

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Enduring Understandings/Learning Outcomes/Questions Connected to URJ's Values

URJ fosters communities of belonging where all campers and staff have open conversations, even around difficult topics. We believe it is most necessary to have respectful dialogue and engage with curiosity when we have different points of view.

Our approach to Israel education is to invite different perspectives into learning, conversation, and understanding. The information below offers suggestions on how everyone can speak with each other and feel a sense of belonging, and how we can create safe, brave spaces for campers, learners, and staff.

It is based around a series of URJ Values and provides the supporting text from which each value springs. It then lists enduring values, or big ideas, linked to that value, and learning outcomes that should come from a discussion of the value. Finally, it provides questions to help learners engage in and benefit from the conversation.

This is not an exhaustive list of approved values, understandings, outcomes, and questions. It's also not intended to be your sole resource. There are many other programming resources available from partner organizations. Your staff and faculty can also be reservoirs of creativity and experience.

This is a tool for your camp community to start the process. Each of you can determine how to use it. Some may decide to focus on one value and develop learning experiences with that value in mind. Others may explore a number of values with particular current resonance in their community. Feel free to adjust the outcomes and clarify the questions for different age-groups and developmental stages in your community.

Our hope is all these resources will spark creativity and consolidate energy in the areas that matter most for your community, while keeping the values we share at the center.

VALUE: ISRAEL AND JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

כל ישראל ארבים זה בזה | *Kol yisrael arevim zeh ba'zeh*

“All of Israel and the Jewish people are responsible, one for the other.” (Shevuot 39a)

Enduring Understandings

- Jews everywhere are inextricably linked to the land and people of Israel.
- Individual relationships with Israel and Jewish Peoplehood change over time and can include both senses of belonging and separation.

Learning Outcomes

- Express your personal connections to the land and people of Israel.
- Explain how and why your relationships with Israel and Jewish Peoplehood have changed.

Questions

- In what ways are you linked to the land and people of Israel?
- How does where you live (North America, Israel) shape your relationship with Israel?
- How has your relationship with Israel and the West Bank/Gaza changed over time?
- When have you felt a connection to the Jewish people, Israel, and Palestinians?
- When have you felt a sense of separation from the Jewish people, Israel, and Palestinians?
- How has the current conflict impacted your feelings of belonging or isolation?

VALUE: JUSTICE

דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט | *Dirshu mishpat* – Seek justice. (Isaiah 1:17)

Enduring Understandings

- Individuals have the responsibility to act in support of justice for Israel and the West Bank/Gaza.
- Jews are responsible to seek justice and pursue it for everyone.

Learning Outcomes

- Determine and/or perform an act to support justice for Israel, the West Bank/Gaza.
- Explore an example from Israel or the current war of justice or injustice.

Questions

- What does justice mean for Israelis? What does justice mean for Palestinians?
- What actions can you take to support justice in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza?
- Are any of your values in tension with one another when you think about Israel and the West Bank/Gaza? How so?

VALUE: SHARED HUMANITY

בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים | *B'tzelem Elohim* – In the image of God. (Genesis 1:27)

Enduring Understandings

- Everyone is created in the divine image. All loss of life is tragic.
- Finding areas of agreement leads to deeper connection among human beings.

Learning Outcomes

- Express emotions surrounding Israel in constructive ways.
- Identify areas of agreement between people who also hold differing views of Israel.
- Display empathy for people who hold different identities in Israel and those who are affected by the current war.

Questions

- What does shared humanity mean to you?
- How might we share humanity when we feel that our views are different from someone else's?
- What can we agree on that helps us find our shared humanity?
- How do you feel connected with people who live in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza?
- How do your personal identities shape how you view the conflict between Israel and Hamas?
- How could other people's identities shape how they view this conflict?
- The ancient Jewish text Pirkei Avot teaches: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?" How might this teaching relate to the current conflict?
- How have people been practicing the value of Shared Humanity since the war began? How have they not?

VALUE: BELONGING

אִתְּם נִצְּבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלָכֶם | *Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem* – We build, connect, and enrich communities – congregations, camps, programs, social justice work and more – where youth and adults across all identities, generations, and lived experiences feel a deep sense of belonging. (Deuteronomy 29:9)

Enduring Understandings

- A deep sense of belonging is important for everyone across all identities and lived experiences.
- Israel can be a place of belonging for all Jews and people of many faiths.

Learning Outcomes

- Cultivate ways for every person to feel a sense of belonging in the camp community.
- Expand your understanding of how you and others can find a sense of belonging with Israel.

Questions

- Share a time when you felt you truly belonged in a community. What contributed to your feeling that way?

- Share a time when you felt you didn't belong. What made you feel that way?
- Have you been part of a mutually respectful community? What did that community look like? What did it feel like?
- What do you need to participate as your full self?
- How do you feel connected with Jews?
- How do you feel connected with Palestinians?
- What do you know about the diversity of people and identities in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza?

VALUE: LEARNING

תלמוד תורה כנגד כלם | *Talmud Torah k'neged kulam* – We honor Torah, wrestle with Jewish traditions and beliefs, including God, and engage directly with the difficult questions of our age. (Mishnah Peah 1:1)

Enduring Understandings

- Enhancing a culture of learning about Jewish and world topics.
- Learning basic history and geography
- Engaging directly with difficult questions leads to learning and understanding even among those with whom we disagree.
- Productive conversations about Israel between people who disagree are possible. A healthy argument creates a community of fellow-grapplers. Expressing opinions with respect, humility, and thoughtfulness, and listening carefully with resilience, even when something is hard to hear, contribute to a productive conversation.

Learning Outcomes

- Ask questions about Israel.
- Be willing to share your thoughts and feelings about Israel with others with respect, humility and thoughtfulness.
- Summarize something you have learned about Israel.

Questions

- What experiences have helped you learn about Israel and the West Bank/Gaza?
- How does the current conflict challenge your understanding of Israel and the West Bank/Gaza?
- When you think about the current war between Israel and Hamas, what questions have come up for you? Is there something you would like to understand better? How could you explore it?
- Is there something you've learned, changed your mind about, or considered in a new way since Hamas' October 7 attacks in Israel? Is there new information you find yourself seeking out?

VALUE: EVOLVING

וגָּטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל-יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית | *U'vtuvo mechadesh b'chol yom tamid ma'aseh v'raysheet* –
With goodness, the Holy One renews creation every day. (“Yotzeir Or,” Daily Liturgy)

Enduring Understandings

- A peaceful future for Israel and her neighbors is possible and desirable.
- Commitment to a strong, vibrant, Jewish and democratic state of Israel, secure within its borders, can be expressed in different ways.

Learning Outcomes

- Explore multiple narratives within Judaism, Zionism, and Israel's history.
- Differentiate historical truths, facts and perspectives.
- Illustrate how your awareness of Israel has shifted this summer.

Questions

- When you think about what's happening in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza, what values are present, and which are bumping up against one another?
- How are your values pulling you in different directions?
- How have your ideas about Israel and the West Bank/Gaza changed? What has prompted this change?
- When you talk about difficult issues, where do you feel them in your body? How do you feel when there is a pause or silence in a difficult conversation?
- What is an experience, conversation, or relationship you've had that caused you to change a deeply held belief or understanding?
- Finish this sentence: When the war between Israel and Hamas ends, i hope that _____.

Resources

- [Talk for Change conversation cards](#)
- [How to facilitate productive conversations about hard topics](#)
- [How our Values Help Shape our Thinking about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
- [Curricularizing Israel: Principles and Themes](#)