalem.

Enduring Understanding: Foods are one way of linking people with their heritage, and therefore, even during such everyday acts as eating, our thoughts turn to Israel.

Essential Questions: 1. What role does food play in our sense of connection to Israel?

Learning Activities:

1. Distribute the Food for Thought worksheet. (See Pages 11-12.) Allow students time to complete it. Then debrief.
2. Refer the class to a text of the abridged version of Birkat Hamazon. Consulting the English translation, have them identify the main idea of the first blessing.
3. Next, refer them to the *Kakativ...* passage. Sing it together. Then tell them what it means. Ask them where they have heard that text before.
4. Ask the students why they think that the text goes from discussing food to reference to the land of Israel.
5. Ask the students in what way, based on the worksheet, Israel is a “shared family experience” (even if they have never visited Israel) related to food.
6. Next, refer them to the *Uv’ney Yerushalayim...* passage. Sing it together. Ask them to identify the city mentioned in the text.
7. Ask the students why they think that the text goes from referring to Israel to mentioning Jerusalem.
8. Have students create a visual Birkat Hamazon by downloading and assembling pictures of the Seven Species mentioned in the quote from Deuteronomy, plus pictures of Israel and Jerusalem and quotes from the text of Birkat Hamazon. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For each of the foods below, write the first thing that comes to your mind:

1. Turkey_____

2. Matzah ball soup_____

3. Layer cake_____

4. Oatmeal_____

5. Potato latkes_____

6. S'mores_____

7. Apples_____

8. Hamentashen_____

9. Bread_____

10. Falafel_____

Now review your answers. Place a check mark next to any line where what you wrote pertains somehow to experiences with family or friends. How many items did you check off? _____

Why do you think that foods often remind people of family or friends?

Read the following text from the Torah, the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 8, Verses 7-10:

⁷ For the Lord your G-d is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; ⁸ a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your G-d for the good land that He has given you.

Find each food that is mentioned in the text. List them here:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	

What does the text say that a person should do after eating?

What does the text say that we should praise G-d for? _____

To what “land” is the Torah referring? _____

What is the name of the prayer that Jews traditionally say after eating bread?

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Grade: 5 Text: Torah Service- Av Harachamim

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Articulate at least two different ways of applying the words of the prayer to modern Jerusalem.
2. Explain some of the reasons that housing in Jerusalem is so costly.

Enduring Understanding: Jerusalem, though modern and thriving, is nonetheless a city in need of building. That building may be understood in multiple ways.

Essential Questions: 1. How might one who does not believe that the Temple should be rebuilt understand the words of this prayer?
2. How could the high cost of housing in Jerusalem be mitigated?

Learning Activities:

1. On the board, write the following words: “Build the walls of Jerusalem!” Ask the students to explain what those words might be referring to.
2. Refer the class to the prayer, Av Harachamim. Tell the class that it was first found in Masechet Sofrim, which was written in 7th Century Palestine. Ask the class what the authors of the prayer might have meant by the words.
3. Distribute the pages of pictures of sections of Jerusalem. (See Pages 15-17.) Which of the pictures most closely pertains to the original intent of the text? Why? There will probably be students who will feel (for a variety of reasons) that we should not pray for the Temple to be rebuilt.
4. Ask the class, “In light of the other two sets of pictures, how do you feel about the words of the prayer?” Discuss. *(Note to teacher: There will probably be students who will say that the prayer is not relevant since it appears that Jerusalem is so built up.)*
5. Ask the class how else one might understand the prayer. Then distribute the page with the costs of housing in Jerusalem. (See Page 18.) Go over the page, helping students to grasp the meaning of the data.
6. Ask the class why they think housing in Jerusalem is so expensive. List their thoughts on the board. Augment their thoughts, if necessary, with some other facts, such as that many Jews from outside of Israel wish to own property in Jerusalem, and because many of them have more money than Israelis, the builders are building fancier apartments and homes than most Israelis can afford.

