



*Israel/Palestine:  
Is There a Samaritan on the Road?*

**Facilitators' Manual**

This booklet describes a four-session course offered at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., November-December, 2010. It has been published as an aid to parishes developing their own courses on the subject. The manual and all its appendices can be found on the St. Mark's web site. For its encouragement of this project, the authors wish to thank the Companion Diocese Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

## Acknowledgments

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- The clergy and wardens of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, who supported the establishment of the Mid-East Working Group in 2009 and encouraged the array of educational events we undertook in our first two years.
- Our Working Group colleagues, who offered helpful advice and assisted in many ways.
- The lay leaders of St. Mark's Christian Education Program who supported our proposal for this unique course and gave us much wise guidance as we shaped it.
- The guest presenters who gave generously of their time and insights.
- The 34 members of the congregation who enthusiastically participated in the course and gave us constructive evaluations of it.
- Business Research Services, Inc., Bethesda, Maryland, for donating its services to publish the manual.
- The Companion Diocese Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington for sponsoring the distribution of the manual.

Whatever use you make of the manual and appendices, may they help you and those you reach respond faithfully to work for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the Holy Land.

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Mid-East Working Group: [www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/](http://www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/)

Course web page: [www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/](http://www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/)

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## A Note to Readers

If you are considering engaging members of your church in an exploration of the situation in the Holy Land and the efforts being made to seek security, peace, and justice for *both* the Israeli and Palestinian people, we applaud your commitment and welcome you to use whatever material in this manual may be helpful to you.

We fully recognize what a daunting task it is to craft a course that

- introduces Americans to the nature of the conflict,
- exposes them to the terrible suffering that both peoples have experienced,
- celebrates the courageous work of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian peacemakers,
- examines the critical role that our own country plays, and
- attempts to do all this in a reasonable number of class sessions!

We therefore present this *Facilitators' Manual* to you in the spirit of humility. It is not a textbook for course participants. Nor do we even recommend that you replicate the course as we structured it in 2010. We would not do so ourselves if we were to offer the course again. Instead, we offer the manual as compendium of approaches that you may select and modify to suit the circumstances of your own audience and setting.

**The manual and all its appendices, which contain sample facilitator “scripts,” readings, and other material, can be found on the St. Mark’s web site:**

[www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/](http://www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/)

**They are posted in a format that will allow you to download and print entire documents or to copy and paste portions that are of interest to you into your own course materials.**

This printed version contains the full text of the manual but only a few selected appendices. It includes the following:

- A frank discussion of the challenges anyone faces in attempting such a course, from the sheer scope of the subject to the inevitable apprehension of many people to delve into it.
- A brief description of our goals for the course and the “ground-rules” we hoped participants would endorse and follow.
- Our objectives for each of the four, two-hour sessions.
- The outline for each session (used by facilitators and shared with guest presenters, but not handed out to all participants).
- Explanatory notes on the methods or materials chosen for each session.
- Lessons learned: our frank assessment of what worked and what did not work.
- Recommendations for reconfiguring the course to include a 5th and 6th session.

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## Context at St. Mark's

### The Mid-East Working Group

The course on Israel/Palestine was developed by members of the Mid-East Working Group at St. Mark's in response to the group's mission, as stated in its Charter:

*To work for peace, reconciliation, and justice for the people of Palestine and Israel by promoting greater understanding of historic and current issues in the Middle East, partnering with peace-seeking individuals and groups in all faith communities, both here and abroad, supporting our Anglican brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, promoting the relevant policies adopted by The Episcopal Church, and recommending that St. Mark's advocate for additional, appropriate policies and actions by The Episcopal Church and the U.S. government.*

The Charter enumerates activities that the group may pursue in order to fulfill this purpose, including the following:

- a. Explore and proclaim the universal principles of peace and justice that are at the heart of our Christian faith tradition
- b. Provide opportunities for the members of St. Mark's to learn about the causes of conflict and the opportunities for peace in Israel and Palestine
- c. Educate members of the parish and others about the policies and actions of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington pertaining to Palestine and Israel
- d. Bring to the attention of parishioners advocacy positions, actions, and organizations that they may wish to support as individuals

The Israel/Palestine course, however, was not the Working Group's first educational offering. Instead, it followed by more than a year the group's formation in June, 2009, by nine interested parishioners. For the remaining months of that year, the group concentrated on learning about current issues in the Holy Land, contacting peace groups at other churches, and raising awareness within the congregation by promoting relevant lectures, films, and other educational events in the Washington area.

During 2010, the Working Group began to sponsor its own events at St. Mark's. These included the sale of Palestinian olive oil and craft items to raise money for the programs of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a visit by a Palestinian Episcopal priest, and a Mediterranean dinner followed by a feature film set in Palestine. Based on attendance at these events and growing interest among parishioners, the group submitted a formal Charter to the Vestry and a proposal for an introductory course to the lay Co-Directors of the church's adult education program. The proposal was accepted and the course was scheduled for four evenings in November and December.

[For more information on the formation of the Mid-East Working Group and a copy of its approved Charter, see [www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/](http://www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/).]

### Adult Education at St. Mark's

So that the reader can understand the decisions that the teaching team made about the structure and methods of the course, it is necessary to explain the approach of the Christian Education Program at St. Mark's. For over 40 years, the foundation of the program has been the "functional education" process developed by the Rev. Charles Penniman, an Episcopal priest, theologian, and consultant to St. Mark's in the 1950s and 1960s. This process begins with the exploration of life experiences to identify where and in what ways Judeo-Christian proclamations of insight and faith help make "sense out of existence."

Functional courses are non-didactic: facilitators prompt individual and group reflection rather than “teach” a set body of knowledge. Passages drawn from Scripture and other texts are used as catalysts for discussion, meditation, and personal expression through art to help individuals explore diverse ways of exploring and experiencing insights. Emphasis is placed on people sharing their stories with one another in a climate of respect and confidentiality.

While the Education Program is supervised by the Rector, it is developed and managed by four Co-Directors, drawn from the congregation to serve a two-year term. The Co-Directors recruit teams to teach popular courses and solicit proposals for new ones. They also assign a seasoned teacher to advise the team as “supervisor” for the course. While only some adult classes offered each semester are “fully functional” in all respects, most members of St. Mark’s have become so accustomed to this approach that they expect all courses to adhere to its basic principles.

Aside from its methodology, adult education at St. Mark’s differs from that at many other churches in terms of the timing and funding of courses. Most adult classes take place on weeknights or weekends rather than on Sunday morning. Moreover, the program is largely self-supporting financially. Course fees range from \$30 for an all-day workshop, to \$50-75 for a course with four to five sessions but no weekend retreat, to as much as \$275 for a longer course with a retreat experience. A portion of all fees goes into a scholarship fund to help subsidize the cost for parishioners who request the assistance.

## **Developing the Course**

### *Anticipating the Challenges*

One benefit of the approach to adult education at St. Mark’s is that great care is taken in both the planning and implementation of courses to strike a healthy balance between the didactic and experiential. The risk in not doing so is to create class sessions that engage only the participants’ intellects but do not help them connect the issues to their emotional and spiritual lives.

We were fortunate in having the help of a supervisor who had extensive experience in developing and teaching courses and in supervising other teaching teams. The fact that she had attended Mid-East Working Group events and had a keen interest in the topic was a plus!

From the outset, we recognized that the complexity of the topic, the diversity of potential participants, and the time constraints inherent in two-hour evening classes all presented challenges we would need to address in our planning. We believe that any group preparing an introductory course on the conflict in Israel/Palestine will face similar challenges:

- How to provide enough information so that course participants can grasp the realities of the situation without being overwhelmed by the complexity?
- How to avoid drowning in details and losing sight of the suffering, rights, and aspirations of both the Palestinian and Israeli people?
- How to accommodate a range of participants, from those who have extensive knowledge of the situation to those who know only its outlines?
- How to welcome an exchange of opinions and assure participants that class sessions will not devolve to contentious arguments or proselytizing?
- How to help participants feel empowered not merely to learn more about the situation but actually do something about it?

### ***Underlying Issues***

Our supervisor also helped us identify and explore some of the additional challenges we might face in the unspoken attitudes, assumptions, and emotions that participants bring with them into the classroom. On one level, people might have understandable trepidations about tackling the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Some might be concerned that the teachers will have axes to grind. Others might come with their own strong opinions and resist receiving information contrary to their preconceptions.

From previous conversations with some of our older parishioners, for example, we knew that many of them strongly supported Israel and gave scant thought to the plight of the Palestinians because they still remembered the shock with which they had learned about the horrors of the Holocaust in the years after the war. We were also aware that many members of the congregation -- like many Americans -- might be concerned about being perceived as anti-Semitic if they made critical comments about the actions of the Israeli government.

At an even deeper level, we also recognized that each participant's ability to engage with the issues and moral imperatives to be explored in the course would be affected week to week by an array of internal emotions and desires. One of the values of the Functional Education approach is to help teachers identify the underlying feelings and concerns that all humans share and to understand that they will inevitably shape people's attitudes and actions including their silent reflection, comments and questions, creative expressions, and interaction with others.

In the Functional Education tradition, these underlying issues are expressed as tensions between the kinds of conflicting desires and concerns that individuals often experience simultaneously. With the help of our supervisor, we identified the following tensions as most likely to lie below the surface of participants' reactions to the subject matter that the course would explore:

- I long for peace, but I fear feeling helpless and discouraged.
- I want to learn more about the situation, but I fear getting sucked down a black hole of complicated, conflicting information.
- I want to express my feelings with others, but I fear being shunned.
- I want to talk with people who have differing opinions, but I fear conflict and confrontation.
- I want to be truly helpful (e.g. to be a Samaritan), but I don't want to pay the price.

Being aware that these feelings and desires will ebb and flow below the surface can help teachers become sensitive to both individual and group dynamics during a class session. Rather than explicate them for participants in an intellectual manner, however, teachers can craft discussion questions or learning situations that will allow individuals to experience, examine, and perhaps articulate these tensions in personal work, small group exercises, or large group settings.

### ***Our Commitments and Goals***

Out of these discussions, we developed the following set of commitments to guide our process of planning and teaching the course:

- Make participants feel welcome, regardless of their prior knowledge.
- Encourage participation in a number of ways, such as story telling, sharing in pairs, and sharing in small group discussions.
- Use a variety of methods and not be wholly didactic.
- Place the learning in a spiritual context.

- Build quiet time for reflection into each session.
- Expose participants to Israeli as well as Palestinian narratives and perspectives, possibly through a combination of guest speakers, selected readings, and film clips.
- Establish “ground rules” so that participants will respect differences of opinion and avoid arguments and attacks.
- Provide participants with resource suggestions to use during and following the course.

In keeping with these commitments, we drew up the following goals for the class:

To help participants:

- Create a safe space for dialogue in which no opinion is unwelcome.
- Understand the situation in Israel and Palestine and gain insight into what will be needed in order for both people to achieve true peace, justice, and security.
- Appreciate the diverse narratives and perspectives that individuals in Israel and Palestine have about the situation, as well as the many Americans who are concerned about their fate.
- Explore their own thoughts and feelings about what is happening in Israel and Palestine, examine the connection it may have to their own faith journey, and decide what they might do about it.
- Introduce them to a range of resource materials, organizations, and options that they may wish to explore as they take their next steps.

### ***Structure and Cost of the Course***

Based on the considerations described above, we decided to structure the course as a series of four, two-hour sessions meeting on consecutive weeks.

*Session One* would provide a general overview of the topic and feature a knowledgeable but engaging speaker.

*Session Two* would focus on short narratives enabling class participants to hear the voices of a wide range of Israelis and Palestinians. With the help of a parishioner who specializes in helping victims of trauma as a psychologist, we would also examine the ways in which all the people of the Holy Land have been traumatized by conflicts over several generations.

*Session Three* would delve into some of the attitudes and daily realities that exacerbate the situation and make it seem impossible for Israelis, Palestinians -- and their American supporters -- to move towards peace. We would use excerpts from documentary films to help participants glimpse what life is like there.

*Session Four* would focus the discussion on the steps that different individuals and organizations are taking to promote peace. Readings provided ahead of the class would introduce participants to the positions of the Episcopal Church and to the roles played by a number of other pro-peace denominations and groups. We would invite a Palestinian and an Israeli working with two of these groups to address the class. The class would conclude with time for personal reflection on next steps.

At the last class we would also provide each participant with a “take-home” packet of resource materials to use for further study as well as to share with others. The packet would include a reading list, some booklets, and some documentaries on DVD. (The booklets and DVD’s would be purchased with class fees or obtained for free).

Because this course had never been offered at St. Mark's, we were eager to set the course fee low enough so that it would not be an impediment but at a level that would enable us to pay guest presenters a modest honorarium and to purchase the materials needed for the class sessions and for the take-home packets. In consultation with the Co-Directors for Christian Education, we settled on a fee of \$50. On a case by case basis, we also offered discounts to young adults in college and to individuals with limited incomes.

### ***Promoting the Course***

Our commitment to create a "safe space" for learning and sharing became a recurring theme in all our promotional material for the course, beginning with the brief description that appeared after Labor Day in the Christian Education Course Catalog:

#### *Israel/Palestine – Is There a Samaritan on the Road?*

The "Holy Land" is rife with issues of meaning and belonging. Can Jews, Christians, and Muslims all share this land? As followers of Jesus and members of the Abrahamic family, do we have any responsibility for seeking peace, justice and security for the people there? Do perceived needs for self-protection imprison or immobilize even those who yearn for peace? In four classes, we will highlight the history, current context, and key players through the narratives of special guests, film excerpts, and readings. Personal reflections, small group discussions, and other methods will enable us to "ponder these things in our hearts," better understanding how we are touched by the strife we witness and how we might help.

Together with information about the teaching team, course fee, and session dates, this initial description was used in both the printed catalog of courses and on the church's web site. Due to space availability and other class schedules, our course was slated for four consecutive Monday evenings from 7:30-9:30 pm, beginning on November 22.

This schedule gave the teaching team time to determine the specific methods and materials to be used in each session. It also gave us time to prepare additional promotional materials. Ranging from announcements in church, to e-mail invitations, to a poster, these expanded upon the description given in the catalog and gave us the opportunity to highlight some of the special features of the course, including confirmed speakers. (A complete set of our promotional materials can be found in *Appendix A* on the course web page.)

A week prior to the start of the class, we sent our 34 registrants a welcome letter and their first reading assignment: a brief biography of our guest speaker for the first class and an eight-page overview of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, co-authored by the speaker.



