

Palestinian Christians in the Middle East - Study resources for children and youth



Dear Teachers and Youth Advisors,

Because this may be your first look at the plight of the Palestinian Christians in the Middle East, we have chosen **resources to help but not overwhelm** you. We know your time is limited.

We recommend that you begin on **“Background Information”** and access the link and materials they reference. While you may want to share some of these with older youth, they are here to help you begin to get a picture of the area so that you will be better prepared to help your children and youth interpret what they see and hear. We also recommend that you check out the resources available in other portions of the website.

“Walls or Bridges?” is the theme of these children and youth resources. You will find tabs for media, books and readings, and activities to investigate. And because conflict resolution skill-building, bullying, racism and diversity awareness are all suitable topics to introduce before, during, or after the week you focus on the Middle East, we have created an additional tab called **“Other Peace-Building Resources”**. These are Christian social awareness topics which need to be reinforced always.

You may notice that while many resources are about the Middle East and peace-making broadly, many others focus on the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** in particular. This is because that conflict impacts Christians living everywhere in the Middle East, and they need us to be better informed than most of us are.

You know your audience and setting best, so take from this site what works for you. Modify and use these ideas in Sunday morning classes, Sunday evening youth groups or mid-week meetings, even intergenerational events. Weave one or more into the week your congregation chooses to lift up the Christians living in the Middle East—and at other times as well perhaps.

God's blessing be upon you as you prepare to teach the children and youth about the situation in the very land that Jesus Christ came to the world as a babe. May your work strengthen the minds and hearts of those who hear so that we may raise a generation that will tear down walls and replace them with bridges to justice, friendship and peace.

Background Information

[“Peace Propaganda and the Promised Land”](#) This film orients the viewer to the source of his or her existing biases about the Middle East and prepares the viewer to be a more critical media consumer. Combining American and British TV news clips with observations of analysts, journalists, and political activists, this film provides an historical overview, a striking media comparison, and an examination of factors that have distorted U.S. media coverage and, in turn, American public opinion. Interviewees include Seth Ackerman, Mjr. Stav Adivi, Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Hanan Ashrawi, Noam Chomsky, Robert Fisk, Neve Gordon, Toufic Haddad, Sam Husseini, Hussein Ibish, Robert Jensen, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Karen Pfeifer, Alisa Solomon, and Gila Svirsky.

You may view it on-line by clicking on the title above. If you want to share it with others, especially older youth, consider purchasing an 80 minute version with other churches or request that your synod purchase it. Non-profit purchase price is \$125. [A Study Guide can be downloaded for free](#). Institutions may [order a free preview copy](#).

Church and Society This magazine, published by the PC (USA), is an excellent source of background information about the Middle East. Particularly relevant issues are:

- Jan/Feb. 2004: “Creating a Peaceable Kingdom for Children” – order # 7263004601
- Sept/Oct. 2004: “A Wall of Security, A Barrier to Peace” – order # 7263004605
- Sept/Oct. 2005: “Jerusalem” – order # 7243105605
- July/Aug. 2006: “To All the Children of Abraham” – order # 7243106604

These may be available within your presbytery or synod or they can be ordered for \$3.00 per copy. Visit the [Presbyterian Marketplace Web site](#) or call (800) 524-2612.

MEDIA

Elementary School (grades K-5/6):

“Children of Jerusalem” Video Series: From the Mennonite Central Committee’s Resource Library (can be ordered for the cost of postage at mcc.org/catalog). These 30 minute videos (seven altogether) follow the lives of children ages 8-12 who live in and around the West Bank. They are Jewish immigrants, Christians, Arab Palestinians and Israeli children whose lives are captured on film.

Middle School (grades 5-8):

“Trust Me: Shalom, Salaam, Peace” by Wellspring Video This wonderful documentary was just awarded the Parent's Choice award, recommended for children 10-14 years of age. It follows 33 Christian, Jewish and Muslim boys (ages 9-13) who arrive with some trepidation - as well as preconceived notions about the kids of other faiths. The Christian boys have never met Jews or Muslims before and expect them to be completely different. The Muslims fear the Christians and

Jews will shun them as their classmates have since 9/11. Several of the Christian and Muslim boys - most of whom have never been away from home before - grapple with another problem: intense homesickness. The film follows the boys, as well as the staff, as they engage in typical camp activities and in the process, forge strong bonds with each other. The week turns out to be an extraordinary experience for all. Available on Amazon.com

NOTE: While this does not take place in the Holy Land – it is a camp in North Carolina – it does speak to the differences between the three religions and the boys are frank about their biases, with reference to September 11. It would elevate awareness too that it is not just an “over there” problem that we face regarding bigotry and racism.