7. Ask the class, in light of the housing statistics, how else one might understand the words, “Build the walls of Jerusalem.”
8. Have students visit the website of the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction: <http://www.moch.gov.il/english/Pages/HomePage.aspx> to find out more about how Israel hopes to resolve the housing crisis.
9. Have students write letters to the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction, expressing their thoughts on the housing crisis. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)*

THE JEWISH QUARTER

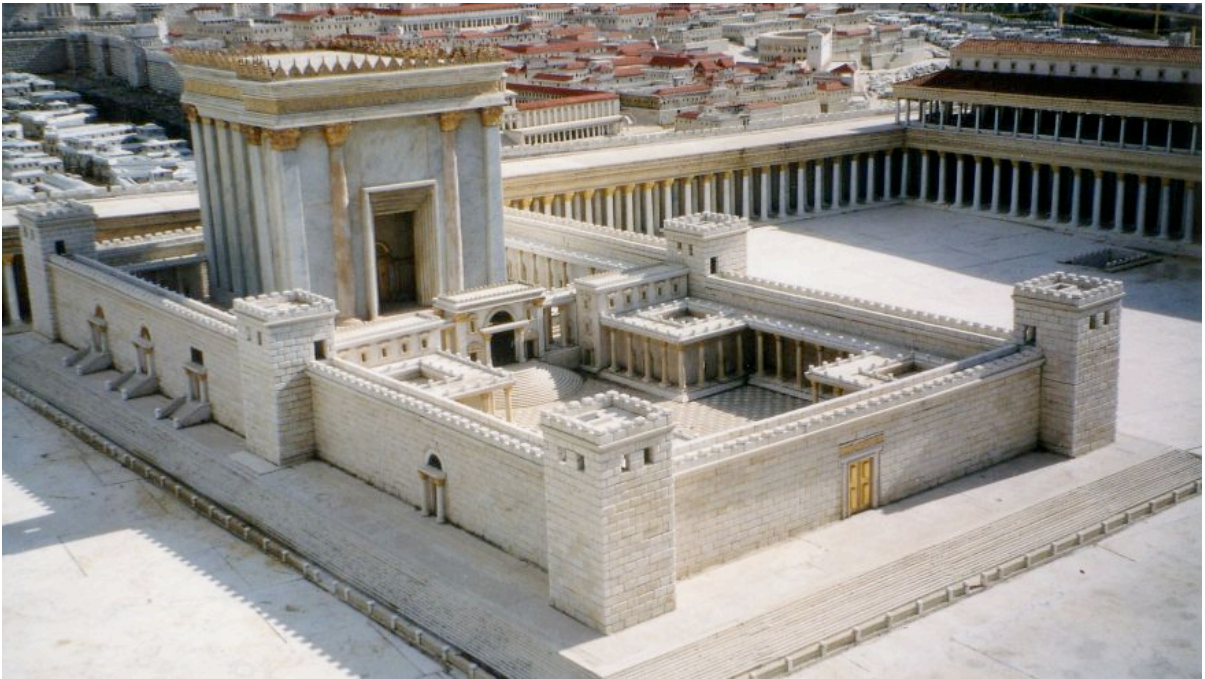


1948



TODAY

THE TEMPLE MOUNT



Model of ancient Jewish Temple on Temple Mount until 70 CE



Dome of the Rock Mosque, on Temple Mount since 691 CE

BEN YEHUDA STREET



1948



TODAY

COST OF HOUSING IN JERUSALEM

Salaries

Average Monthly Net Salary (After Tax)	7,347.62 NIS	\$ 2,082.28
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The average monthly income of people in Jerusalem ranks 203rd out of 476 cities in the world.

Rent Per Month

Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre	4089.13 NIS	\$1,158.84
	(55.6% of average monthly income*)	
Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre	2384.62 NIS	\$ 675.79
	(32.5% of average monthly income*)	
Apartment (3 bedrooms) in City Centre	7,000 NIS	\$ 1,983.76
	(95.3% of average monthly income*)	
Apartment (3 bedrooms) Outside of Centre	4,392.86 NIS	\$ 1,244.91
	(59.7% of average monthly income*)	

***Typically, people are advised not to spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing.**

The cost of living in Jerusalem ranks 41st out of 509 cities in the world.

(Source: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Jerusalem>, June 2017)

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Grade: 5 Text: Torah Service- Vayehi Binsoah- Ki Mitziyon

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Identify the original source of this quote.
2. Articulate some possible interpretations of the verse.
3. Explain some of the complexity of this notion in modern Israel.