## **Session 1 -- *Overview of the Conflict***

### ***Objectives***

- 1) Develop a sense of group familiarity as we embark on this journey of exploration.
- 2) Establish ground rules for a “safe space” so everyone can ask questions and voice opinions, while respecting those of others.
- 3) Provide an overview of the history of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, previous efforts at peacemaking, and the current situation.
- 4) Allow time for participants to ask questions

### ***Guest Speaker***

Ambassador Philip C. Wilcox, Jr., former Consul General for the U.S. in Jerusalem and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs. Currently President of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, Washington, DC. (honorarium provided)

### ***Facilitators' Outline***

7:30 Welcome and introductions -- FACILITATOR A

- Welcome everyone. Introduce guest speaker. (Class participants were previously e-mailed his bio and a pamphlet he co-authored on the conflict.)
- Give a quick preview of the evening's schedule.
- Ask each participant to introduce him/herself and give ONE reason for taking the class.

7:40 (approx.) Course objectives and methods -- FACILITATOR B

- Review objectives for the course (with key words shown on a flip chart):
  1. Create a safe space in which to examine our understanding, hopes, and fears relating to Israel and Palestine – and in which we can express opinions in confidence without being judged.
  2. Gain more awareness of the situation in Israel/Palestine. Consider what might be needed for all the people there to achieve true peace, justice, and security.
  3. Hear the different narratives and perspectives that individuals in Israel, Palestine, and the United States have about the situation.
  4. Explore our thoughts and feelings about what is happening in Israel/Palestine, examine the connection it may have to our personal faith journeys, and consider what steps each of us might take.
  5. Learn how faith-based organizations and other groups are promoting peace.
  6. Identify resource materials to further our understanding and our next steps.
- Mention that we will use a variety of methods: guest presenters, readings, film excerpts, small group discussions, and time for personal reflection and journaling.

7:45 Setting ground rules to ensure a safe space -- FACILITATOR C

- Review some initial ground rules written on a flip chart: respect each others' viewpoints, don't argue, no such thing as a dumb question, all in-class conversations confidential, etc.
- Ask participants to suggest other “rules” to create a “safe space” for all members of the group. Add these to the flip chart and ask class to agree to abide by them.
- Explain that the facilitators may take occasional notes to aid us in making adjustments to the class, but that these will not be shared with others.

- Mention that we may use a flip-chart to “park” questions for which we either do not have an answer or for which we cannot take time in the class to answer.

Approx. 7:50-8:00 Background on the conflict -- FACILITATOR B

- Introduce the speaker with a few brief highlights (allow 25-30 minute for his presentation, providing time cues from the back of the room)
- Thank the speaker and announce that the class will take a brief break, then divide into small groups to generate questions. Ask the group to count off in fours to form the groups.

8:25 or 8:30 Ten minute break

8:40 Break-out groups (With a 5 minute warning at 8:50)

Each break-out room is equipped with an instruction sheet, a stack of index cards and pens. Ask participants to record all the questions that come to mind on separate cards. Then together they select 1-3 questions for the speaker and designate someone to ask them. (We asked participants for all their cards at the end so class leaders could read them prior to the second class.)

8:55-9:00 Final plenary -- FACILITATOR B

- Ask each group to pose one of their questions to the speaker. (He may choose to hear the first set of questions and answer them together or take them one by one.)
- Rotate through the groups again for their second question, if time permits.
- Thank the speaker for taking time to join us. (If the speaker’s organization sends out e-mail alerts about events, encourage participants to sign up for it.)
- Ask participants to pick up an envelope before leaving at the end of the class. (Each envelope contains a brief instructions and a reading assignment for Session 2.)
- Make any other announcements needed in preparation for the next class.

9:20 Personal reflection -- FACILITATOR C

- Invite the class to take some quiet time for personal reflection and journaling, followed by a closing prayer.
- Place a candle in the center of the room and light it.
- Ask participants to reflect silently on what they have heard this evening.
- Close the reflection time with a prayer.
- Blow out the candle and thank participants.
- Adjourn by 9:30 PM

### ***Explanatory Notes***

*Reading assignment* -- Prior to the class, we provided each participant with *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: a Brief Guide*. Published by the Foundation for Middle East Peace in January, 2008, this pamphlet is co-authored by Ambassador Wilcox. The pamphlet is now out of print, but FMPEP has kindly provided a digital copy, which is available as *Appendix B* on the course web page.

*Wall maps* -- We displayed two wall maps at the front of the room during each class session. One was a 36x48” laminated map showing Israel/Palestine in the context of surrounding countries and identifying cities, towns, roads, and major geographical features. (See *Israel-Political Map* [www.mapsales.com](http://www.mapsales.com)). The other was a much more detailed map of the West Bank, available from the Washington office of B’tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Entitled *The Separation Barrier in the West Bank, February 2008*, this map shows the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green

Line), the route of the Separation Barrier Wall, the location of Palestinian towns, illegal Israeli settlements, Israeli military bases, and the boundaries of Areas A, B, and C. ([www.btselem.org/usa](http://www.btselem.org/usa)).

*Room set up* -- We placed chairs in two concentric circles, with room at the front for the lead facilitator, guest speaker, and two flip charts.

*Facilitator roles* -- In any plenary segment during the course, the facilitators played one of three roles. The *Lead Facilitator* (designated as A, B, or C) would introduce the segment, pose questions, and facilitate discussion. The *Supporter/recorder* would sit nearby, record ideas on the flip chart if needed, gauge class involvement, and help keep the process on track and on time with an occasional prompt if necessary. The *Observer/time-keeper* would remain at the back of the room to take notes of comments and questions for evaluation by the team afterwards, give time cues if needed, distribute materials, and handle late-comers.

### ***What Worked***

Overall, we were pleased with the first class -- especially with the quality and clarity of the overview presented and the level of engagement and enthusiasm shown by the participants.

- Participants found the suggested ground rules helpful and readily agreed to them.
- The self-introductions were very useful in establishing a climate of mutual respect at the outset of the class, revealing varying degrees of knowledge or direct experience with Israel/Palestine, and demonstrating the importance of being succinct and listening attentively. The speaker found it useful to get a sense of his audience.
- Participants found the assigned reading very helpful in giving them an overview of the history and preparing them for the speaker.
- Ambassador Wilcox provided an excellent, succinct overview to the history of the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, as well as to the ebb and flow of negotiations in recent decades. Among his key points were the following:
  1. He emphasized the impact of centuries of Christian prejudice against the Jews and the many acts of persecution that prepared the way for the horrors of the Holocaust. Thus the deep-seated desire among Jews worldwide for a safe homeland.
  2. At the same time, he acknowledged the centuries-old presence of both Arab Christians and Muslims in Palestine, the slaughter of both Jews and Muslims by the Crusaders, the relatively peaceful relations among the three faiths during the Ottoman period, and the sources of increasing tensions in the 20th century.
  3. Without being either polemical or partisan, the Ambassador also explained the dominant role played by the United States since 1948 in supporting Israel militarily, politically, and financially. He frankly admitted that until the 1990's our country essentially turned a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinians.
  4. While acknowledging and clarifying the shortcomings by all parties in previous efforts to negotiate peace, he insisted that the American people and our government must continue to exercise leadership -- but hopefully with a more even hand -- in order to forge a lasting peace that is based on justice for both peoples.

***What Didn't Work***

- Participants took more time than anticipated to introduce themselves, putting us behind schedule.
- Following the Ambassador's remarks, the facilitators realized that class participants wanted to engage him directly with their questions rather than break into small groups to generate questions for a concluding plenary. Because we were also behind schedule, we chose to cancel the break-out groups and instead asked participants to write their questions on index cards during the refreshment break. The lead facilitator then organized the questions to reduce redundancy and posed them to the Ambassador in the closing plenary, which lasted a half hour.

On the one hand, this method ensured that a variety of questions were asked and left time for a lively dialogue. On the other hand, while all class members had an opportunity to submit their questions on index cards, it was not clear that all chose to do so. Nor did all class members participate in the ensuing discussion. We suspect that some individuals might have felt more comfortable voicing their concerns or raising questions initially in a small group setting.

- While the use of index cards for the questions speeded up the process, some participants complained after the class concluded that the facilitator had edited, censored, or at least misrepresented their questions.

## Session 2 -- *Hearing the Voices*

### ***Objectives***

1. “Humanize” the factual framework constructed in the first session by introducing diverse Palestinians and Israelis for whom these facts are a daily reality.
2. Enable class participants to “hear” -- and perhaps identify with -- the narratives, experiences, and perspectives of those who live in Israel/Palestine.
3. Explore the nature and impact of trauma on individuals, communities, and societies.

***Guest Speaker*** -- A trauma psychiatrist (who is also a member of St. Mark’s)

### ***Facilitators’ Outline***

7:30 Welcome and overview -- FACILITATOR A

- Welcome participants
- Explain that the goal of this session is to better understand the people of Israel/Palestine and their differing perspectives on the situation and the prospects for peace.
- Review the schedule for the evening.
- Read an appropriate passage from Scripture to set the tone and then ask participants to go into their small groups according to the letters on their narratives (A, B, C, D).

7:40 Small Groups: Sharing narratives  
(Four groups with one facilitator for each group: A,B,C,D)

1. Ask participants to wear a temporary name tag identifying themselves as the person whose narrative they read.
2. Ask each participant to summarize the experience or perspective of the individual in his or her assigned reading in two minutes. During this round, everyone simply listens to the perspectives without commenting on them. (Facilitators should begin and model brevity; allow no more than half of the 30 minute period for this round of sharing.)
3. After all narratives have been shared, ask participants how they think their person would feel at hearing some of the other voices in the room. Hurt? Hopeful? (If not every participant chooses to respond, move on to the final question.)
4. Ask participants to “de-role” by removing their temporary name tags.
5. Ask each participant to share what it felt like to represent the voice of a specific Israeli or Palestinian. What surprised or disturbed you? Could you relate to this person’s perspective? (Facilitators may wish to begin and model the process.)
6. Return to the plenary room no later than 8:10.

8:10 Plenary: Group “debriefing” -- FACILITATOR B

- Confirm that we are now setting aside this particular group of voices.
- Ask participants to share how it felt to hear those various voices and perspectives. What emotions came up for you?
- Ask “Where are you now left as an individual?”
- Announce break at 8:30.

8:30 Break

8:40 Discussion about trauma

- FACILITATOR C -- Introduce guest speaker, a psychiatrist specializing in trauma
- Speaker – Will pose three questions for discussion, taking 5-7 minutes for each:
  1. What is a trauma?
  2. What must a person achieve in their own mind in order to speak a coherent and alive story about their trauma/life experience?
  3. What is required of a listener who seeks to “bear witness” to the story of a person’s trauma?
- Facilitator: Conclude the discussion after 30 minutes and thank the speaker.

9:10 or 9:15 Personal reflection-- FACILITATOR A

- Invite participants to stand and stretch in place if they wish.
- Make any announcements necessary for the third class session.
- Invite participants to conclude this evening by listening to a short passage of Scripture, followed by 5-6 minutes for silent reflection, and then a prayer circle.
- Suggest that participants may wish to reflect on what they have heard this evening. Perhaps they might consider what they would like to say to the person whose narrative they read...or what prayer they might say for that person.
- Place a candle in the center of the room and light it.
- Read the passage of Scripture.
- After five minutes of silence, ask participants to take one more minute to finish their reflection, journaling, etc., and re-focus.
- Then ask everyone to stand, and form a circle around the candle.

9:20 or 9:25 Prayer Circle

- FACILITATOR B Start the process with a prayer
- FACILITATOR C Wait for others to offer their prayers, then conclude with a closing prayer.
- FACILITATOR A Blow out the candle.

9:30 Adjourn

### ***Explanatory Notes***

*Selecting narratives* -- Early in our planning process, we began to collect personal testimonies or narratives representing as wide a spectrum as possible of the different viewpoints present in Israel/Palestine:

- A radical, recalcitrant perspective, such as that of Hamas leaders and right-wing residents of the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank
- Current or former Palestinian militants or members of the Israeli Defense Forces (whether hardened in their views or beginning to change them)
- Individuals on both sides who had suffered from the violence, such as suicide bombings, missile attacks from Gaza, actions by IDF soldiers or settlers, or the oppressive aspects of the military occupation
- Individuals on both sides who had chosen to renounce violence and work for peace, justice, and reconciliation

We gathered these “voices” from many sources, including books and articles, web sites and blogs, segments transcribed from documentary films, and, in one case, an unpublished play. In this manual, *Appendix D* contains a matrix of the selected narratives, a list of sources, the instructions provided to

readers, and a sample of six narratives. The same material and all the narratives (except for the unpublished one) can be found in *Appendix D* on the course web page.

While these materials are available for use, we strongly recommend that individuals planning to use narratives in this fashion in their own course draw up their own matrix and seek out additional voices by exploring web sites, transcribing portions of additional documentaries, or looking at other sources. We believe course planners/teachers will find that doing so is worth the investment of time. By delving into news stories, testimonials found on various web sites, or viewing documentaries, they will understand the context from which individual narratives may be drawn and thus be better able to answer questions that may arise from participants in the class. The narrative themselves may also be more timely if drawn from recent hard news or feature stories or from non-governmental web sites that frequently feature new testimonials from residents of Israel or Palestine.

*Assignment of narratives* -- We divided the 34 participants into four groups, assigning the same set of narratives to groups A and B and another set to groups C and D. At the end of the first class session each participant picked up an envelope with his or her name on it. Inside was the assigned narrative (generally 1-2 pages in length) and instructions asking the person to come prepared to summarize the narrative in a couple of minutes at the next class. We emphasized that class members would not be asked to “role play” the individual. Nor did they need to agree with the sentiments expressed in the narrative. We simply asked that they represent the person’s experience faithfully and succinctly.

*Facilitator preparation* -- We asked a class member who was also a member of the Mid-East Working Group to serve as our fourth facilitator for the small groups. Several days before the class, we e-mailed participants to confirm who would be attending. Because some people could not attend, the facilitators were prepared to read their assigned “voices.” We provided a complete set of the narratives to our guest speaker in case he wished to familiarize himself with the material prior to the class. We also planned to have extra copies of all the narratives on hand just in case some participants forgot to bring them.