High School (grades 9-12):

“Promises” by New Yorker Video This is a very interesting documentary for high school age youth, available in Arabic, Hebrew and English all with subtitles. It won an Academy Award for Best Documentary. It follows the journey of seven youth in and around Jerusalem from a Palestinian refugee camp to an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. It explores the nature of the physical, historical and emotional boundaries that separates the youth. They have refreshing, personal and sometimes humorous insight into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It was done in 2002 and there is footage on the DVD of an update in 2004 of some of the youth. Because it is 102 minutes long, a youth group setting is best. There is an educational packet available at the Promises Project Web site. The video can be purchased from Amazon.com.

“The Wall” and “Life” from Salt of the Earth. In “The Wall”, the students will take a look at walls and barriers in Scripture, the West Bank and their own lives. In “Life”, students will be engaged in the daily life struggle of a sixth and ninth grader. The sessions are “ready to go” with a Leader Guide and a Student Guide that can be [downloaded for free](#). The DVD can be ordered through ECUFILM for \$20.00.

“The Dividing Wall” This moving 23 minute DVD that comes with a study guide, explores the humanitarian, social and political impact of the Israeli-built “security fence”. Follow the lives of families and farmers who are both Israeli and Palestinian and are trying to build bridges instead of walls. [The DVD can be ordered to view](#) (cost of postage to send and return) for free through the Mennonite Central Committee.

“[Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land](#)” To read description, see the “**Background Information**” section of this document.

Books and Readings

Elementary Students:

“[Papalotzin and the Monarchs](#)” from *Rhinos and Raspberries: Stories and Activities for Young Peacemakers* This one page Aztec tale begins: “The day finally arrived when the Great North built a Great Wall to separate itself from the Great South. Nothing and no one was allowed to pass anymore, not even the clouds, or the wind that once flowed from one side of the sky to the other”. When the monarch butterflies can’t migrate, they begin to die, and everything

turns gray. Papalotzin saves them all by kicking and crumbling the wall so they can fly again and color is restored. This lovely bilingual story can be downloaded for free by clicking the title above.

See the “**Activities**” section of this document for a listing of follow up activities for this story.

[*What Will You See Inside a Mosque*](#) and [*What Will You See Inside a Synagogue*](#)

These two beautifully illustrated books will help inform and introduce children ages 6-10 to the traditions of two world religions, Islam and Judaism. These books can be ordered by clicking on the titles above.

Duck in the Gun by Miriam Cohen (Doubleday, New York, 1969). A war cannot continue until a duck leaves the gun she is nesting in. During the time they wait, the enemies become friends and realize the war cannot continue.

The Sun and the Wind by Cornelia Lehn (Faith and Life Press, Newton, KS, 1983) a fable about love and non-violence.

On the Other Side of the River by Joanne Oppenheim (Franklin Watts, Inc. New York, 1973) is a story about a bridge and how people who traditionally argued realized they need each other.

Let's Be Enemies by Janice Udry (Harper and Row, New York, 1961) Two boys decide it is more fun to be friends than enemies.

The Hating Book and ***The Quarreling Book*** by Charlotte Zolotow (Harper and Row, New York, 1969 & 1963) are books about children and animals that speak to conflict resolution and chain reactions.

Older Elementary/Middle School Students:

The Butter Battle Book by **Dr. Seuss** (Random House, Inc., New York, 1984). This is a story of Yooks and Zooks and the wall that lies between them all because of how they butter their bread. One day a Zook decides to use a slingshot at a Yook and the battle begins! Every day bigger and better weapons are created by both sides as the war wages on. Then a bomb is made by not one but both sides; and the book ends with a Zook and a Yook standing on the wall each with the same bomb in their hand. Who will drop the bomb first is the question that hangs in the air.

Best used with older elementary and middle school children although **high school youth** can still be charmed by Seuss. If you think your high school youth would be reluctant to admit their attraction to a Dr. Seuss book, you might ask if they would read it to the younger children. Perhaps they would be willing to lead a discussion.

Some questions to initiate discussion after reading the book:

What are the similarities between the Zooks and Yooks?

What are the differences?

What do the uniforms and parades remind you of?

Name some times that competition can be healthy.

Notice who is doing the fighting and who is watching. What may happen in the future?

Name some of the ways this book could end.

High School Students:

“The Mending Wall” by Robert Frost The poem talks about how “fences make good neighbors”. If basic knowledge of the situation in the area has already occurred then this would be a good follow up activity. After reading the poem, a discussion of how that works or conversely does not work in Israel/Palestine can be begun.