Enduring Understanding: Tradition holds that Jerusalem and Israel are centers for Torah values for the world, but this is a complex matter for modern Jerusalem.

Essential Questions: 1. Why was/is Jerusalem seen as a center from which Torah values emerge?
2. What role should Torah play in Jerusalem in the modern era?

Learning Activities:

1. Give one of the students a Tanach, open to Isaiah, Chapter 2. Ask him or her to read Verse 2 aloud in Hebrew. Ask the class to identify where they might have heard that verse before.
2. Translate the verse and ask the students what they think Isaiah might have had in mind when he said it.
3. Brainstorm with the class in what ways a city might be a model, or beacon, of Torah values.
4. Distribute the handout of quotes. (See Page 21.) Refer students to the quote from Isaiah, allowing them time to read the entire passage. Then ask them whether the context supports what they thought Isaiah meant by the verse, and if not, what they now think he meant.
5. Refer the class to the Talmudic quote. Ask them to explain how it interprets Torah as going forth from Jerusalem, and how it might pertain to their presence in Religious School today.
6. Refer the class to the two excerpts from contemporary publications. Ask them how those articles might relate to an interpretation of Isaiah's words.
7. Elicit the students' feelings about the contemporary issues. Ask them whether they see any difference between the matter of soccer matches and that of mini-markets, and to explain their answers.
8. Distribute the piece about Jerusalem's demographics. (See Page 22.) Ask the students how this might differ from a population study in Isaiah's time, had one taken place, and whether these statistics affect their answers to #7 above.

9. Divide the class into three groups, one to formulate arguments in favor of closing soccer and mini-markets in Jerusalem on Shabbat, one opposed, and one that takes a position somewhere in between. Allow students to debate the matter.
(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)

JERUSALEM, THEN AND NOW

1. “In the last days, the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the G-d of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” For from Zion shall the Torah go forth, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” --*Isaiah, Chapter 2, Verses 1-4*

2. “...At first if a child had a parent, the parent taught him, and if they had no parent, they did not learn at all. What [verse] guided them? ‘And you shall teach them to your children’ (Deuteronomy 11), laying the emphasis on the word ‘you’. They then made an ordinance that teachers of children should be appointed in Jerusalem. What verse guided them? ‘For from Zion shall the Torah go forth’ (Isaiah 2). Even so, however, if a child had a parent, the parent would take them up to Jerusalem and have them taught there, and if not, they would not go up to learn there. They therefore ordained that teachers should be appointed in each area.” --*Talmud, Bava Batra 21A*

3. Beitar Jerusalem Nixes Shabbat Soccer Games

One of Israel's top soccer teams accommodates religiously observant fans. The Beitar Jerusalem soccer team said it will stop playing on the Jewish Sabbath. Eli Tabib, the team’s new owner, made the decision to stop playing from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday in order to allow its religious and traditional fans to attend home games, the team said in a statement issued Saturday.

--*Jewish Telegraphic Agency, August 12, 2013*

4. Jerusalem to prosecute minimarts open on Shabbat

Capital’s non-religious mayor supports demands to close stores on Sabbath, while Haredi interior minister has secular Tel Aviv in his sights.

In a continuing battle over the right of grocery stores to remain open on the Jewish Sabbath, Jerusalem municipality on Monday announced its intention to prosecute minimarkets that continue doing business on Saturdays in the city center, in contravention of an order issued last year.

The move, reported by Army Radio, comes in the wake of efforts by Interior Minister Aryeh Deri to impose a blanket Shabbat closure on all businesses in the heart of mainly secular Tel Aviv.

- *Sue Serkes, The Times of Israel, September 19, 2016*

Ultra-Orthodox comprise a third of population of Jerusalem, says CBS

One third of Jerusalem's inhabitants are ultra-Orthodox, while only 21 percent are secular, according to a report released on Tuesday by the Central Bureau of Statistics ahead of Jerusalem Day.

According to the report, Jerusalem's population at the end of 2015 stood at 870,000 people, accounting for 10% of Israel's population – making it the largest city in the country.