### ***What Worked***

- The sharing of narratives proved to be profoundly moving. Those who had to share expressions of hatred and violence found it disturbing and wanted to distance themselves from those voices. Those who shared stories of grieving parents or of people facing daily oppression, commiserated with their suffering.
- The format for the small groups worked well, including the use of the temporary name tags and going around the circle for each of the three questions.
- Some of the narratives introduced the class to organizations through which Israelis and Palestinians are working to resist or at least monitor the military occupation and to build bridges between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. This clearly piqued participants’ interest, stimulated questions, and motivated them to learn more.
- So many participants expressed interest in reading all the narratives that we subsequently e-mailed the full set to each member of the class.
- The speaker skillfully and gently facilitated a discussion of trauma, inviting participants to comment on the narratives they had just read but also to share their own observations about the effects of trauma in our own society. Among his insights and those offered by class members were the following:
  1. That trauma can arrest a person’s behavior and make it difficult to respond to events on their own terms or in a new way
  2. That trauma leaves people feeling unsafe and unsure of their place in the world

3. That trauma can often lead individuals and societies to humiliate their perceived enemies in times of conflict, as a means of undermining their will to resist
  4. That trauma can be passed down through the generations
  5. That in the continuing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, we are witnessing the “geo-political playing out of trauma scripts” on all sorts of levels
  6. That empathetic, non-judgmental listening is essential in helping a victim of trauma
- Class members greatly appreciated having the time for silent reflection at the end of the session. Many offered heartfelt prayers for the people met through the narratives, including the perpetrators of violence, their victims, and those courageously working for peace and justice.

### ***What Didn't Work***

- In the small groups, some participants did not present a brief summary of their narrative as suggested. Instead they had become so engaged in the individual's experience that they seemed to feel honor-bound to relate his or her story in detail.
- Facilitators faced a challenge in giving all participants a chance to respond to the questions posed while also keeping on schedule. Similarly, it was difficult to extricate participants from the break-out rooms when it was time to assemble for the debriefing segment.
- As a result, we fell behind schedule. Rather than take time away from the discussion on trauma, we decided to shorten the debriefing segment. As a result, class members did not have as much time to learn about the narratives used in other groups or to share their reactions with one another in that larger setting.

## Session 3 -- *Viewing the Context*

### ***Objectives***

1. Using film excerpts, give participants a sense of daily life for Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, for Israeli citizens and defense forces, and for those working together for peace.
2. Complement the films with fact sheets providing additional information on the conflict: comparison of armaments, numbers killed or wounded, attitudes as revealed by opinion polls.
3. Examine the choices made by the media regarding Israel/Palestine and ask how they can influence perceptions of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans toward the conflict and the prospects for peace.

### ***Facilitator's Outline***

7:30 Welcome and overview -- FACILITATOR A

- Welcome participants.
- Explain the objectives for this evening within the context of the first two classes:
  1. We've considered the historical context, we've heard the voices of a variety of Israelis and Palestinians who are living with the results of that history; and with the help of our trauma expert, we have explored what it means to be an empathetic witness and listener to those who have suffered and who continue to suffer.
  2. Tonight, we will place the narratives we've heard in the context of the land itself and the different realities experienced by the people on a daily basis.
  3. We'll do that in two ways: by sharing and discussing some handouts that will give you additional facts about the situation (responding to questions that arose in the first two classes),
  4. And by showing short segments from two documentaries that reveal conditions "on the ground" that are shaping people's experiences and perceptions.
  5. In light of the special role that the U.S. has played since 1948 and the special responsibility Americans bear, one of these documentaries will examine how the media in our country shapes our perception of the conflict
  6. Through the films, we will also meet some of the peacemakers who work to bridge the divides between Israelis and Palestinians.
  7. We will conclude the evening with some quiet time to reflect on what we have seen and heard in the context of some passages of Scripture.
- Review schedule for the evening (on flip chart)

7:40 (or earlier) Brief discussion of *Handout 1: Changing Populations/Boundaries* -- FACILITATOR B

- Explain the handout (as the other facilitators pass it out)
- Review the demographic statistics on Israel and Palestine, the comparison of land area to U.S. states, the changing boundaries since 1946, and the fragmentation of the West Bank proposed by Sharon in 2001
- Take questions & comments

7:50 Film excerpts #1 and 2 from *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land* -- FACILITATOR C

- Mention the challenge of selecting a few excerpts from the many fine documentaries about Israel/Palestine that are available.
- Introduce *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land*. Produced in 2003, the film documents conditions ranging from suicide bombings in Israel to the hardships of the Occupation while also analyzing how the media have portrayed these things.

- Explain that some of the footage is graphic.
- Mention that the first part of the documentary reviews what the film-makers call the five aspects of Israel's "PR strategy" in dealing with the media. We'll look at two of these segments: *Invisible Colonization* and *Violence in a Vacuum*.

(Facilitator A selects the first segment from the list of chapters and starts the film. Segment 1/6 runs 10 minutes, 30 seconds; segment 1/7 runs 10 minutes, 9 seconds. Facilitator A turns off the DVD at the appropriate point.)

8:15 (approx.) Quick "key word" responses and Handout #2 -- FACILITATOR A

First 5-6 minutes:

- Ask participants to call out the first word that comes to their minds and jot it down on in their journal or on an index card on the table.
- Ask participants to take five minutes of quiet time to reflect on what they've seen. They may wish to write in their journals or use the art material to express their reaction in a drawing.

Last 10 minutes:

- Ask if there are any comments or questions.
- If questions relate to issues of fatalities, the discrepancy in armaments, or U.S. support for Israel, mention the prepared information handout.
- If there is sufficient time remaining, distribute the handout. Or simply cite key findings and say that the fact sheet will be available at the end of the class for people to take home.
- At 8:30 announce a 10 minute break.

8:30-8:40 Break

8:40 Film clip #3 *Encounter Point* -- FACILITATOR C

- Introduce the final film clip, from *Encounter Point*, a 2006 documentary that examines how some Israelis and Palestinians have transformed their grief and pain into a commitment to "the other" in pursuit of peace and reconciliation.
- Point out that three of the narratives read last week featured people shown in this film: Robi Damelin, Sami Al Jundi, and Ali Abu Awwad, all of whom work with the Bereaved Families Forum.

(Facilitator A selects "Scene 6" of the film, which is actually segment 2/7 on the DVD, featuring Tzvika Shahak and George Sa'adeh. The segment runs 12 minutes 22 seconds; Facilitator A stops the DVD and turns off the equipment at its conclusion.)

8:55 (approx.) Quick response to the segment -- FACILITATOR C

First five minutes:

- Ask participants to call out the first word that comes to their minds and jot it down on in their journal or on an index card on the table.
- Ask participants to take five minutes of quiet time to reflect on what they've seen. They may wish to write in their journals or use the art material to express their reaction in a drawing.

Last ten minutes:

- Ask for any comments or questions.
- If there is a natural entry-point, mention the handout on opinion polls and either distribute it or cite some key findings and encourage participants to pick it up at the end of class.
- End the discussion at 9:09
- Tell participants they will receive a short reading assignment for the final class by e-mail in the next two days; make any other announcements necessary for the next class.

9:10 “Walk in the Wilderness” -- FACILITATOR A

- Explain that we will set handouts aside, stand up, and spend 5-6 minutes in a “walking meditation” around the perimeter of the room.
- During the walk, the facilitators will read four passages of Scripture. Ask participants to consider how the passages apply not only to Israelis and Palestinians but also to ourselves as Americans.
- Ask participants to form a circle and begin their walk.

## Readings:

FACILITATOR B -- Read Genesis 17:4-9 and Galatians 3:5-9, 26-29

FACILITATOR A -- After 20-30 seconds of silence, read Amos 5:14-15, 22-24

FACILITATOR C -- After 20-30 seconds of silence, read Isaiah 58:1-9

After a final 30 seconds of silence, Facilitator C asks everyone to take a seat at a table and spend the remaining time in quiet reflection, journaling, or using the art materials to create a picture or collage to express their feelings at has been seen and heard this evening.

9:25 Closing prayer -- FACILITATOR A***Explanatory Notes***

*Experiencing despair* -- In planning this session, we recognized that participants would likely come into the room already feeling some level of despair because of the harsh experiences and viewpoints they had learned about through the narratives. We also knew that seeing acts of violence and oppression in the film excerpts, learning about the misrepresentations often made by the media, and learning about the great disparities in funding, armaments, and deaths would leave many participants feeling overwhelmed and hopeless about the situation in Israel/Palestine.

In the tradition of adult education at St. Mark’s, courses are often intentionally planned to arrive at at point like this. Participants are asked to become vulnerable to the despair that the issue or situation arouses, to relate it to despair they may have felt at other times in their lives, and to reflect on the Gospel accounts that reveal how Jesus and his followers -- like people in all ages -- endured a very human cycle that moves from curiosity and eagerness, through anxiety and despair, to hopeful anticipation. Often participants are invited to use non-verbal means, such as drawings and collages, to express how they feel. (The merits of this approach are discussed in the Recommendations section of *Appendix G* on the course web page.) We originally intended to devote a substantial amount of time to such an art exercise in this session, but due to the time needed for a discussion of the films and fact sheets, we chose instead to invite participants to reflect on their emotional and spiritual response to such despair during a meditative walk.

*Film excerpts* -- From our earliest planning meetings, we decided that film excerpts from one or more documentaries about Israel/Palestine would best reveal the difficult circumstances people face “on the ground”-- many on a daily basis. We estimated that about 30 minutes would be needed to view the films. This would allow time for discussion and other aspects of the class.

In screening documentaries, we looked for excerpts that would illustrate one or more of the following topics:

- Palestinian life under occupation, including the presence of Israeli armed forces, the separation barrier wall, ubiquitous checkpoints, house demolitions, destruction of olive orchards, and property
- Land confiscated for use only by Israeli Jews, including segregated highways and illegal settlements ranging from the hilltop outposts occupied by Orthodox extremists to extensive suburban-style communities

- Examples of the terror experienced by Israelis due to suicide bombings and missile attacks from Gaza and Lebanon
- Palestinians and Israelis working together across geographic, cultural, religious, and ideological divides
- Differences in the way these realities are depicted in the media in Israel/Palestine, the U.S., and possibly other countries

Ultimately, we chose excerpts from two films: *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land* (2003) and *Encounter Point* (2006). For more information on the films, including brief descriptions of the segments we used, see the excerpt from *Appendix E* included at the end of this manual.

*Fact sheets* -- In part to answer questions that had arisen in the first two sessions and in part to expand upon issues addressed by the films, we prepared the three fact sheets described below. Each was one page copied front and back. We chose to distribute the first one in class and use it during a discussion leading into the first film. Facilitators cited key findings from the other two sheets during brief discussion periods after the excerpts were shown. Participants could pick up these two sheets at the end of the class. (All three fact sheets are contained in *Appendix E* on the course web page.)

1. *Israel/Palestine: Changing Populations, Changing Boundaries*

This sheet documents changes in demographics, settlement, and the control of land in the Holy Land from the initial immigration of European Zionists in the late 1870's to the partition of Palestine by the U.N. in 1947, then from the war of 1948 to that of 1967, and from the latter year to 2005.

2. *Israel/Palestine: Comparative Data*

This sheet documents U.S. military aid to Israel, the disparities in armaments available to Israel versus Palestine, and the number of fatalities on both sides from the First Intifada up through the invasion of Gaza in late 2008.

3. *Attitudes and Expectations of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans*

This sheet cites recent findings by university research centers, non-profit organizations, and commercial polling firms on the attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians towards one another, their opinions on prospects for peace, and Americans' attitudes on the conflict.

*The Wilderness Walk* -- We chose to introduce the meditative walk at the end of the class by reminding class members of the many times that Jesus (and numerous prophets and pilgrims before and since) have gone into the wilderness to cleanse their minds and listen to God. We suggested that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes a wilderness of sorts, not merely for the people who live there but also for people around the world who yearn for a resolution but are frustrated by repeated setbacks.

As facilitators who experience the same feelings of despair as everyone else, we joined class members on this silent walk around the perimeter of the room. At different points in the activity, however, each of us stepped aside for a few minutes to read the passages of Scripture cited above. We hoped they would inspire participants to ponder the relevance of ancient calls and commitments to their lives today and to the situation in the Holy Land:

- God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, as applied both to those who inhabit the Holy Land today and to all people,
- Paul's interpretation of the covenant as being extended to those who believe in Christ,
- The call of God through Amos to "hate evil, seek good, and maintain justice,"
- The call of God through Isaiah to "set the oppressed free and to break every yoke."

The passages of Scripture and closing prayer are included in *Appendix E* on the course web page.

### ***What Worked***

- The class responded well to the use of the first Fact Sheet during the introduction to the film clips. The information on changes in population, settlements, and land control expanded upon points raised by Ambassador Wilcox in Session One, provided more context for the narratives used in Session Two, and helped frame the content of the films we were about to screen.
- This fact sheet also sparked a lively discussion and led to additional questions concerning the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, the status of refugees now, and voting rights within the State of Israel.
- During this and subsequent discussions, facilitators and class members alike found the wall maps useful for locating places, borders, and the route of the Separation Barrier Wall.
- The film excerpts had an enormous impact on participants judging from their close attention, reactions while watching, and comments afterwards.
- Asking participants to share “key words” after the excerpts had an immediate, cathartic effect. *Injustice, deception, manipulation, and outrage* were among the words evoked by the first pair of excerpts, while *Encounter Point* elicited *hope, healing, empathy, and redemption*.
- In the two post-film discussions, we were able to make some connections between viewer responses and the other two fact sheets. For example, statistics comparing Israeli and Palestinian armaments and fatalities provided context for the depictions of force in the films. Similarly, the hardening of attitudes evident in the films linked with opinion polls documenting increased antipathy towards “Arabs” in many segments of Israeli society.
- Following the class, participants expressed appreciation for the “Wilderness Walk” and for the closing prayer we used (a Hanukkah poem evoking the power of a single candle against the darkness). We subsequently e-mailed all class members the passages of Scripture and the prayer.

### ***What Didn't Work***

- Participants expressed frustration during the refreshment break and after the class at not having had more time to discuss the films and fact sheets, all of which sparked more questions than we could answer during the session.
- The brief post-film discussions were somewhat awkward. We had anticipated developing a discussion from viewers’ responses and had not prepared “launch” questions as a back-up. We were not as nimble as we could have been in connecting people’s key words and questions about the films with some of the information provided on the fact sheets. Nor had we anticipated some questions. For example, when participants expressed concern about inaccuracy in the major media, we were unprepared to respond with a discussion of alternative news sources.
- We chose to hand out only the first fact sheet because the class would have more time to look at it while participating in the opening discussion. We feared that the other two sheets might be too much of a diversion, so we chose to cite highlights rather than distribute them. Although we encouraged participants to pick up those sheets at the end of the class, not all copies were taken. Whether this was due to forgetfulness, a lack of interest, or information overload, we do not know.

