

Guidelines for Presbyterian-related Trips to Israel and Palestine

(Developed by the New Jersey Israel/Palestine Education Group, a state-wide Presbyterian task force)

1. Overarching framework

- Presbyterian Religious Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
 - Visiting key biblical and historical sites
 - Peacemaking, reconciliation, respect for narratives of all involved, and advocacy for faithful justice and nonviolence
 - Presbyterian initiatives that welcome participants from ecumenical partners

2. Intended Outcomes

- Increased knowledge of biblical and historical dimensions of vital Christian faith
- Deepened faith in God, heightened sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit, and increased commitment to following Jesus Christ
- Develop awareness of Presbyterian history and contributions to the region
- Initiation or strengthening of partnerships and solidarity with the churches in Israel and the Palestinian Territories
- Appreciation for the complex range of Palestinian and Jewish narratives and development of ability to articulate those narratives in a way that can facilitate dialogue with Jewish and Arab partners in the U.S. context
- Commitment to participating in a national network of Presbyterians who have participated in a Presbyterian-related trip and to support efforts to educate and advocate for a just and durable resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Identification of a potential partner(s) with whom to enter into a longer-term relationship or partnership
- Commitment to the things that make for peace with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the PC(USA) and with members of legislative and executive branches of U.S. government
- Commitment to educate U.S. Presbyterians about “on-the-ground” from local perspective and to deepen the peace and justice witness of individual Presbyterians, congregations, presbyteries, and the General Assembly

3. Operating Principles

- Seek out multiplicity of views
- Experience home stays with both Palestinian and Israeli families
- Develop significant exposure to the Palestinian Territories
- Share in fellowship and worship with Christian communities and their leaders
- Integrate worship and prayer into daily group life
- Converse with PC(USA) contacts on the ground (whenever possible)
- Meet with ecumenical partners
- Keep costs within range of affordability (e.g. \$2,500-2,700 for 10 days on the ground)
- Prepare adequately (especially through study of religious, historical, and political dimensions of the situation)
- Commit to provide interpretative and advocacy leadership to churches and other groups upon return

4. Resources

A. Connections

- Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA)
 - www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org
 - To join contact: krmatsu@aol.com
 - PC(USA)Offices

- www.pcusa/worldwide/middleeast.htm
- www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/
- www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/palestinemissionnetwork.htm
 - PCUSA Peacemaking Program (<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/>)
 - Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/>)
 - Churches for Middle East Peace (<http://www.cmep.org/>)
 - Related PC(USA) documents and statements
- <http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00005.htm/section00011.htm/sub-section00034.htm?vid=default>
 - Relevant United Nations documents
- <http://www.un.org/issues/docs/d-qpales.html#featured>

B. Suggested Books for Preparatory Study

Primary Reading List (Don't leave home without having read these!):

- Chacour, Elias. *Blood Brothers* (Chosen Books, 2003)
- Cohn-Sherbok, Dan and Dawoud El-Alami. *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld Publications, 2003 rev. ed.)
- Presbyterian Church (USA) documents on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see especially: <http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll/socialpolicy/chapter00005.htm/section00011.htm/sub-section00034.htm?vid=default>).
- Tolan, Sandy. *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, A Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* (Bloomsbury, 2006)
- Wiesel, Elie. *The Night Trilogy* (Hill and Wang, 2004).

Secondary Reading List:

- Ateek, Naim. *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Orbis, 1989)
- Ben-Sasson, Hayim. *A History of the Jewish People* (Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Burge, Gary. *Whose Land? Whose Promise?: What Christians are not Being Told about Israel and the Palestinians* (Pilgrim, 2003).
- Carter, Jimmy. *Palestine Peace not Apartheid* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006)
- Cragg, Kenneth. *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East* (Westminster John Knox, 1991)
- Feuerverger, Grace. *Oasis of Dreams: Teaching and Learning in Jewish- Palestinian Village in Israel* (RoutledgeFalmer, 2001)
- Gorenberg, Gershom. *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of Settlements, 1967-1977* (Owl, 2007)
- Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Warner, 1992)
- Idilby, Ranya et al. *The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew – Three Women Search for Understanding* (Free Press, 2007)
- Lynd, Staughton, Sam Bahour, and Alice Lynd. *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians* (Olive Branch Press, 1994)
- Morris, Benny. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (Vintage, 2001)
- Pappe, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006)
- _____. *The Modern History of Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge, 2006)
- Patterson, Richard North. *Exile* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2007)
- Raheb, Mitri. *I am a Palestinian Christian* (Augsburg Fortress, 1995)
- Rosenthal, Donna. *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (Free Press, 2003)
- Scheidlin, Raymond. *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood* (Oxford, 2000)
- Shipler, David K. *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in the Promised Land* (Penguin, 2001 rev. ed.)
- Tessler, Mark. *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Indiana University Press, 1994)