Lidar Grave-Lazi, Jerusalem Post, June 1, 2016

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Grade: 5 Text: Torah Service- Mi Sheberach for the Community
(Torah Service, just before Ashrei)

(Note to teacher: This text is not presently a part of the Fifth Grade curriculum, but could easily be incorporated into lessons regarding the Mi Sheberach for the sick, which is currently an element.)

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Explain multiple interpretations of “those who build Israel.”
2. Describe the work of at least one organization that is involved with building Israel.
3. Identify one way in which each of them could become a “builder of Israel.”

Enduring Understanding: As Jews, Israel is a part of “our community,” and we are encouraged to support and help build Israel in a variety of ways.

Essential Questions:

1. What has it meant over time to “build Israel?”
2. In what way could one be a builder of a place without physically being there?
3. How might one of us become a builder of Israel?

Learning Activities:

1. Distribute the page of excerpts from the text of the Mi Sheberach. (See Page 25.) Allow the students time to read the excerpts and consider the questions.
2. Divide the class into pairs or small groups to discuss their answers to the questions. Then have each pair/group share with the rest of the class.
3. Pursue the matter of building the Land of Israel. Distribute the pictures of early builders of Israel. (See Page 26.) Discuss. Point out the youth of the people, and the involvement of people of both genders. Direct the students’ attention to the pictures of Tel Aviv and Kibbutz Ein Harod today. (See Page 27.) Discuss the contrast.
4. Have the students assume the persona of one of the people in the pictures, and write a couple of sentences describing how it feels to them to be a builder of Israel.

5. Point out that the text of the prayer is in the present tense: “Bless...builders of Israel.” Ask them to consider what is required for a person to be a builder of a place.
6. Distribute the list of organizations that are involved in building Israel. (See Page 28.) Have students choose an organization and prepare a report or poster display of the way(s) in which that organization and its participants help build the Land of Israel. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)*

MI SHEBERACH FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

“May the One Who blessed our ancestors...

bless this entire congregation, together with all other holy congregations...

along with those who devote themselves to establish synagogues for prayer...

who provide food for guests, bread for the hungry, tzedakah for the poor, and shelter for the homeless,

and all who faithfully devote themselves to the needs of this community and the building of the Land of Israel.

May the Holy Blessed One reward them...

And send blessing to all the works of their hands...

--Excerpted from the Conservative Movement's rendering of the prayer

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does this text resemble the one said for the sick? How does it differ?
2. According to this text, how do you think helping Israel compares with helping the “home community?” Do you agree with that ranking? Why or why not?
3. What do you think it means to be a “builder of Israel?”

EARLY BUILDERS OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL



Chalutzim from Belarus, working in Tel Aviv, 1923



Building Kibbutz Ein Harod, 1941

MY, HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED!



Tel Aviv



Kibbutz Ein Harod

Here is a selected list of organizations that are involved in building Israel in different ways. Choose one, research it, and report to the class what it does:

Yad Sarah www.yadsarah.org

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Grade: 6 Text: Haftarah Blessings

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Identify places in the blessings after a Haftarah that pertain to Israel and Jerusalem.
2. Explain how “prophecies of truth and justice” pertain to Israel and Jerusalem.
3. Relate prophecies of the destruction and restoration of Israel to events in Jewish history.

Enduring Understanding: The prophets spoke of the exile of the Jews from their land, and of their eventual return to it. This message has inspired Jews throughout the millennia, and in reading many of the Haftarat, we are reminded of that message.

Essential Questions:

1. To what extent have the promises of the prophets sustained Jewish attachment to and hopes for Israel?
2. To what extent should Israel rely upon prophetic promises in determining its actions and attitudes?

Learning Activities:

1. Distribute the page of quotes from the Prophets. (See Page 31.) Ask students to read the first three quotes, then the next three, and to summarize what each group is saying.
2. Tell the class that Micah and Isaiah lived in the eighth century BCE and spoke about invasion by Assyria. Jeremiah lived in the seventh century BCE and prophesied about the Babylonian exile.
3. Ask the students to search on-line and find out if/when Assyria and Babylonia in fact invaded Israel. (*Note to teacher: Assyria invaded in 722 BCE. The Babylonians invaded Israel and destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE.*)
4. Ask the students what conclusions they might draw from these facts.
5. Now distribute and have the students read the Midrash from Tractate Makkot. (See Page 32.) Ask them to explain why the three rabbis were encouraged by Rabbi Akiva’s words, and what the implications might be for other Jews in various times and places.
6. Refer the students to the blessings after the Haftarah. Ask them to cite passages that relate to the matter of prophecies about the destruction/ restoration of Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. (*Note to Teacher: You*

may wish to generate a handout of the text so that students might highlight the relevant passages.)