- Several participants who have taken other classes at St. Mark's were frustrated that we made art materials available but then did not provide a sufficient block of time to make use of them. This was also the facilitators' biggest regret about the effect of time constraints on this particular session.

## Session 4 -- *Where Do We Go from Here?*

### **Objectives**

1. Explore the variety of work being done by peacemakers in Israel, Palestine, and the U.S., including faith-based groups and non-profit organizations.
2. Consider possible options as we ponder our own “next steps.”

### **Guest Speakers**

- Noura Erakat, Legal Advocacy Coordinator, *Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights* (Washington, DC, office of this Bethlehem-based organization)
- Ori Nir, former journalist with *Ha'aretz* and current spokesman for *Americans for Peace Now*, the U.S. counterpart of *Peace Now*, the oldest Israeli peace group (honorarium provided to each speaker)

### **Facilitators' Outline**

7:30 Welcome and overview -- FACILITATOR A

- Welcome everyone and introduce our guests.
- Explain the focus of this final session -- “*Where do we go from here?*” -- and state our objectives for the session.
- Review the schedule for the evening (on the flip chart)

7:35 or 7:40 Moderated discussion -- FACILITATOR A

- Acknowledge the personal courage that it takes for individuals in either Israel or Palestine to work for peace in the midst of people who have been traumatized by decades of violence, animosity, and suffering.
- Mention that our speakers are two of many others working for peace on both sides, some of whom class members have “met” in the narratives they read and the films they viewed
- Ask the speakers to describe the work of their organizations. (3-4 minutes each).
- Ask Mr. Nir to describe other pro-peace groups started by Jews either in Israel or the U.S.
- Ask Ms. Erakat to describe other pro-peace groups started by Palestinian Christians or Muslims.
- Ask both speakers to discuss how they work with other groups, whether faith-based, interfaith, or non-sectarian.
- Before taking questions, remind the speakers that class members prepared for this session by exploring the web sites of a few peace groups selected from a list we provided.
- Invite participants to ask speakers about their organizations, the role played by other groups, and the current challenges faced by them all.
- At 8:20, bring the segment to a close, thanking the speakers and inviting them to meet class members during the refreshment break.

8:20-8:30 Break

8:30 How U.S. Churches are responding -- FACILITATOR B

- Ask participants for their reactions to their assigned reading about the role of churches and faith-based groups in working for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. Specifically:
  1. Ask what they learned about the positions of the Episcopal Church and the relationship of the Dioceses of Washington and Jerusalem

2. What they discovered about the roles being played by other denominations and by inter-faith groups.

- After eight minutes, thank everyone for the comments. Explain that we will now be breaking into small groups to consider our personal “next steps.” Remind participants to pick up an envelope with take-home materials at the end of the class. (Contents described in *Appendix H*.)
- Ask participants to count off in fours and proceed to their break-out rooms.

8:40 to 9:00 Small group discussions -- FACILITATORS A, B, C (and D)

(Facilitators in each room will have a discussion guide, a handout for participants, and pens and paper for participants to use, if needed.)

- Introduce the session as merely the start of what will be a longer process of thinking about the content we have all heard, seen, and discussed in the four weeks. Now how do we integrate it into our own lives?
- Distribute the sheet with three statements for participants to consider. Read the statements and pose questions.
- Take notes only on responses to the last question: Are there things St. Mark’s or the Diocese could do to help you be a more empathetic listener to those who suffer and to work for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine?
- Finish discussion by 9:00.

9:00 Final plenary discussion: The Good Samaritan story -- FACILITATOR C

- Explain that we will spend the last portion of the class revisiting the Good Samaritan story: considering how the people of Jesus’s time would have heard it and what it means to each of us today. (Facilitators A and B pass out copies of the story.)
- Light a candle in the center of the room and read the story.
- Pose questions about the Samaritan, the Levite, the road to Jericho, etc. What would this story have meant to Jesus’s audience? (Offer explanations if no one else does so.)
- Ask if participants identify with any of the characters in the story.
- Thank everyone for participating. Conclude by pointing out that  
*We are always on the road to Jericho in our lives and must decide for ourselves how we will respond. This is also true of how we choose to respond to the plight of the Israelis and Palestinians.*

9:25 Silent reflection and commitment cards -- FACILITATOR C

(Facilitators A and B distribute one index card and envelope per person.)

- Invite everyone -- facilitators and class members -- to take a few minutes in silence to think about what he or she wants to do next on this journey...and where he or she would like to be in three months.
- Ask each person to make a personal commitment to take some action in the next three months, then write it on the index card, seal it in the envelope, self-address it, and place it in the basket before leaving.

9:28 Closing prayer – FACILITATOR B

9:30 Adjourn

**Explanatory Notes** -- Five to six days prior to the class, we sent participants an e-mail with two documents attached. We asked everyone to read the first one, *Israel/Palestine -- The Episcopal Church's Response*, a brief summary of positions taken by the General Convention or Executive Council of the Church, statements by the Presiding Bishop, the "companion" relationship between the Dioceses of Washington and Jerusalem, and the text of a resolution passed by the Diocesan Convention in 2010. (This document has been revised to reflect actions in 2011; see *Appendix F* on the course web page.)

The second document, entitled *Promoting Peace and Justice in the Holy Land: Faith-based and Other Groups*, was a seven-page, annotated list of selected faith-based and non-sectarian organizations in Israel, Palestine, and the U.S. that are working for peace. We asked class members merely to scan this list, select one faith-based group and one non-profit organization, and then visit their respective web sites to learn about their efforts to promote peace in Israel/Palestine. (See *Appendix F*.)

**Speakers** -- From the many organizations in the Washington area, we selected two representatives who we knew to be engaging speakers. We explained that due to time constraints, we would not ask them to speak separately but to participate in a moderated discussion for approximately 40 minutes. Because we wanted this segment to address not just the work of two groups but the efforts of the broader, pro-peace field and the challenges it faces, we asked the speakers to mention some of the other groups with which they work. We also explained that during the question and answer period, class members would likely refer to some of the groups they had researched.

**Break-out groups** -- In the final hour of the class, we wanted to give participants a chance to "decompress" from all that they had seen, read, and heard in the course up to that point. Instead, we wanted to create an atmosphere in which they could focus on where the journey had led them and where they might want to go next with it, both as individuals and, possibly, as members of a congregation. In contrast to the previous plenary session, the small groups would provide an intimate setting for this shift in focus.

To prompt reflection and discussion, participants were first asked to share stories of occasions in their lives when they had been an active listener or empathetic "witness" to people's suffering, when they had worked for peace and justice or "spoken truth to power," or when they had quite naturally recoiled from a difficult situation and chosen not to get involved. Then we used three questions to shift the focus back to Israel/Palestine:

1. In light of what you've learned about Israel/Palestine, what do "empathetic listening" and "being a witness" mean to you in your actions as Americans?
2. What do "working for peace and justice" and "speaking truth to power" mean to you in the context of Israel/Palestine?
3. Are there things our church or diocese could do that would help you be a witness to the suffering in Israel/Palestine or to work for peace and justice in the Holy Land?

If participants made any suggestions in response to the third question, the facilitator would offer to share them with the Coordinating Committee of the Mid-East Working Group for consideration and possible follow-up. (*Appendix F* contains the facilitator's instructions and handout sheet.)

**Concluding plenary** -- For the final 30 minutes of the class, we wanted to return to the Gospel story alluded to in the title of the class: *Israel/Palestine: Is there a Samaritan on the Road?* We provided each participant with a handout containing the story from Luke (Chapter 10, verses 25-37). After reading the story together, the facilitator would ask a few clarifying questions, provide background information as needed, and then ask participants to consider when in their lives they had acted like any of the characters in the story. Whether answered silently or aloud, this question would then lead into the final period of quiet, personal reflection. (*Appendix F* contains the reading from Luke, the facilitator's notes, instructions about the commitment cards, and the closing prayer used in this session.)

*Commitment cards* -- As facilitators, we had seen this technique used to great effect in other courses and thought it would be an appropriate way to end this course. In its very size, the index card helps each participant focus on one concrete action that he or she would like to accomplish in the coming months. Sealed in separate envelopes, the commitments are kept strictly confidential. Three months later, when each participant receives the envelope in the mail, only he or she knows whether the commitment was kept. Each of the facilitators also wrote a commitment and sealed it in an envelope.

*Take-home packet* – With class fees, we purchased a copy of *Steadfast Hope* for each participant. (This was the original version published by the Presbyterian Church USA, which has since been revised and reissued. A version for Episcopalians is now available from the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.) Of all the material in the take-home packet, we thought this booklet, with its companion DVD of film excerpts, might be most useful to class members if they wished to continue their study or engage friends and family members in a discussion of the situation in Israel/Palestine.

The packet also included two other DVD's and another booklet, all of which we obtained for free from local organizations. We had begun work on an extensive, annotated bibliography of suggested books and films but did not have time to finish it by the last class meeting. Instead, we enclosed a one-page list of recommended books and films. This has been updated and combined with a description of the other take-home materials in *Appendix H*, which can be found in this manual and on the course web page.

### ***What Worked***

- Participants found the assigned readings very useful. Some were inspired to investigate many of the organizations listed. Most said they had no idea that the Episcopal Church had taken strong policy positions on Israel/Palestine or that the Diocese of Washington had a Companion Diocese Committee working to raise awareness.
- Class members were very engaged by the two speakers and appreciated the maps and other handout materials they provided from their respective organizations.
- Participants liked the concluding meditation on the Good Samaritan and the idea of making a commitment to themselves to take some next step.
- Towards the end of the class, the facilitators acknowledged that there had not been sufficient time in this sessions to answer the many questions that had arisen or to consider next steps. We announced that we would hold a follow-up meeting in mid-January 2011 for class members interested in continuing the conversation. There was general assent to this idea.
- After the conclusion of the session, many participants lingered to express their appreciation for class. While recognizing the challenges of delving into such a complex topic in only four sessions, they expressed gratitude for the pains taken to create a “safe space” for dialogue, for the wide range of “voices” heard during the course, and for the time reserved in each session for personal reflection.

### ***What Didn't Work***

- Each component of the final session had merit, but it was unrealistic to do all of them justice within the constraints of two hours.
- One of our speakers arrived 25 minutes late -- half way into the time allotted for our “moderated discussion.” As a result, instead of having a dialogue, each guest spoke separately. To allow time for this and for even a brief Q&A period, the facilitators made the difficult choice of canceling the small break out groups. Even with this time adjustment, there was not sufficient time to broaden the discussion in order to consider the role of other groups working for peace.

- After the refreshment break and the departure of the speakers, we held a plenary session combining a discussion of the roles played by the Episcopal Church and other denominations with a discussion of possible next steps that individuals might take. For the latter segment, we posed the three questions intended for the break-out groups. This sparked a lively, though still too brief, conversation about the role of churches and other groups working for peace in the Holy Land and some discussion of actions that individuals might take. Several participants expressed frustration, however, at not yet understanding what individuals can actually do to make a difference.
- As with the other segments in the session, we did not have enough time to explore the Good Samaritan story in the depth and detail originally intended (as indicated by the facilitator notes shown in *Appendix F*). Instead, the facilitator merely read the passage from Luke, posed a few general questions, and then asked participants to consider when in their lives they had acted like any of the characters in the story. Although the discussion was less rich and engaging than it could have been, the story still served as a useful prelude to the final period of quiet reflection.

## Course Evaluation

In most adult education courses at St. Mark's, teachers or facilitators build time into the final session so that participants can complete a brief evaluation form before leaving. We knew that we would not have time to do this during our last class meeting. Instead, we alerted participants that we would e-mail a short Evaluation Form to them a few days after the class. We considered revising the standard form to include specific questions regarding different components of the course, but decided that this might be more burdensome for participants and reduce responses. Instead, we used the following, generic questionnaire and hoped that participants would comment on the pro's and con's of the different approaches we had tried in their responses to the open-ended questions.

- Personal data: years at (*this church*) and number of adult classes previously taken.
- Value of this class to you on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 = very high)
- Level of personal involvement in the class on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 = very much)
- What do you think the purpose of the class was?
- The thing of most value for me in this class was....
- One thing I would change is ....
- Other comments, suggestions?

Three days after the final session, we sent class members an e-mail thanking them for their participation, reminding them of the optional follow-up discussion on January 18, and asking them to take a few minutes to evaluate the course. The questions were contained in the text of the message, making it possible to answer them in a return e-mail. No doubt the intervening holidays affected the response rate. While many class participants spoke to the facilitators about the course in the following weeks, only half of the group completed and returned their evaluation forms by early January. (The Co-Directors of Christian Education at St. Mark's tell us that this is a typical response rate when evaluations are not handled as part of the final class.)

In general, respondents gave the course high marks. They particularly valued the speakers, first-person narratives, and film excerpts for exposing them to the situation on the ground and to what individuals are experiencing on a daily basis. One participant said the course was of greatest value in "[planting] seeds of understanding about the scope and complications of the Israel/Palestine crisis [...and in bending] my heart and hands in the direction of responding." Another wrote that it was of great value to "connect with other people at St. Marks who share an interest and passion for the Middle East."

As for future steps, many respondents said they would:

- Follow media coverage of Israel/Palestine with a more critical eye. One person wrote, "I will read the news without the sense of futility that I was experiencing."
- Be more willing to engage others in dialogue. One respondent put it this way, "Knowing more, I will be less wary/hesitant to involve myself in dialogue on this subject..." Another said, "I feel less isolated with my thoughts about the Israeli/Palestinian situation."
- Take action. One class member wrote, "I will be more engaged in working on this issue."
- Make a faithful response. One participant pledged to "include the people of Palestine and Israel in my daily loving-kindness/prayer practice." Another put it this way: "As a result of this class, one thing I believe will be different for me is that 'the mustard seed' will grow. I live into the Hope."

The majority of respondents recommended that a fifth or sixth session be added to allow more time for course content, interaction with speakers, deepening the experience of the narratives, and sharing personal responses. Some suggested that a full day or half day retreat on a Saturday could provide the extra time needed to engage speakers and especially to explore "what we can DO with what we have learned if we choose to take any action." For a copy of the evaluation form and a summary of responses, see *Appendix G* on the course web page.

## Follow-up Activities

Since the conclusion of the course in December, 2010, many class members have continued to learn about Israel/Palestine by reading books on their own, noticing and sharing news stories and editorials with each other, and attending related events at St. Mark's or at other venues in the area. In addition to continuing their individual "journeys" in these ways, participants have also spread the word about the class within the congregation. This has resulted in attendance at events by people not previously engaged, an expansion of our e-mail list for event notices, and requests that we offer the course again.