“¡Vamonos!” from Teaching Tolerance (#23, Spring 2003) This web exclusive tells the story of Mexican and United States students looking both ways across the border. This age group will easily be able to see the similarities between the “security fence” in Israel/Palestine and the border between the United States and Mexico. Finding the article will appeal to young people and expose these computer surfers to a wealth of other peace-building resources.

They can follow the border wall connection further [the World War 4 Report web site](#). This site tells that the same Israeli firm, Elbit Systems, that was contracted to build the fence on Palestine land in the West Bank, has also been contracted to build the fence on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Activities

Butterfly Craft Popular with just about any age of children and youth, this activity goes especially with the “Papalotzin and the Monarchs” story. (See the **“Books and Readings”** section for the story description). Make butterflies by using coffee filters that have been painted or colored (paints or markers work well). Or if you prefer, instead of coffee filters, use tissue paper or any brightly colored paper (such as wrapping paper). Secure the paper and fashion a body and antennas with clothes pins or pipe cleaners. You may find other butterfly craft ideas on the internet or at your local library.

Build a Wall and then a Bridge can be accomplished with any age group by tailoring the activity to the age and size of the group. For example, collect blocks, shoe boxes or anything that you can think of that can be stacked. If the students are going to write on them then cover the boxes with Kraft paper or newspaper. Have the students list ways they say or do things that can create a wall or barrier between them and another person or group of people. Stack them all up and have them take turns sitting on each side of the wall and get a “feelings” check from each side. Have them take the wall apart and figure out how to make a bridge instead. Have them name what practices create bridges (instead of walls). At the end ask the students to stand in a circle and make a personal pledge to help build a bridge, ask them to be specific in what they will do to accomplish this. It would also be good to let them know you will have them report back next week as to what they did and what happened!

Create a Photo/Picture Gallery Any age group can cut out pictures of walls and bridges from magazines, books or newspapers. Mount them on colored paper and put them in the middle of the table/floor. Have students take one and talk about how it makes them feel. What kinds of emotions are stirred when they look at them. If there are people in the pictures ask the students how those people may be feeling. Or make a group collage/mural/gallery of the pictures and

photos and have the students write captions to go along with them. See below (**Raise Money to Help Palestinian Children**) for an especially exciting source of photos.

Look Up Maps A good map is worth a thousand words. Older youth can visit the [Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace Web site](#) for an excellent visual story of the consecutive loss of Palestinian land from 1946 to 2005. The site also shows how Israeli settlements on Palestinian land has so fragmented native communities that a viable Palestinian state has become nearly impossible. National Geographic has a detailed [Holy Lands Reference Map](#) which can be ordered online for \$10.99 + shipping and handling.

Learn the Lord's Prayer in Arabic and Hebrew Middle and High School students may enjoy seeing (in the book *Gifts of Many Cultures* by Maren C. Trabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, United Church Press, Cleveland, OH, 1995), a beautiful Mandela of "The Lord's Prayer" in Arabic. Find someone who is able to speak either of these languages and have them teach the students the prayers.

Raise Money to Help Palestinian Children Direct Contact with The Holy Land is possible through our partners on the ground there! There is [a spectacular calendar that can be ordered](#) that depicts "Children of Palestine". Children and youth of all ages could order them for 2008 and sell them as a fundraiser for the organizations in the Holy Land that aid Palestinian Christian children. These partner organizations in the Middle East can be found in another section of this website.

In the meantime, order a copy of the 2007 calendar and have the children look at the pictures and create stories about how they think they live and feel. The photos would also add life and beauty to the **Photo/Picture Gallery** activity described above.

Visit Jerusalem's Museum on the Seam on line - High school youth may become delightfully lost as they wander this unique museum's website. Especially interesting are postcards from the **COEXISTENCE Project** including postcard #1005 (at the site's store) which speaks to the coexistence of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. [Visit the Museum on the Seam Web site.](#)

Look Up Information Website High School youth can investigate the [Remember These Children Web site](#) for an up-to-date list of children who have died in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 2000. Although the site does not identify whether the children were Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, it does list Israeli and Palestinian deaths in separate columns by month. This allows the reality to become clear that, contrary to the impression given in U.S. news accounts, the overwhelming number of deaths have not been by Palestinian suicide bombers but by the Israeli military.

Other Peace-Building Resources

Two beautiful books entitled *Peace Quest* and *Go With Peace* by Kelly Guinan (Kind Regards LLC, Blair, NE, 2002) contain peacemaker activities. [Order the books.](#)

Peacemaking Creatively Through the Arts by Phyllis Vos Wezeman (Educational Ministries, Prescott, AZ, 1990) has chapters including Peacemaking with Self to The World with many

activities that teach children about peace using the multiple intelligences theory teaching methods.