7. Have students search on-line and select images of modern Israel that in their opinions depict the fulfillment of the last three quotes on Page 31. Have them print out the picture and mount the quote on it, and display the class's work on a bulletin board. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/enrichment/follow-up activity at another time.)*

PROPHECIES OF DESTRUCTION AND RESTORATION

“Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the Lord and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us.’ Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the Temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.”

-- Micah 3:11-12

“Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege.”

--Isaiah 1:7-8

"...This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the Lord, "and will make it desolate forever."

--Jeremiah 25: 11-12

And the Lord shall inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

--Zechariah 2:16

“Thus says the Lord G-D, “On the day that I cleanse you from all your sins I will also cause the cities [of Israel] to be inhabited, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. Then they will say, ‘This land that was deserted and desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations that are left around you will know that I the LORD have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and will do it.”

--Ezekiel 36: 33-36

“ ‘Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you. As surely as I live,’ declares the LORD. ‘You will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride. Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away.’”

--Isaiah 49: 18-19

“ALL HIS WORDS ARE TRUE AND JUST.”

Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva were walking towards Yerushalayim. When they reached Mt. Scopus (from which it is possible to see the Temple Mount), they tore their clothing. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox running out of the area where the Holy of Holies had been. They began to cry, while Rabbi Akiva laughed.

They said to him, “Why are you laughing?”

Rabbi Akiva responded, “Why are you crying?”

“If from the place about which it is written, ‘And the stranger who enters there, shall die,’ we see a fox coming out, should we not cry?”

To which Rabbi Akiva said, “For that very reason, I am laughing. Isaiah the Prophet said, ‘I will bring two reliable witnesses regarding my People, Uriah the Priest and Zechariah ben Yevarech’yahu. (Isaiah 8:2) In Uriah’s case, it is written, ‘Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed under like a field.’ (Micah 3:12) In the case of Zechariah, we find, ‘Yet again, elderly men and elderly women will sit in the streets of Yerushalayim, and each will have a staff in his or her hand from great age. And the streets of the city will be full of children, playing in her streets.’ (Zechariah 8: 4-5) Until I saw the fulfillment of Uriah’s prophecy, I had some doubt as to whether Zechariah’s prophecy would come true. Now that I have seen Uriah’s prophecy fulfilled in full detail, I know that Zechariah’s prophecy will also be fulfilled.”

“Hearing that, Rabbi Akiva’s colleagues said to him, ‘Akiva, you have comforted us. Akiva, you have comforted us.’”

--Talmud, Makkot 24A and B.

Teaching Israel Through Liturgy
Marilyn Z. Fine
Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County
Grades 4-5-6 Hebrew and Prayer

Grade: 6 Text: Prayer for the State of Israel

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Articulate awareness that different branches of Judaism have differing visions of the role of the State of Israel.
2. State what some of the differences are between the various visions.

Enduring Understanding: All of Judaism's major movements emphasize our attachment to and concern for Israel, but the specifics of those relationships may vary.

Essential Questions:

1. What are some of the many visions for the State of Israel?
2. Why do different movements have different hopes for the State?
3. Is it important that all Jews share a common vision for Israel? If so, how can we achieve that?