Building upon this increased interest, the Mid-East Working Group (MEWG) has undertaken the following activities in the past year:

- *January 2011 Gathering* – About 40 class participants and other interested members of the congregation attended this meeting to further educate themselves about issues, discuss options for individual action, and brainstorm activities that the Working Group or the church itself might undertake. Suggestions included learning more about advocacy options, organizing a parish trip to Israel/Palestine with a focus on peace issues (not just visits to holy sites), and establishing a relationship with a parish, school, or health facility in the Diocese of Jerusalem.
- *Endorsement of the MEWG* – In January, the Vestry approved the Working Group's Charter, which authorizes the group to educate our congregation regarding issues in Israel/Palestine and to advocate for justice and peace.
- *March 2011 Event on AFEDJ* - The MEWG hosted a Sunday afternoon presentation by Phoebe Griswold, President of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem ([www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org)) We invited members of other congregations to attend, including those that have already established links with individual parishes, schools, or health clinics administered by the Diocese of Jerusalem.
- *Participation in the Good Friday Offering* – With the approval of the Rector and Senior Warden, the MEWG promoted and coordinated St. Mark's participation in the annual collection of a special offering to support the work of the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf States. Over \$1,800 was raised.
- *May 2011 Advocacy Discussion* – MEWG held two sessions at which church members could learn more about the public policy positions of the Episcopal Church regarding Israel/Palestine and explore options for individual advocacy.
- *September 2011 Screenings of Budrus* – To educate parishioners and residents of Capitol Hill about the growth of non-violent resistance in the West Bank, we screened the documentary film *Budrus* at church and arranged for it to be shown at a neighborhood venue. Both events were well attended.
- *November 2011* – MEWG hosted a panel presentation by members of the clergy and congregation who have lived, worked, or extensively traveled in Israel/Palestine. The speakers shared their insights with fellow parishioners and related what were often transformative experiences.
- *December 2011* – MEWG sponsored its second annual Advent Sale as part of the church's Alternative Gift Fair. We sold olive oil from a Nablus Farmers Cooperative and olive wood creches and ornaments from Bethlehem. Thirty per cent of the proceeds were sent to the American Friends of the Diocese of Jerusalem to aid the Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children in Jerusalem, one of several health facilities operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.
- *Monthly e-Announcements* -- Twice a month, the MEWG sends a blast e-mail to over 100 parish members who have asked to be alerted to current articles and metro area events on Israel/Palestine.

In early 2012:

- *Diocesan Resolution* -- The Rector and Lay Delegates from St. Mark's co-sponsored the submission of a resolution on *Pursuing a Just Peace in the Holy Land* to be presented at the January 2012 Diocesan Convention.
- *MEWG Readers Group* -- Launch of a monthly, informal gathering at which interested members of parish can participate in a facilitated discussion of recent news articles, op-ed's, and other short works relating to peace and justice between Israelis, Palestinians, and their Middle East neighbors.
- *MEWG Lending Library* -- Launch of an online reservation service (using GoogleDocs) through which the Working Group, as well as individual members of the parish, can lend books and DVDs pertaining to Israel and Palestine.
- *Trip to Israel/Palestine* -- The Mid-East Working Group is planning a trip to take place in the spring of 2013.

## Recommendations

As the previous sections indicate, participants in the “Israel/Palestine” course remained engaged and enthusiastic throughout the four sessions and gave the course high marks in their evaluations. In general, therefore, the planning team felt that the course had met most of its objectives.

At the same time, in looking back over the way the four sessions had actually played out, we recognized that we failed to achieve several very important objectives:

- Providing opportunities for class members to interact in small groups,
- Allowing sufficient time for participants to consider the connections between course content, the teachings of our faith tradition, and their personal faith journeys,
- Providing an opportunity for class members to explore and express their response to course content using art materials, and
- Examining options for individual advocacy

In some cases, we simply were not very realistic about the time we allotted for some of these activities. In other instances, we chose to give them short shrift or to delete them outright by making changes to agenda for a given class meeting (such as Session 3) in an attempt to respond to questions that had arisen by that point. At other times, we made on-the-spot decisions to curtail or cancel planned activities in order to adjust to what appeared to be the dominant interest of the group (such as having more time to interact with Ambassador Wilcox in Session 1) or to unexpected changes such as the late arrival of a speaker.

Inevitably any team of teachers or facilitators attempting to engage church members in an exploration of the many issues intertwined in the conflict and continuing story of Israel and Palestine will face similar challenges and have to make adjustments. As mentioned in the “Note to Readers” at the beginning of the manual, we have not presented this summary of our experience with the intention that any other church will (or should) replicate it in every respect. Instead, we have tried to represent faithfully what we attempted, what worked, and what frankly did not work as well as we had hoped.

Our over-arching recommendation to anyone putting together a course on Israel/Palestine -- and by far the most frequent suggestion given by class participants in their evaluations -- is to devote more than four, two-hour sessions to the topic.

In *Appendix G*, which can be found on the course web page, we discuss how the course might be reconfigured in six sessions (with some possible options) and re-examine the benefits of allowing time for the four approaches mentioned above in the bulleted list. What follows is an excerpt from that appendix, providing an abridged version of how course components might be organized in a six-session format.

### ***Session One***

We would still devote this session to an overview of the conflict, its history, and the current status of negotiations. We recommend giving participants a short reading assignment prior to the class, such as the pamphlet we used or appropriate pages from *Steadfast Hope*. The major part of the two hours would be devoted to a guest speaker who can offer a succinct, insightful, and non-polemical review of the history. Rather than interrupt the flow of the evening by interposing break-out sessions between the speaker’s presentation and the Q&A segment, we would simply reserve time at the end of the class, following speaker’s departure, to have participants gather in small groups to share reactions and get to know each other.

### ***Session Two***

We would still devote this session to sharing narratives representing a wide variety of Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. Depending on the number of small groups formed and the number of narratives used, reconvening the class for a plenary “debriefing” will enable participants to compare notes on similar narratives and learn about “voices” they had not heard in their own group. We would still devote the second half of the evening to a discussion of trauma with the assistance of a guest speaker specializing in that topic.

Option: Consider holding this session as a half day retreat so that its three major components -- narrative sharing, debriefing, and trauma discussion -- can be given ample time. Participants might share a meal together as part of the debriefing period and thus have more opportunity to learn about additional narratives and perspectives before reconvening to discuss trauma.

### ***Session Three***

In a six-session format, we would use this session to delve more deeply into some of the troubling realities of the conflict, using film excerpts to show the class what life is like on the ground in Israel/Palestine. We would not, however, use the fact sheets in this session, as they lessen the visceral impact of the films by diverting participants into the realm of facts, figures, and intellectualizing. Instead we would limit the response time after each film to eliciting key words from viewers and answering only a few clarifying questions, if necessary. The remainder of the session could be devoted to a meditative “Wilderness Walk” to listen to passages of Scripture, followed by a 30-40 minute period of individual art expression. (See *Appendix G* for more detail on how this segment could be handled.)

### ***Session Four***

If Session Three has been used as described above, there will be pent-up demand among class members to discuss their reactions to what they have learned and felt thus far in the course, as well as to ask questions. We would therefore recommend that the fourth session be used to dig into the issues raised by the films. Fact sheets, such as we prepared, could be e-mailed to participants prior to the class meeting as a reading assignment. Alternatively, complementary readings from *Steadfast Hope* or other sources could be used. If the list of non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) were also provided, each class member could be asked to read one of the fact sheets and then explore the web sites of at least two organizations working for peace.

During the first half of the class, participants could review the fact sheets in a plenary session, then break into small groups to share insights from their exploration of NGO web sites. The second half of the session could be devoted to hearing from and engaging two guest speakers: preferably one Israeli and one Palestinian, working for two of the organizations listed.

### ***Session Five***

This session could focus on the role of the Church in the Holy Land, the role of the Episcopal Church and other denominations in promoting peace and justice in Israel/Palestine, and options for individual advocacy. *Appendix G* discusses several options for a pre-class reading assignment

During the first half of the session, class members could discuss the important role still played by the Christian community in the Holy Land despite its diminishing numbers. Excerpts from the *Kairos Palestine* document could be used as a focus for small group reflection. Within that context, the class could then examine the work being done by the Episcopal Church and other denominations and faith-based groups in the U.S. to promote peace and justice in the Holy Land. A guest from the Episcopal Public Policy Network, the Companion Diocese Committee, or the Palestine Israel Network of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship might be invited to join in the plenary discussion.

In the second half of the session, class members could review the range of options for individual advocacy available to them, using the handouts contained in *Appendix I* for reference. The facilitators might ask participants to break into small groups to discuss their comfort level with different approaches, to share personal examples of past activism, and to brainstorm possible actions vis-a-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The session could conclude with a plenary session in which the small groups could report out key suggestions, concerns, or questions.

Option: As an alternative to a two hour session, consider holding a half-day or all day retreat on the dual topics of the church's response and individual advocacy. This would allow time for additional speakers to be involved. For example, representatives from groups such as Churches for Middle East Peace, Interfaith Peace Builders, or the U.S. Coalition to End the Occupation could talk about the resources and training they provide to help individuals speak up for peace and justice by communicating to elected officials, the media, the business sector, and fellow citizens.

### ***Session Six***

We strongly recommend that the final session be devoted to personal reflection by participants and not involve outside speakers. We would start the session by asking participants to break into small groups to discuss where the journey has brought them in terms of their understanding of Israel/Palestine, their concern for the people living there, and their own possible next steps.

While many different questions could be used to launch this discussion, course planners may wish to consider using or adapting the facilitator guidelines that we prepared for the small groups originally intended for our final session. See *Appendix F* on the course web page. Following the break-out groups, the class could reconvene in a plenary session setting to share some of the ideas generated.

We would reserve the final 45 minutes of the session for an in-depth discussion of the Good Samaritan story, as suggested in the facilitator's notes that we prepared for this segment (also included in *Appendix F*). The class could then conclude with 5-10 minutes for silent reflection, the filling out of "commitment cards" if that seems appropriate, and a concluding prayer.



## Appendices

Due to space constraints, the printed *Facilitators' Manual* contains only excerpts from some of the appendices. **These are indicated IN BOLD below.**

For digital copies of the manual as well as the complete set of appendices, please see the course page on the St. Mark's web site: [www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/](http://www.stmarks.net/get-involved/mid-east-working-group/israel-palestine-course/)

- A. Promoting the Course
- B. *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Brief Guide*  
Preparatory reading for Session 1, courtesy of the Foundation for Middle East Peace
- C. Sessions 1 and 2: Facilitator Material
  - Closing prayer for Session 1: *A Peacemaker's Prayer*, from the Mennonite Church
  - **Facilitator's Opening and Closing Remarks, Session 2**
- D. Session 2: Israeli and Palestinian Narratives**  
(matrix and sources for all narratives; six examples included in the manual)
- E. Session 3 Material
  - Fact Sheets:
    1. *Israel/Palestine -- Changing Populations, Changing Boundaries*
    2. *Data on Fatalities, Armaments, and U.S. Aid*
    3. *Attitudes and Expectations of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans*
  - **Film Selection and Response**
  - Readings from Scripture and Closing Prayer
- F. Session 4 Material
  - Reading for the Class: *Israel/Palestine -- The Episcopal Church's Response*
  - Reading: *Promoting Peace and Justice in the Holy Land: Faith-based and Other Groups*
  - Facilitator Instructions for Break-out Groups
  - Notes for the Closing Segment: The Good Samaritan Story, Discussion Questions, Commitment Cards, and Closing Prayer
- G. Course Evaluation and Facilitator Recommendations
- H. Take Home Material**
  - Suggested Reading and Viewing
  - Description of Booklets and DVD's
- I. Advocating for Peace and Justice in Israel/Palestine
  - *Resources for Episcopalians*
  - *Options for Individual Action*
  - *Sources of Information*



## **Appendix C -- Sessions 1 and 2**

*(Contents; Closing Prayer, Session 1, and Facilitator's Opening and Closing Remarks, Session 2)*

### **Facilitator's Opening and Closing Remarks, Session 2**

#### **Welcome**

(Brief welcoming remarks, noting members of the class who are ill or traveling and asking for prayers on their behalf.)

#### **Overview**

Last week, thanks to Ambassador Wilcox, we got an overview of the history and politics shaping the situation in the Holy Land today.

Tonight, we will turn our attention to Israelis and Palestinians as individuals

- whose memories have deep roots in that history
- whose perceptions of each other are shaped by those memories
- whose lives are affected by the realities of the conflict today
- who have various visions of the future
- and whose choices of how to act towards one another will, ultimately, determine how the future will really turn out

Of course, we can't meet all the individuals who live in the Holy Land this evening.

There are approximately 7.5 million of them living in Israel and another 3.5 million living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Instead, we have worked hard to find a sample of voices that represent the wide range of experiences and perspectives – some starkly divergent...others surprisingly similar.

We're about to ask you to break into four groups to share the narratives you've read. In each group you will hear four Israeli voices and four Palestinian voices.

With a few exceptions, the voices to be shared in Groups A and B are the same, as are those in Groups C and D.

We don't expect you to agree with the perspective of the person whose narrative you have read. Indeed some of them may be very troubling to you.

All we ask is that you faithfully represent these voices to one another....and that you listen to them with your hearts as well as your heads....so that you may hear "where they are coming from," so to speak.

#### **Schedule & Send-off**

(Brief review of the schedule for the evening, as written up on a flip-chart, with approximate starting times for each segment.)

Following tonight's class, I will e-mail everyone the complete set of narratives, just in case you are intrigued with some of the voices you have heard this evening and want to read their narratives.

As we head to our respective groups, I invite you to consider this line from the Book of Job

*Did not he who made me in the womb make them?  
Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?*  
(Job 31:15, New International Version).

As children of God, let's go meet our sisters, brothers, and cousins.

#####

**Closing Reflection & Prayer Circle**

Now let's take our seats, close our eyes, and take a deep breath...

While you're getting centered, listen to what the Scriptures have to say about healing. This is Psalm 30, verses 1 through 5:

- I will exalt you, O Lord; for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
- O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me.
- O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.
- Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name.
- For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

- I invite you now to take the next five minutes to reflect on what you have heard this evening.
- You may wish to think what you might say to the person whose narrative you shared earlier.
- You may wish to compose a prayer for that person.
- Or you may wish to write in your journal or simply to meditate quietly.
- After five minutes, we'll rise and form a circle to end the evening in prayer.