The *Teaching Tolerance* magazine is FREE to educators (secular or religious). [Visit the Teaching Tolerance Web site](#) and sign up. The Fall 2006 issue has many activities to engage children and youth in conversation about differences and similarities. There are excellent ideas and fine resources that you can have sent to you, also free!

Fairness for All Individuals through Respect (FAIR) has activities that help children recognize unfairness in our society related to race, gender and class. It helps children promote fairness in their everyday lives through respect for themselves and others. It is developed by [Human Development and Family Studies Department at Colorado State University](#).

Early Childhood Adventures in Peacemaking and *Early Childhood Adventures* are lesson plans and resources for understanding poverty, war and peace, self esteem and bullying. It also offers an award-winning guide with more than 150 activities promoting social and emotional development through music, games, stories, arts and crafts, puppet play, drama and more. [Visit the Educators for Social Responsibility Web site](#).

PC (USA) [Download a PDF file of excellent Peacemaking resources](#) that are designed for children and youth.

Web addresses referenced in this document

Peace Propaganda and the Promised Land

Video:

http://video.google.com/url?vidurl=http%3A%2F%2Fvideo.google.com%2Fvideoplay%3Fdocid%3D-6604775898578139565%26q%3DPeace%252CPropaganda%2Band%2Bthe%2BPromised%2BLand&docid=-6604775898578139565&ev=v&esrc=sr1&usg=AL29H232sYuZC8yjLflcRmYK14D_X0byTw

A Study Guide can be downloaded for free

<http://www.mediaed.org/videos/MediaRaceAndRepresentation/PeacePropaganda/studyguide/PeacePropaganda.pdf>

Order a free preview copy

<http://www.mediaed.org/videos/MediaRaceAndRepresentation/PeacePropaganda/>

Presbyterian Marketplace Web site

<http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/index.jsp>

"Trust Me: Shalom, Salaam, Peace" by Wellspring Video -

Order from Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_gw/105-8211071-3843638?url=search-alias=aps&field-keywords=Trust+Me:+Shalom,+Salaam,+Peace&Go.x=13&Go.y=10

"Promises" by New Yorker Video

Order from Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_gw/105-8211071-3843638?url=search-alias=aps&field-keywords=Promises&Go.x=6&Go.y=12

Promises Project Web site

<http://www.promisesproject.org/>

"The Wall" and "Life" from Salt of the Earth

Leader Guide and a Student Guide downloaded
<http://www.saltfilms.net/>

Order DVD from ECUFILM
<http://www.ecufilm.org/>

"The Dividing Wall"

Order DVD
<http://www.thenovgroup.com/MCC/catalog/cart.php?pt=borrow&pid=719>

"Papalotzin and the Monarchs"

<http://www.teachingtolerance.org/rhinos>

What Will You See Inside a Mosque

http://www.skylightpaths.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=SP&Product_Code=1-893361-60-8

What Will You See Inside a Synagogue

[http://www.skylightpaths.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=S
P&Product_Code=1-59473-012-1](http://www.skylightpaths.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=S&Product_Code=1-59473-012-1)

“The Mending Wall” by Robert Frost

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/frost-mending.html>

“¡Vamonos!” from Teaching Tolerance (#23, Spring 2003)

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/printar.jsp?p=0&ar=410&pi=ttm>

The World War 4 Report web site

<http://ww4report.com/node/2743>

Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace Web site

<http://www.wiamep.org/>

National Geographic Holy Lands Reference Map

[http://google.nationalgeographic.com/search?site=default_collection&client=default_fron
tend&proxystylesheet=default_frontend&output=xml_no_dtd&oe=UTF-
8&q=Holy+Lands+Reference+Map&btnG.x=29&btnG.y=5](http://google.nationalgeographic.com/search?site=default_collection&client=default_frontend&proxystylesheet=default_frontend&output=xml_no_dtd&oe=UTF-8&q=Holy+Lands+Reference+Map&btnG.x=29&btnG.y=5)

Raise Money to Help Palestinian Children

“Children of Palestine” calendar
<http://www.calendarforpalestine.org/>

Museum on the Seam Web site

<http://www.coexistence.art.museum/eng/index.asp>

Remember These Children Web site

<http://www.rememberthesechildren.org/>

Peace Quest and Go With Peace.

Order the books
<http://www.celebratingpeace.com/>

Teaching Tolerance Web site

<http://www.teachingtolerance.org/>

Human Development and Family Studies Department at Colorado State University

<http://www.fair.cahs.colostate.edu/>

Educators for Social Responsibility Web site

<http://www.esrnational.org/otc>

Download a Peacemaking resources PDF file from PC(USA) Web site

<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/pubs/06resourcelist.pdf>