Learning Activities:

1. Ask students to write what they wish for their home community. Compare the answers, and post key points on the board.
2. Discuss the fact that not everyone mentioned/emphasized the same points.
3. Distribute the texts of the Prayer for Israel, and the accompanying worksheets. (See Pages 35-37.) Working together as a class, have students list the key points of the 1948 text in the column under its heading. In each of the remaining columns, place a check if the corresponding text addresses that point, or write in any rephrasing of the original points or ideas that it mentions that were not mentioned in the original version.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences between the versions, and possible reasons for them. (Emphasize the common thread: All pray for Israel!)
5. Allow students to compose their own personal prayers for Israel, incorporating the ideas in the texts they have examined or ideas of their own. *(Note to teacher: This activity may be as simple or as complex as you wish, and could be used as a review/ enrichment/ follow-up activity at another time.)*

Reflection: While in general, it is preferable to provide students with the Hebrew version of prayers, in this case, the English was preferable as it allowed for greater consideration of ideas and nuance in the texts. As it happened, I did this lesson twice, each time with half of my class. (About 8 children each time.) Though that was not my original vision for the lesson, it was very effective that way, as it allowed the students and

me to sit around a single table and help one another tease out the ideas more fully. In one group, students used different colors of highlighters to note passages in the various texts as “common threads” or as notions distinct to a particular text.

PRAYING FOR ISRAEL: ONE PRAYER, MANY VOICES

CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL (1948)

Our Father who is in heaven, Protector and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel, the dawn of our deliverance. Shield it beneath the wings of Your love; spread over it Your canopy of peace; send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, officers, and counselors, and direct them with Your good counsel.

Strengthen the defenders of our Holy Land; grant them, our G-d, salvation and crown them with victory. Establish peace in the land, and everlasting joy for its inhabitants. Remember our brethren, the whole house of Israel, in all the lands of their dispersion. Speedily bring them to Zion, Your city, to Jerusalem Your dwelling-place, as it is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses:

“Even if you are dispersed in the uttermost parts of the world, from there the Lord your G-d will gather and fetch you. The Lord your G-d will bring you into the land which your ancestors possessed, and you shall possess it; and G-d will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your ancestors.”

Unite our hearts to love and revere Your name, and to observe all the precepts of Your Torah. Speedily send us Your righteous Messiah of the House of David, to redeem those waiting for Your salvation. Shine forth in Your glorious majesty over all the inhabitants of Your world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: “The Lord G-d of Israel is King; His majesty rules over all.” Amen. Selah.

GATES OF PRAYER: THE NEW UNION PRAYERBOOK (CCAR, 1975, pp. 412–414)

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame that burns in the heart's secret places.
Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake.
Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Israel, born in pain, has lived in peril. We pray for the welfare of her people and their land. May they dwell in safety and live in peace and friendship with their neighbors. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you prosper! Let there be peace in your homes, safety within your borders. For the sake of my people, My friends, I pray you find peace. For the sake of the House of the Lord our G-d, I will seek your good.

SIDDUR SIM SHALOM (UNITED SYNAGOGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM, 1985)

Our Father in Heaven, Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel; Bless the State of Israel, with its promise of redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth. Help them

with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our Holy Land. Deliver them; crown their efforts with triumph. Bless the land with peace, and its inhabitants with lasting joy. And let us say: Amen.

KOL HANESHAMAH SHABBAT V'CHAGIM (RECONSTRUCTIONIST PRESS, 1994)

Rock and Champion of Israel, please bless the State of Israel, first fruit of the flourishing of our redemption. Guard it in the abundance of Your love. Spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Send forth Your light and truth to those who lead and judge it and to those who hold elective office. Establish in them, through Your presence, wise counsel that they might walk in the way of justice, freedom, and integrity. Strengthen the hands of those who guard our Holy Land. Let them inherit salvation and life. And give peace to the Land and perpetual joy to its inhabitants.

Appoint for a blessing all our kindred of the House of Israel in all the lands of their dispersion. Plant in their hearts a love of Zion. And for all our people everywhere, may G-d be with them, and may they have the opportunity to go up to the Land. Cause Your spirit's influence to emanate upon all dwellers of our Holy Land. Remove from their midst hatred and enmity, jealousy and wickedness. Plant in their hearts love and kinship, peace and friendship. And soon fulfill the vision of Your prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Let them no longer learn ways of war." And let us say, Amen.

AVODAH SHEBALEV (THE ISRAEL MOVEMENT FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM, 2007)

Our Divine Guardian, Rock and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel, the beginning of our redemption. Shield it beneath the wings of Your steadfast love and spread over it the shelter of Your peace. May a spark of Your spirit inspire the actions of its President, Prime Minister, officials, judges and advisors that they may follow the path of righteousness, liberty and freedom. Strengthen the hands of those who build and protect our Holy Land and grant them salvation and life. Grant peace to this land and everlasting joy to its inhabitants.