(Class participants and facilitators offered voluntary prayers during the closing prayer circle.)

## Appendix D -- Session 2: Israeli and Palestinian Narratives

(Sample of six narratives, indicated in **bold caps** below)

### MATRIX

*Showing the range of voices assigned to each break-out group.*

#### GROUPS A & B (9 voices)

##### **Israeli Voices**

- 1) Type: Israeli settler in Occupied Territories  
Example: **AVRAHAM BINYAMIN** (Reuters) p.4
- 2) Type: Israeli who has suffered bombing.  
Ex: Dr. Avraham Bauer, from article in *Jewish Action*, Winter, 2007, p. 5
- 3) Type: Israeli who has embraced non-violence  
Ex: **ROBI DAMELIN** (from The Parents Circle web site) p. 6
- 4) Type: Former IDF soldier  
Ex: Lazar Berman, *Huffington Post*, p. 8

##### Palestinian Voices

- 1) Type: Experience of being dispossessed  
Ex: Woman in Jerusalem being denied a resident's permit (*Not included*)
- 2) Type: Experience of occupation  
Ex: Mira Rizek (home demolition) p. 9 (*EAPPI and Way of the Cross*, p. 27)
- 3) Type: Person who is promoting peace  
Group A: Dr. Izzeldin Abuellaish, Gaza (from *NY Times* and *Guardian*) p.10  
Group B: **ALI ABU AWWAD** (*Enc. Pt.*) p. 13
- 4) Type: **PALESTINIAN MILITANT**  
Ex: Quotes from 2003 study, p. 14
- 5) Type: Students  
Ex: Birzeit University PR Director and two female students (film *Occupation 101*) p.16

### SOURCES

#### Israeli Voices

Avraham Binyamin, Yitzhar Settlement, West Bank

Source: *Jewish Settlers Claim Biblical Birthright to Land*, by Maayan Lubell, REUTERS, 9/26/10

<http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2010/09/27/jewish-settlers-claim-biblical-birthright-to-occupied-west-bank-land/>

#### GROUPS C & D (8 voices)

##### **Israeli Voices**

- 1) Type: Proponent of Greater Israel  
Ex: "Drora's response to the Arab" woman" from *Think Israel* web site, p. 17
- 2) Type: Israeli suffering Gaza missiles  
Ex: **NOMIKA ZION'S** letter from Sderot on the *Huffington Post*, 1/13/09, p. 19
- 3) Type: Israeli who has embraced non-violence  
Ex: Testimony from Louise Dalum, Machsom Watch (*Contemp. Way...* p. 30) p. 21
- 4) Type: Former IDF soldier  
Ex: Inbar Michelzon (*The Guardian*), p. 22

- 1) Type: Experience of being dispossessed  
Ex: Story of the Al Kurd family, from *Contemp. Way of the Cross* (Station 4, p.17), p. 23
- 2) Type: Experience of occupation  
Ex: **NAHEEL ABD al-RAHIM**(checkpoint) (*Contemp. Way of...Cross*, p. 33), p. 24
- 3) Type: Person who is promoting peace  
Group C: Sami Al Jundi (*Encounter Pt.*), p. 24  
Group D: Ashraf Tannous, Lutheran Pastor (Source: EAPPI web site), p. 25
- 4) Type: Palestinian militant  
Ex: Khalid Al-Mish'al, head of Hamas, p. 27

“Drora, an Israeli citizen, responds to Samar, an Arab woman from Haifa”

Source: A posting by Daisy Stern on the web site Think Israel, December 31, 2008.

The post is entitled Arab: "Lieberman, we shall yet step on you", and the answer from the Israeli  
<http://www.think-israel.org/dec08bloged.html>

Dr. Avraham Bauer, Jerusalem

Source: *Feeling the Hand of God*, by Sarah Shapiro

*Jewish Action* online, the magazine of the Orthodox Union, Volume 68, No. 2, Winter 2007/5768

[http://www.ou.org/index.php/jewish\\_action/article/33245/](http://www.ou.org/index.php/jewish_action/article/33245/)

Nomika Zion, resident of Sderot, Israel

Source: Post entitled *War Diary from Sderot* from the *Huffington Post*, January 13, 2009

Robi Damelin, Tel Aviv

Source: The Parents Circle web site, [www.theparentscircle.com/stories.asp](http://www.theparentscircle.com/stories.asp)

Louise Dalum, member of Machsom Watch -- Women for Human Rights, [www.machsomwatch.org](http://www.machsomwatch.org)

Source: *Contemporary Way of the Cross*, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem, 2010

Lazar Berman, former IDF officer

Berman served as an IDF infantry officer in Gaza from 2004-2007 and currently studies military operations at Georgetown University's Graduate School of Foreign Service.

Source: Posted on the *Huffington Post*, January 15, 2009

Inbar Michelzon, former soldier in the Israeli Defence Force

Source: Quoted in *The Guardian*, August 22, 2010.

Article title: *Israeli army's female recruits denounce treatment of Palestinians*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/22/israel-female-soldiers-gaza-occupation>

### Palestinian Voices

Unnamed Palestinian woman, Jerusalem

Source: *Voices Speak to Us*, an unpublished play by David L. McWellan

(Note: Not included in the set of narratives posted on the course web page.)

The Al Kurd family, East Jerusalem

Source: *Contemporary Way of the Cross*, Station 4, pp. 17-18

Mira Rizek, Beit Hanina

Source: Eye witness account of a home demolition that took place in Beit Hanina, West Bank, on July 29, 2008. The testimony was recorded by a volunteer with EAPPI, the Ecumenical Accompaniment

Programme in Palestine and Israel ([www.eappi.org](http://www.eappi.org))

Naheel Awni Abd al-Rahim, West Bank

Source: Testimony reported by B'tselem, September 17, 2008; quoted in *Contemporary Way of the Cross*

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, Jabaliya refugee camp, Gaza

Sources: This narrative is drawn from two articles:

*Gazan Doctor and Peace Advocate Loses 3 Daughters to Israeli Fire and Asks Why*

Dina Kraft, *New York Times*, January 17, 2009

[www.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/world/middleeast/18doctor.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/world/middleeast/18doctor.html)

*Gaza Doctor Writes Book of Hope despite Death of Three Daughters*

Harriet Sherwood, *The Guardian*, August 15, 2010  
[www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/15/palestinian-doctor-izzeldin-abuelaish-gaza-war](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/15/palestinian-doctor-izzeldin-abuelaish-gaza-war)

Ali Abu Awwad, who works with the Parents Circle/Bereaved Families Forum in the West Bank  
 Source: Transcribed from several scenes in the documentary film *Encounter Point* (2006).

Sami Al Jundi, Jerusalem  
 Source: Transcribed from several scenes in the documentary film *Encounter Point* (2006).

Ashraf Tannous, Ramallah  
 Tannous, age 24, lives in Ramallah and works in Jerusalem. He is preparing to be ordained as a Lutheran pastor. The profile from which this narrative is taken was written by "Oliver W.," a volunteer working in Yanoun with EAPPI, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. Entitled *Meeting God at the Checkpoint*, the profile was posted September 15, 2010. (Enter Tannous on the Eyewitness Reports search page <http://www.eappi.org/index.php?id=4837&L=2index.php> .)

Palestinian militant(s)  
 Source: These quotations are attributed to unnamed, incarcerated Palestinians who were interviewed by the authors of the following study: Jerrold M. Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita Denny, *The Terrorists in their own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists*, in *The Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15, no.1 (2003), 171-184

Khalid Al-Mish'al, Hamas leader based in Damascus  
 Source: *The New Leadership of Hamas: A Profile of Khalid Al-Mish'al*, by Yehudit Barsky  
 Posted in May, 2004, on the web site of the American Jewish Council:  
<http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=ijIT12PHKoG&b=846739&ct=1052665>

Voices from Birzeit University  
 Source: Transcribed from the documentary film *Occupation 101*  
 Birzeit University is located the outskirts of the town of Birzeit, just north of Ramallah. This excerpt from the film features Dr. Albert Aghazarian, Director of Public Relations at the university, and (in a separate interview) two female university students who are not named.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Each participant in the class was given one of the narratives listed above to read prior to the second class. Most of the narratives were 1-2 pages in length. Accompanying each one were the following instructions:

*The attached narrative reflects the experience and perspective of one Israeli or one Palestinian. Drawn from a news story, documentary, or another reliable source, it is the voice of a real person, not a fictitious one.*

*At the beginning of our next class, we will break into four small groups (A, B, C, and D). Please come prepared to summarize this narrative for others in your group. You do not need to agree with the sentiments this person expresses. Nor will you be asked to impersonate this individual in a role-play. We simply ask that you faithfully represent the person's experience and attitude as stated here. Thank you!*

## EXAMPLES

The following six examples reflect the range of perspectives included in the narratives. The complete set of narratives is included in *Appendix D* on the course web page.

### Avraham Binyamin, Yitzhar Settlement, West Bank

Source: *Jewish Settlers Claim Biblical Birthright to Land*, by Maayan Lubell, REUTERS, 9/26/10  
<http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2010/09/27/jewish-settlers-claim-biblical-birthright-to-occupied-west-bank-land/>

YITZHAR, West Bank

(Reuters) - Jewish settler Avraham Binyamin says any Israeli withdrawal from occupied land would be like severing a limb from his body.

As one of some 300,000 Israelis living in enclaves built on West Bank land that Palestinians seek for a state, Binyamin expresses a view held by many that the area is a Jewish biblical birthright and must never be relinquished, not even for peace.

Though not all settlers object to the U.S.-sponsored peace talks that began on September 2, many are fiercely opposed and say they will do whatever is needed to keep their homes and prevent an accord.

"The national being of any people, particularly the Jewish people, is like a body, you cannot give up parts of your body," said Binyamin, 25, a teacher from Yitzhar, a settlement known for its tense relations with neighboring Palestinian villages.

The religiously devout father of two says the 2.5 million Palestinians living in the West Bank should be relocated to neighboring Arab lands.

"I can sometimes very much understand their pain and their need," he says. "But from the national perspective, it's either me or them -- and I prefer it to be me."

Yitzhar, a small hilltop enclave housing 180 families, was built on the site of a military outpost in 1985 and overlooks six Palestinian villages, 45 km (30 miles) north of Jerusalem.

The houses have the trademark red-tiled roofs that adorn so many settlements, setting them apart from the flat roofs of the Arab villages and making them highly visible from afar.

Some of the settlers carry guns strapped to their backs as they walk down the neat streets, providing security for their tight-knit community.

### MORATORIUM

The question of settlements has immediately come to the fore at the peace negotiations, with a partial freeze on Jewish building in the West Bank ending on Sunday.

The Palestinians have threatened to quit the talks unless the moratorium is extended.

They say the settlements, along with building in East Jerusalem, which Israel has annexed without international recognition, will make it impossible for them to create a viable state. Israel has so far refused to countenance any extension.

"We, as Jews, believe that the land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel because a divine promise was given to us. The Bible is our legal document," says Binyamin, who serves as a spokesman for Yitzhar, which rarely opens up for the media.

To underline the point, most settlers balk at the term "West Bank" for the territory Israel captured in 1967, instead using the region's biblical names, Judea and Samaria

Such beliefs underscore how hard it will be to reach a peace deal; the Palestinians take for granted that, at a minimum, dozens of smaller settlements, including Yitzhar, must go as part of an accord.

Tensions between Yitzhar and its neighbors remain high. Palestinians accuse settlers of destroying olive trees and setting fields ablaze. Settlers accuse Palestinians of torching crops and tractors.

Yitzhar's settlers are among some 100,000 that Israel is seen as likely to remove as part of any agreement to establish a Palestinian state. Most live in enclaves built beyond a barrier of fences and walls that Israel put up across West Bank land following a wave of Palestinian suicide attacks from 2000-2007.

Binyamin said any move to evacuate West Bank settlers would meet with stronger resistance than a pullout from the Gaza Strip in 2005, when 8,000 Jews put up spirited but ultimately futile protests.

But not everyone in Yitzhar objects to a deal with the Palestinians.

Michal Avraham, a German-born bookkeeper and mother of eight, says it would make her "very happy one day to see a real peace, real fair coexistence," even if the chances are slim.

"I would be very happy to wander around in my car in any village or place peacefully, as I do when I visit my family in Europe," she said.

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For an update on the tensions between settlers in Yitzhar and surrounding Palestinians, see the article, *The War of the Olive Harvest: Palestinians vs. Settlers*, posted on TIME magazine's web site, November 15, 2010: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2028009,00.html>

The article concludes with the following comments by Avraham Binyamin:

*"There are clashes here between Palestinians and Israelis, no doubt about it," says Avraham Binyamin, a soft-spoken social worker who acts as spokesman for the 200 families in Yizhar. "There is a conflict here over to whom this land belongs. It's mutual and sometimes it goes to violence." He does not deny attacks on olive groves but prefers to talk about earlier attacks on settlers: the most recent was two years ago, when a 9-year-old boy survived a stabbing.*

*The view from the hilltop is stunning; Binyamin's smile is knowing. "I'd love to sit in the valley," he says. "We're caught up in a conflict of people against people. I hope the guy from Bureen will have a good future. But all my efforts will be to assure that his future won't be here. Because this land belongs to the Jewish people."*

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**Nomika Zion, resident of Sderot, Israel**

Source: Post entitled "War Diary from Sderot" from the *Huffington Post*, January 13, 2009

"I speak with the people of Sderot and the flush has returned to their cheeks" boasted Fuad [Ben Eliezer, Labour Knesset member and Israel's current Minister of Infrastructure] to Razi Barkai [presenter of a popular news programme on Israel Army Radio] on the second day of the war. "The heavier the war is, so the heart opens." But we are not all Fuad, not all of us. And I too am a lonely voice in the greater Sderot area, and I am not Fuad, and he should know about it.

Not in my name and not for me did you go into this war. The bloodbath in Gaza is not in my name nor for my security. Houses destroyed, schools blown up, thousands of new refugees - they are not in my name or for my security. In Gaza, there is no time for funerals; the dead are put in refrigerators two by two in the mortuary for lack of room. The bodies of policemen and children are laid out and the eager journalists jump between the tactics of pro -Israel advocacy and "the pictures that speak for themselves". Tell me, what is there to explain? What is there to explain?

I did not buy myself security or peace and quiet in this war. After such an essential period of calm that enabled us (the residents of Sderot) to recover psychologically and to experience sanity again, our leaders have returned me to that same gashed and anxiety-filled place. To the same demeaning experience of

running petrified to the protected space. [Since the 1980's Israeli building regulations require all new homes to have a room with thick concrete walls that will withstand bombs - called a "protected space."]

Don't misunderstand me. Hamas is a bad and terrible terror organization. Not only for us. First and foremost for their citizens. But behind this accursed leadership live human beings. Laboriously, simple people on both sides build small bridges of human gestures. So did the "Other Voice" group from Sderot and the surrounding-Gaza region (of which I am a member) when it sought to pave a human path to the hearts of its neighbours. While we took advantage of a 5-month lull, they suffered under the millstone of the siege. A young man told us that he does not intend to get married and have children, because in Gaza there is no future for children. In the brandishing of one fighter plane's wings, these gestures plunge to the depths of blood and despair.

I am afraid of the Qassam rockets. Since the current war started I have hardly dared to go beyond the bounds of our street. But I am much more afraid of the inflammatory and monolithic public and media discourse that is impossible to penetrate. It scares me when a friend from the "Other Voice" is verbally attacked by other residents of Sderot while being interviewed and expressing a critical opinion about the war, and afterwards gets anonymous phone calls and is afraid to return to his car for fear that something will happen to him. It scares me that the other voice is such a small one and that it's so hard to express it from here. I am prepared to pay the price of isolation but not the price of fear.

It frightens me to see my town lit up, as if for a festival and decked out with Israeli flags, groups of supporters distributing flowers in the street and people sounding their car horns in joy at every ton of bombs that's falling on our neighbours. I am frightened by the citizen who admitted to me, with a beaming face, that he never attended a concert in his life but that the Israel Defence Forces bombs is the sweetest music to his ears. I am frightened by the haughty interviewer who doesn't question his worlds by one iota.

I am frightened that, underneath the Orwellian smokescreen of words and the pictures of [Palestinian] children's' bodies that are especially blurred for us on TV as a public service, we are losing the human ability to see the other side, to feel, to be horrified, to show empathy. With the code word "Hamas" the media paints for us a picture of a huge and murky demon that has no face, no body, no voice, a million and a half people without a name.

A deep and gloomy current of violence seeps through the dark pores of Israeli society like a grave illness, and it gets worse from one war to the next. It has no smell and no shape but one feels it very clearly from here. It is a kind of euphoria, a joy of war, lust for revenge, drunkenness on power and burial of the Jewish command "Do not be joyful when your enemy falls." It is a morality that has become so polluted that no laundry could remove the stains. It is a fragile democracy where you have to weigh every word with care, or else.

The first time I really felt that Israel was really defending me was when a ceasefire was agreed. I have no responsibility for Hamas, and therefore I ask our leaders, "Did you leave no stone unturned in order to achieve a continuation of the period of calm? To prolong the ceasefire? To reach a longterm understanding? In order to solve the questions of the crossing points and the siege before all hell breaks loose. Did you go to the ends of the earth to find suitable mediators? And why did you wave away the French initiative for a ceasefire after the war already broke out, without batting an eyelid? And why do you continue to reject up to this moment every possible suggestion for negotiation? Have we not yet reached the quota of Qassam rockets that we are able to withstand? Have we not yet reached the quota of killed Palestinian children that the world is prepared to countenance?"

"And who guarantees us that it is even possible to destroy Hamas? Didn't we try this maneuver somewhere else? And who will take the place of Hamas? Worldwide fundamentalist organisations? Al-Qaida? And how will there spring from the ruins and the hunger and the cold and the dead the moderate voices of peace? Where are you leading us to? What future do you promise us here in Sderot? And for

how much longer will you hang on our shoulders the 'backpack of lies' laden with all the worn-out clichés? 'There is no partner,' 'A war of no choice,' 'Let the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) finish the work,' 'One good blow and we'll finish them off,' 'Destroy the Hamas' and 'Who doesn't want peace?' The lie of power and futility of even more power as the only guide to solving problems in the region."

And why is it that every instant interview with a representative of the "Other Voice" always starts and ends with the punchline question 'Don't you think you are naïve?' How does it happen that the option of dialogue and negotiation and the quest for agreements and understandings has turned into a simile for naiveté, and that the option of force and war is always the sensible rational ultimate alternative? Have not eight years of a pointless cycle of violence taught us anything about the naiveté of the use of force? The IDF mowed down and destroyed and shot and razed and shot and missed and bombarded - and what do we get in return? A rhetorical question.

It's unbelievably difficult to live in Sderot these days. During the night the IDF crushes the infrastructure and the people in Gaza, and the force of their bombing causes the walls and the houses to shake. In the morning we get hit by Qassam rockets, ever more sophisticated. Somebody who goes to work in the morning doesn't know if he'll find his house in one piece in the evening. In the afternoon we bury the best of our young who gave their lives for yet another "just" war. In the evening we succeed, with difficulty, in getting through to our desperate friends in Gaza. There's no electricity there, no water, no gas, no food, nowhere to escape to. And only the words of N., a 14 year old whose school was bombed and whose friend was killed and who writes us an email in perfect English that her mother succeeded with difficulty in sending: "Help us, we are humans after all."

No, Fuad, my cheeks are not rosy, not rosy at all. A ton of cast lead [Cast Lead is the name that the IDF has given to the "operation" in Gaza] weighs on my heart, and my heart is too small to contain it.

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### **Robi Damelin, Tel Aviv**

Source: The Parents Circle web site, [www.theparentscircle.com/stories.asp](http://www.theparentscircle.com/stories.asp)

*In March 2002 Robi Damelin's son, David, was shot by a sniper while serving in the Israeli army. He was 28 years old. Robi now works for The Parents Circle/Bereaved Families Forum, a group of Israeli and Palestinian families supporting reconciliation and peace. The following narrative is excerpted from her testimony on the organization's web site.*

David was killed by a sniper, along with nine other people. They were at a checkpoint, a political checkpoint, near Ofra. Two days after he was killed it was pulled down; they removed the checkpoint.

...It is impossible to describe what it is to lose a child. Your whole life is totally changed forever. It's not that I'm not the same person I was. I'm the same person with a lot of pain. Wherever I go, I carry this with me. You try to run away at the beginning, but you can't.

...Yitzhak Frankenthal had come to speak to me; he was the founder of the Bereaved Families Forum. I wasn't sure that was the path I wanted to take, but I went to a seminar. There were a lot of Israelis and Palestinians from the group there and I didn't really feel convinced yet. But the more time went by, the more I wanted to work somewhere to make a difference.

...David was killed on March 3rd 2002. On October 2004 the sniper who killed David was caught, which for me was a huge step. That was really the test. Do I actually mean what I'm saying or am I just saying it because... that's the test of whether I really have integrity in the work I'm doing? Do I really mean what I'm saying when I talk about reconciliation? I wrote a letter to the family. It took me about four months to make the decision, many sleepless nights and a lot of searching inside myself about whether this is what I

really mean. I wrote them a letter, which two of the Palestinians from our group delivered to the family. They promised to write me a letter. It will take time; these things take time, I'm waiting. It could take five years for them to do that. They will deliver the letter that I wrote to their son who is in jail. So in my own personal development, this was the big milestone for me.

[The letter.]

This for me is one of the most difficult letters I will ever have to write. My name is Robi Damelin. I am the mother of David, who was killed by your son. I know he did not kill David because he was David, if he had known him he could never have done such a thing.

David was 28 years old. He was a student at Tel-Aviv University doing his Masters in the Philosophy of Education. David was part of the peace movement and did not want to serve in the occupied territories. He had a compassion for all people and understood the suffering of the Palestinians. He treated all around him with dignity. David was part of the movement of the Officers who did not want to serve in the occupied territories, but nevertheless, for many reasons he went to serve when he was called to the reserves.

What makes our children do what they do? They do not understand the pain they are causing; your son by now having to be in jail for many years and mine who I will never be able to hold and see again or see him married, or have a grandchild from him. I cannot describe to you the pain I feel since his death and the pain of his brother and girlfriend, and of all who knew and loved him.

After your son was captured, I spent many sleepless nights thinking about what to do, should I ignore the whole thing, or will I be true to my integrity and to the work that I am doing and try to find a way for closure and reconciliation. This is not easy for anyone and I am just an ordinary person not a saint. I have now come to the conclusion that I would like to try to find a way to reconcile. Maybe this is difficult for you to understand or believe, but I know that in my heart it is the only path that I can choose, for if what I say is what I mean it is the only way.

I understand that your son is considered a hero by many of the Palestinian people. He is considered to be a freedom fighter, fighting for justice and for an independent viable Palestinian state, but I also feel that if he understood that taking the life of another may not be the way and that if he understood the consequences of his act, he could see that a non-violent solution is the only way for both nations to live together in peace.

I hope that you will show the letter to your son, and that maybe in the future we can meet.

Let us put an end to the killing and look for a way through mutual understanding and empathy to live a normal life, free of violence.

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**Naheel Awni Abd al-Rahim, West Bank**

Source: Testimony reported by B'tselem, September 17, 2008; quoted in *Contemporary Way of the Cross*, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem, 2010

I married Muaiad Abu Rideh two years ago and had a baby girl, Shadah, a year ago. She was born in my seventh month of pregnancy but is fine now.

Seven months ago, I became pregnant again. Last Thursday [4 September], I had sharp stomach pains and I started to bleed badly. Around 7 pm I went to Dr. Fathi Odeh in Jawarish, because our village doesn't have any specialist physicians. He gave me medication and told me I'd be all right, but I didn't feel any improvement and the pains even got worse.

Around midnight, I couldn't bear the pain any more. I woke my husband and asked him to take me to the hospital. When he saw how much I was suffering, he called to get his brother Udai, who lives in the center of the village, to drive us in his car. Udai arrived, with my mother-in-law, in a couple of minutes. My husband picked me up and carried me to the car. I was in so much pain, I couldn't walk.

We started on our way to the hospital in Nablus at about 12:50 am. At the Zatarra checkpoint, we told the soldiers I was pregnant and had to get to the hospital, and they let us cross without a problem. When we got to the Huwwara checkpoint, the soldiers didn't let us pass. They said we didn't have a permit to cross by car. We told them my brother has a permit to cross the Maale Efraim checkpoint because he works at settlements in the Jordan Valley, but that didn't help.

The pain got worse. I felt as if I was going to give birth any moment. Now and then, the soldiers came over to the car and looked at me lying in the back seat. I was really worried about the fetus, and couldn't stop thinking that I'd have to give birth in the car while the soldiers watched.

I kept screaming and crying and calling for help. I don't know how much time passed, but suddenly I felt the fetus coming out. I shouted to my mother-in-law and to Udai, who were outside the car: "I think he's coming out!" I took off my clothes. I was afraid they'd see me naked and that something would happen to the fetus. My mother-in-law shouted: "Yes, here's his head; he's coming out." I asked her to pull him and she said: "Breathe! Push!" I felt as the baby moved, as if he was calling for help and asking us to help him come out. My mother-in-law covered me with my clothes. I shouted to my husband, "The baby is out!" He shouted to the soldiers something in Hebrew that I didn't understand.

I don't remember exactly what happened then, but when the medics arrived, they picked me up with the car seat and put me in the ambulance. I didn't feel the baby moving any more and realized he was dead. It hurts me a lot when I remember how the baby moved inside me and what happened to him. What did he do wrong? This poor baby died because there wasn't anybody to help me deliver him.

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### **Palestinian militant(s)**

Source: The following quotations are attributed to unnamed, incarcerated Palestinians who were interviewed by the authors of a 2003 study entitled *The Terrorists in their own Words* (see footnote).

You Israelis are Nazis in your souls and in your conduct. In your occupation, you never distinguish between men and women, or between old people and children. You adopted methods of collective punishment. You uprooted people from their homeland and from their homes and chased them into exile. You fired live ammunition at women and children. You smashed the skulls of defenseless civilians. You set up detention camps for thousands of people in subhuman conditions. You destroyed homes and turned children into orphans. You prevented people from making a living, you stole their property, you trampled on their honor. Given that kind of conduct, there is no choice but to strike at you without mercy in every possible way. (p. 178)

*You have to understand that armed attacks are an integral part of the organization's struggle against the Zionist occupier. There is no other way to redeem the land of Palestine and expel the occupier. Our goals can only be achieved through force, but force is the means, not the end. History shows that without force it will be impossible to achieve independence. Those who carry out the attacks are doing Allah's work...*

*The more an attack hurts the enemy, the more important it is. That's the measure. The mass killings, especially the martyrdom operations, were the biggest threat to the Israeli public and so most effort was devoted to these. The extent of the damage and the number of casualties are of primary importance. (p. 179)*

I am not a murderer. A murderer is someone with a psychological problem. Armed actions have a goal, even if civilians are killed, it is not because we like it or are bloodthirsty. It is a fact of life in a people's struggle. The group doesn't do it because it wants to kill civilians, but because the jihad must go on. (p. 179)

*The organization has no moral red lines. We must do everything to force the enemy to retreat from our lands. Nothing is illegitimate in achieving this. As for the organization's moral red lines, there were none. We considered every attack on the occupier legitimate. The more you hurt the enemy, the more he understands. In a Jihad, there are no red lines. (p. 181)*

I belong to the generation of the occupation. My family are refugees from the 1967 war. The war and my refugee status were the seminal events that formed my political consciousness and provided the incentive for doing all I could to help regain our legitimate rights in our occupied country.

Enlistment was for me the natural and done thing...in a way, it can be compared to a young Israeli from a nationalist Zionist family who wants to fulfill himself through army service. My motivation in joining Fatah was both ideological and personal. It was a question of self-fulfillment, of honor and a feeling of independence...the goal of every young Palestinian was to be a fighter. After recruitment, my social status was greatly enhanced. I got a lot of respect from my acquaintances and from the young people in the village. (p. 182)

*I regarded armed actions to be essential. It is the very basis of my organization and I am sure that was the case in the other Palestinian organizations. An armed action proclaims that I am here. I exist. I am strong, I am in control, I am in the field, I am on the map. An armed action against soldiers was the most admired...The armed actions and their results were a major tool for penetrating the public consciousness.*

*The various armed actions (stabbing, collaborators, martyrdom operations, attacks on Israeli soldiers) all had different ratings. An armed action that caused casualties was rated highly and seen to be of great importance. An armed action without casualties was not rated. No distinction was made between armed actions on soldiers or on civilians: the main thing was the amount of blood. The aim was to cause as much carnage as possible. (p. 183)*

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The authors conclude this summary with two observations:

Before closing, we should distinguish between the Palestinian "suicide bombers" and the Al-Qaeda suicidal hijackers. The profile of a typical Palestinian is: age, 17-22, uneducated, unemployed, unmarried. Unformed youth. Once in the hands of Hamas and Islamic jihad, they are never let out of sight before an attack, lest they backslide.