Be near to all the people of Israel throughout the lands of their dispersion. Plant within their hearts the love of Zion, and may those of our people are so inspired come to Jerusalem, Your city, which bears Your name. Spread Your spirit over all the inhabitants of our land. Uproot hatred, jealousy and evil; plant in our heart love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. And speedily fulfill the version of Your prophet: Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn more any more. *Lo yi-sa goi el goi che-rev, lo yil-du od mil-cha-ma.*

And let us say: Amen.

THE PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

ISRAELI CHIEF RABBINATE, 1948	CCAR 1975	USCJ 1985	RECON. PRESS, 1994	ISRAELI PROGRESSIVE, 2007
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Teaching Israel Through Liturgy
Marilyn Z. Fine
Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County
Grades 4-5-6 Hebrew and Prayer

Grade: 6 Text: Birchot K'riat Shema, Shacharit- Va-havienu

Goals and Objectives- Students will be able to:

1. Articulate the meaning of this portion of the prayer.
2. Identify at least two authors who expressed longing for Israel.
3. Identify at least two countries from which large groups of people have made Aliyah.

Enduring Understanding: Devotion to Israel has been a unifying idea for Jews from all over the world, and many have longed to return to the land or have actually done so.

Essential Questions:

1. Why have Jews throughout history felt so attached to Israel?
2. Why did the leaders of Judaism over 1,000 years ago include mention of return to Israel in the daily prayer service?
3. Should all Jews see Aliyah as their means of connecting to Israel?

Learning Activities:

1. Distribute the pictures of various groups of Olim. (See Pages 40-41.) Allow the students time to consider them. Then ask what all of the pictures have in common, and how they are different.
2. Distribute the chart of immigration to Israel. (See Page 42.) Find the countries on a world map. Ask the class to explain why so many Jews from around the world have made Aliyah.
3. Point out the passage at the end of Ahavah Rabbah, and sing it using the tune of Hatkivah. Ask the class to consult the English translation of the text, and to explain why many congregations have adopted the practice of singing it to that particular tune. Mention that Ahavah Rabbah is mentioned all the way back in the Talmud, which was compiled over 1800 years ago. Ask what influence the practice of saying this prayer might have had upon Jews throughout time.
3. Distribute the page of quotes. (See Page 43.) Allow students to peruse the quotes. Ask each student to identify one quote that s/he finds particularly meaningful, and to explain why.
5. Play the YouTube video, *Back to Jerusalem* by Jeremy Gaisin:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnH8U1pH6Ec> Relate it to the quotes, especially the one from Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

6. Explain the practice of a worshipper gathering the Tzitzit from the four corners of a Tallit upon reciting this passage. Demonstrate, using a Tallit.
7. Have students create an art Tallit, featuring the opening words of the Va-Havienu on the Atara (collar) of the Tallit, a centerpiece impression of Jerusalem, and pictures of Jews from different times and places arrayed around the Jerusalem scene. Display the Tallit on a bulletin board, with the fringes of the four corners gathered together. (See photos, Pages 44-45.)

(Notes to teacher: 1. The pictures for the Tallit may be found online, or in a wide array of books. 2. Students may draw their own copies of the illustrations they find, or may cut out and mount images found online. 3. The Tallit project is a time-consuming one, and I recommend that it be done in small installments over a period of weeks or months, thus serving as reinforcement of the concepts of the prayer and generating a real swell of excitement as the project comes together and is displayed. 4. Our school's Sixth Grade curriculum also contains Parashat Tzitzit, the third paragraph of the Shema. The Tallit activity pertained to both of those prayers, and, of course, made the tying of the Tzitzit a relevant learning experience unto itself. However, if that text is not part of the curriculum, the teacher may wish to do the tying of the Tzitzit him/herself, or to purchase a ready-made all white Tallit and embellish it with the art.)

Reflection: As noted above, the Tallit project took a very long time to complete because it was done in small installments by segments of the class at any one time. However, it was an extremely worthwhile endeavor, and one in which the class took great interest and pride.