This is in vivid contrast to the hijackers of Al-Qaeda. The latter were older: many had higher education....The majority of the September 11 hijackers were from comfortable middle-class families in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. (p. 183-84)

These interviews have resulted in information not previously elicited from terrorists. We have gained invaluable insight that takes us further along the path of understanding the social context, mindset, motivations, and recruitment of these individuals, a unique and invaluable insight into the tragedy unfolding before our eyes. (p. 184)

SOURCE:

Jerrold M. Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita Denny, "The Terrorists in their own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," in *The Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15, no.1 (2003), 171-184

**Ali Abu Awwad**, who works with the Parents Circle/Bereaved Families Forum in the West Bank  
Source: Transcribed from several scenes in the documentary film *Encounter Point* (2006).

My name is Ali Abu Awwad. ...I was involved in the first Palestinian uprising, the Intifada, at age 16. I threw a ton of stones. I was very active in the first Intifada. I grew up in a political household. My mother was in jail. My brother was in jail. Another brother was in jail.

...I was in Saudi Arabia when I heard that my brother Youssef had been killed by an Israeli soldier. The soldier stopped him at the entrance to his village and just killed him in cold blood. For the first time, Palestinians and Israelis are meeting to share their pain. We're meeting about issues that politicians use to justify killing. No! Don't use us as an excuse! We're united!

...My brother Youssef was killed when I was 30 years old. I was shot in the leg by a settler. My mother was imprisoned. I was also in prison for four years. Sometimes I am faced with questions like: "How can you still do this after all you've been through? You could have great status in your society. You have the right to hate."

But I tell them, "I don't have to love the Israelis to make peace with them. And I'm not asked to forgive the soldier who killed my brother. I'll never forgive him."

*(Meeting with wounded Palestinians in a rehab hospital.)*

*Ali:* Have you heard of India's non-violent movement? Did it liberate India or not? Why don't we act like the Indian people? For 56 years we have been talking about slaughtering the Jews and we've only gone backwards. For once, let's try changing our tactic. Maybe it will work.

*A young man:* We don't want peace. We Arabs don't want peace. We must have resistance and war.

*Ali:* I don't differ from you. I am resisting too. I have to resist. But the form of my resistance is different because I think about it. A just cause like ours is now being called terrorism. We've never been terrorists. But today you must convince the world that you are not.

*(In his car.)*

People are not really free to say what they think. That's another big problem. For example, any meeting with Israelis calling for non-violence is immediately labeled as "normalization." This refers to someone who sells his principles, who gives in to his enemies and killers. So he's accused of "normalization."

...I could be considered a hero by my people, given what I've been through. I was shot, imprisoned, my brother was killed. All of this gives me credibility in my society since I've suffered. I could be spreading hate and that would be seen as justified. But that's no longer a personal issue for me. It is a collective issue.

...I am ready to talk to anyone whether the person believes in peace or not. If anyone opposes me, whether among my people, among Israelis, or anywhere in the world, I am ready to have an open and clear dialogue with that person.

...To be a Palestinian and work for peace – not just believe in it, but work for it – you have to be like a mountain.

## Appendix E -- Session 3 Material

(1. Fact Sheets, 2. Film Selection and Response, 3. Readings from Scripture and Closing Prayer)

### Film Selection and Response

#### *Selection of Film Excerpts*

After screening a number of different films, we settled on three excerpts from two documentaries:

#### *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land*

(Produced by the Media Education Foundation, 2003, [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org))

1. DVD Segment 1/6: *Invisible Colonization*, 10 minutes, 30 seconds
2. DVD Segment 1/7: *Violence in a Vacuum*, 10 minutes, 9 seconds

#### *Encounter Point*

(Produced by Just Vision, 2006, [www.justvision.org](http://www.justvision.org))

3. Segment 2/7, featuring Tzvika Shahak and George Sa'adeh

*Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land* examines the different ways in which television news outlets in Israel, Great Britain, and the United States cover the same events. The first segment reviews many of the aspects of the Occupation, revealing that British editors and journalists more frequently provide their viewers with the “bigger picture” in comparison to their American counterparts. For example, they may explain that most checkpoints are within the West Bank and not at access points into Israel itself. They may show that the route of the barrier wall is not along the 1967 line previously separating Israel from Palestine, but encroaches well into the West Bank, placing important water resources and geographic features -- as well as part of the Palestinian population -- on the Israeli side of the wall.

In one telling example, a British journalist reveals an internal CNN memo directing that network’s journalists not to describe illegal, Jewish-only settlements built on Palestinian land near Jerusalem in those terms but as “Israeli neighborhoods.” The film then juxtaposes news footage from CNN, CBS, and other major American media sources using that misleading language with the more honest coverage shown on the BBC and other British outlets.

The second segment similarly contrasts the ways in which violent incidents in Israel and Palestine are described by Israeli, American, and British media. While not condoning any of the violence, the film reveals that Israeli and American media rarely explain that acts of desperate violence by Palestinians are forms of protest against the seizure of their land -- first in 1948 and again in 1967 -- and the harsh, humiliating conditions of the military occupation. Conversely, the film shows that acts of violence by the government of Israel against Palestinian communities are almost always described in American and Israeli media as “responses” to provocations and motivated by a desire to defend Israel. In contrast, British media will more often provide the larger context for the violence, describing the provocation of the Occupation itself and contrasting the scale of Palestinian violence with the collective punishment meted out by the Israeli forces against entire communities.

Admittedly these two excerpts paint a depressing picture of the situation in Israel/Palestine. They also provide a disturbing analysis of the ways in which commercial television networks in the U.S. have for many years (or at least up to 2003) been providing audiences with a distorted or at least partial view of realities there.

[Editors’ Note: Since this film was released, media coverage in the U.S. has improved somewhat. In producing the companion DVD for its 2009 study guide *Steadfast Hope*, the Israel Palestine Mission

Network of the Presbyterian Church USA included an excerpt from *Peace Propaganda and the Promised Land*, but complemented it with an excerpt from a January, 1960, broadcast of *60 Minutes*.

[Characterized as a “breakthrough” in major American media, this episode of *60 Minutes* featured a report by journalist Bob Simon covering President Obama’s call for a freeze on the construction of illegal settlements by Israel. In the piece, Simon showed in detail many of features of Israel’s military occupation of Palestine not previously explained on network TV. He concluded the piece by suggesting that Israel faced three choices: 1) the continued ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, 2) giving Palestinians the vote and thus ending the Jewish state, or 3) creating an apartheid state in which a minority Jewish population would rule the majority Palestinian population.

[Despite some changes in American media coverage of Israel/Palestine, *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land* is still an effective wake up call for many viewers, helping them become more alert to instances of biased reporting and misrepresentations made in editorials.]

### ***Use of Encounter Point***

Although we wanted to impress upon class participants the harshness of daily life in the Occupied Territories, as well as the fear pervading Israeli communities within range of missiles fired by Hamas and Hezbollah, we also wanted to show that there are signs of hope. To that end, we drew our final excerpt from *Encounter Point*, which profiles a number of Israelis and Palestinians who have labored against great odds -- including the suspicion and antagonism of family members and friends in many instances -- to bridge these divides and work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

The film documents several organizations and programs through which Israelis and Palestinians are cooperating. One of the most impressive is the Parents Circle/Bereaved Families Forum, which brings together individuals who have lost family members to violence. Rather than give in to revenge, these people have instead committed themselves to addressing the underlying causes for the violence and to promoting understanding and reconciliation at both individual and communal levels.

The excerpt we selected focuses on Tzvika Shahak, a businessman and decorated war veteran with 35 years of service in the Israeli army and reserves, and George Sa’adeh, a Palestinian high school principal. Both men lost children to the violence. Shahak’s 15 year old daughter was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber outside a Tel Aviv mall. Sa’adeh’s 12 year old daughter was killed when Israeli soldiers mistakenly fired upon the family’s car as they were returning from grocery shopping. The two men meet at a Bereaved Families Forum gathering and decide to work together to change the perceptions, actions, and visions of their respective communities.

### ***Response to Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land***

Asking participants to share “key” words that captured their initial reactions to the film proved to be a useful way to break the ice immediately after screening the two excerpts. Words mentioned included: *injustice, deception, disgusting, outrage, passivity, manipulation, brainwashing, and betrayal*.

The film sparked a lively discussion about accuracy in the media. Several participants with overseas experience pointed out how common it is for reporters in conflict situations to rely on official sources of information. Others said it is incumbent on all viewers and readers to seek out alternative sources.

One participant noted that the excerpts seem to present the Palestinians as being defenseless, when in reality some segments of the population (most notably those who are members of Hamas in Gaza or Hezbollah in Lebanon) have launched countless rocket attacks on communities within Israel. The facilitators acknowledged that we had searched for a film excerpt that would address the rocket attacks but had been unable to find one. Instead, we purposefully used excerpts that showed the aftermath of suicide bombings in Israel and the deaths caused by Palestinian snipers.

This discussion allowed us to introduce some of the facts from the second Fact Sheet concerning the disparities in armaments between Israel and Palestine and in fatalities on both sides -- as documented by an Israeli-based human rights group. One facilitator also pointed out that as of December 2010, there had not been a suicide bombing in Israel for four and a half years.

Questions were also raised about the Israeli government's withdrawal of its citizens and military from Gaza. The film was produced in 2003. In December of that year, Israel announced its plan to evacuate all 8,500 settlers by the end of 2005. One Jewish member of the class said that he had read that Israel's real reason for withdrawing was that it had nearly exhausted the water table there in order to send water to communities and farms in the Negev Desert. One facilitator mentioned having read that Israel sought and received aid from the United States to cover the subsidy paid to each of the settler families as an incentive to evacuate.

### ***Response to Encounter Point***

Class members offered the following "key" words following the screening: *hope, pragmatic, healing, communication, courageous, empathy, change, cycle, redemption, open-hearted, hard, and perseverance*. One participant said he had thought of *Pentecost*, which he explained was "really about having the capacity to hear the other person."

As expected, participants were in awe of the courage shown by Shahak and Sa'adeh in transforming their grief into a commitment to reach out to parents "on the other side" and work with them to promote reconciliation. Noting that both of these men are well-educated, one class member asked if the Bereaved Families Forum also involves individuals from poorer families. The facilitators cited several examples, including that of Ali Abu Awwad, who is featured in the film and whose narrative was used in the previous week's class. We also pointed out that complete transcripts of the interviews conducted by the film crew can be found on the Just Vision web site (<http://www.justvision.org/encounterpoint/about/protagonists>).

A segment of the film showing Shahak addressing a class of Israeli boys about to do their three years of required service in the armed forces prompted a discussion about the hardened attitudes that many Israelis and Palestinians appear to have towards one another. That provided an opportunity to cite some of the findings from public opinion polls recorded on the final Fact Sheet. Among these are studies by Haifa University and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel documenting deteriorating relations between the two populations and an increase in racist attitudes towards Palestinians by Israeli teens.

## Appendix H -- Take Home Material

### Suggested Reading and Viewing

#### Books

- Ateek, Rev. Naim, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008
- Baltzer, Anna, *Witness in Palestine: A Jewish American Woman in the Occupied Territories*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006
- Ben-Ami, Jeremy (J Street founder and president), *A New Voice for Israel*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011
- Bennis, Phyllis, *Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Primer*, Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2007
- Bird, Kai, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956-1978*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010
- Braverman, Mark, *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land*, Austin, TX: Synergy Books, 2010
- Chacour, Elias, and David Hazard, *Blood Brothers*, Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2003
- Dershowitz, Alan, *The Case for Israel*, New York: Wiley, 2003
- Forer, Richard, *Breakthrough: Transforming Fear into Compassion*, Albuquerque, NM: Insight Press, 2010
- Grossman, David (Jessica Cohen, translator), *To the End of the Land* (novel), New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010, and *Yellow Wind*, (Haim Watzman, translator), New York: Macmillan, 2002
- Israeli/Palestinian Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA), *Kairos Palestine - A Moment of Truth* (24 page study guide), 2011 (<http://store.pcusa.org>)
- Makdisi, Saree, *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008
- Palestine Israel Network, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace*, 2011 (48 page study guide and DVD). Based on the highly acclaimed Presbyterian publication, this version has been edited for Episcopalians. (<http://epfstore.myshopify.com/>)
- Tolan, Sandy, *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2006

#### Films and DVDs

##### Documentaries

*Budrus* (2010), *Encounter Point* (2006), *Gaza Strip* (2002), *The Iron Wall: Story of Vladimir Jabotinsky* (2006), *Little Town of Bethlehem* (2010), *Occupation 101* (2007), *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land* (2003), *Rachel: An American Conscience* (2005). *With God on Our Side* (2010)

##### Feature Films

*Amreeka* (2009), *The Lemon Tree* (2008), *Miral* (2010), *Paradise Now* (2005), *Rana's Wedding* (2002), *Under the Bombs* (2007)

## Booklets and DVD's

### ***Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace***

This booklet and companion DVD provide an excellent overview to the history of the conflict, the nature of the Occupation, and the efforts being made for peace by people and groups in Palestine, Israel, and around the world. The DVD itself is a useful compendium of film clips from more than ten documentaries. The authors also suggest how the booklet and film clips can be used as part of a four-week or seven-week course.

Originally produced in 2009 by the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA) <http://israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/main/> Updated and expanded second edition published in April, 2011. Version for Episcopalians released in 2011 by the Palestine Israel Network, Episcopal Peace Fellowship: <http://epfstore.myshopify.com/>

### ***Palestine: Passing on the Promise, Holding on to the Key***

A booklet from American Muslims for Palestine ([www.ampalestine.org](http://www.ampalestine.org)) providing a brief history of the Nakba or “Catastrophe” in 1948, when Zionist military forces expelled 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and eradicated over 450 villages.

### ***Occupation 101***

A 90-minute documentary produced in 2007 by Triple Eye Productions. Available at [www.occupation101.com](http://www.occupation101.com)

### ***New Hope for Peace: What America Must Do to End the Israel-Palestine Conflict***

A 21-minute film produced in 2009 by Landrum Bolling with support from the Foundation for Middle East Peace and Mercy Corps. It features interviews with President Jimmy Carter, former Secretary of State James A. Baker, and former National Security Advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft.

Available at no cost from the Foundation for Middle East Peace  
1761 N Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202-835-3650 Email: [info@fmep.org](mailto:info@fmep.org) Web: [www.fmep.org](http://www.fmep.org)