GATHERED FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH



Yemenite Jews on Operation Magic Carpet, 1949-1950



1970s group of “Refuseniks,” Soviet Jews who had requested, and were denied, the right to leave the Soviet Union for Israel.



Ethiopian Olim, Operations Moses and Solomon, 1984-1991



Olim from the United States and Canada arrive in Israel on a regular basis.

IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL, 1948-2012

<u>Russia/Ukraine</u> (Former USSR)	1,231,003
<u>Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia</u>	354,852*
<u>Romania</u>	276,586*
<u>Poland</u>	173,591*
<u>Iraq</u>	131,138*
<u>United States</u>	101,592
<u>Ethiopia</u>	92,730
<u>France</u>	81,885
<u>Iran</u>	76,934*
<u>Argentina</u>	66,916*
<u>Turkey</u>	62,837*
<u>Yemen</u>	50,731*
<u>Bulgaria</u>	44,372*
<u>Egypt</u> and <u>Sudan</u>	37,763*
<u>Libya</u>	35,844*
<u>United Kingdom</u>	35,164
<u>Hungary</u>	32,022*
<u>India</u>	28,702*
<u>Czechoslovakia</u> (Former)	24,468*
<u>South Africa</u>	20,038*
<u>Germany</u>	19,905*
<u>Yugoslavia</u> (Former)	10,768*
<u>Syria</u>	9,547*

QUOTES REFLECTING LONGING FOR JERUSALEM/ ISRAEL

“By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion... If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!”

--*Psalm 137*

“My heart is in the east, and I am at the ends of the west. How can I enjoy food? How shall it be sweet to me? It seems it would be easy for me to leave all the good things of Spain -- seeing how precious in my eyes it would be to behold even the dust of the destroyed sanctuary. “ --*Judah Halevi, 1171*

“Next year in Jerusalem!” --*Isaac Tyrnau, Austria 1400s (The first to write of the recitation of the phrase during Passover.)*

"And through Your great love, my King, You will arise and have mercy on our holy Zion. You will restore Your glory to Your dwelling... O G-d, pray send the bearer of our royal honor, for it is there, in Zion, that our hearts yearn to shine." --*Judah Aryeh of Modena, Italy (1571-1648)*

“Wherever I walk, I am walking to Jerusalem.”--*Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Ukraine, 1772-1810*

"The Torah forbids jealousy, and, thank G-d, I envy no person, except for those Jews who travel to the Land of Israel." -- *Rabbi Yerahmiel of Koznitz, Poland, 18__-1909*

“As long as in the inner heart a Jewish soul stirs, and the eye gazes Eastward to Zion, our hope is not lost, the hope of two thousand years, to be a free people in our own land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.” --*Naftali Tzi Imber, Author of Hatikvah, 1878*

“Through a historical catastrophe — the destruction of Jerusalem by the emperor of Rome — I was born in one of the cities in the diaspora. But I always deemed myself a child of Jerusalem, one who is in reality a native of Jerusalem.” --*S.J. Agnon, Israeli Nobel Literature Prize Laureate, 1966*

THE TALLIT PROJECT



TEXT OF INFORMATION ACCOMPANYING TALLIT DISPLAY:

Gather Us in Peace from the Four Corners of the Earth by Mrs. Fine's Sixth Grade

In the Shacharit (Morning) prayer service each day, the blessing before the Shema asks that G-d gather the Jewish People from the four corners of the earth and bring us proudly to our homeland. This is one of the ways that our tradition has kept alive the Jewish People's connection to the Land of Israel.

As one recites that line of the prayer, it is customary to gather together the Tzitzit, the knotted fringes on the four corners of a Tallit.

To symbolize the meaning of this prayer, we created a Tallit. On the Atara, the collar piece, we inscribed the Hebrew of this line from the blessing. In the center of the Tallit is a painting that represents Jerusalem, and all around it are pictures of Jews from different places and times.* The Tzitzit are gathered together to symbolize the unity of the Jewish People in our love of Jerusalem and the Land of Israel.

*** Pictures were hand or machine-copied from from online sources or from *A History of Jewish Costume* by Alfred Rubens.**