

Invitation to Judaism – Lesson Plan – Israel

Rabbi Steven Morgen, Congregation Beth Yeshurun

1. **Historical** connection
 - a. **Biblical** – From Genesis through Chronicles
 - b. **Liturgy** (after Second Temple destroyed and Bar Kochba Revolt defeated, prayers everywhere included plea for return)
 - c. Several **Messianic movements** over the centuries, incl. after Spanish Expulsion, Shabbtai Tzvi, and others
2. **Political** (Zionism) – Began in 1800's. Theodor Herzl galvanized the movement after Dreyfuss Affair in France. First Zionist Congress in Basel 1897.
3. **Religious** (see Liturgy above), it's actually a mitzvah to live in Israel if you can
4. **Cultural** (see separate outline) [Ahad Ha'am](#) and Cultural Zionism
5. **Modern Israel: A Democratic and Jewish State** (?)
6. **American Jews and Israel today**
7. **Anti-Zionism and Anti-semitism.** When is criticism of Israel OK? When is it NOT OK? The three "D's": Demonization, Delegitimization, Double Standard
8. **Arab-Israel Conflict – History** (see AJC pamphlet below)
9. **Bibliography/Web Sites**
 - a. Laqueur, *The Israel-Arab Reader*. A collection of documents spanning the modern history of the conflict. (8th edition, 2016)
 - b. – *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel*
 - c. Hertzberg, Arthur *The Zionist Idea*. A collection of writings by the leading Zionist thinkers.
 - d. Gil Troy *The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland – Then, Now, Tomorrow*
 - *Why I am a Zionist*
 - e. Sachar, Howard *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (3rd ed. 2007)
 - f. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/myths-and-facts-toc> (Myths and Facts)
 - g. <https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/israel> (The Anti-Defamation League - Israel)
 - h. <https://www.ajc.org/issues/israel> (American Jewish Committee - Israel)
 - i. <https://view.joomag.com/israel-and-the-arab-israeli-conflict-jan-2016/0000022001452533971> (AJC pamphlet on history of the Arab-Israel Conflict)
 - j. <http://www.standwithus.com/> (Stand With Us)
 - k. <http://spme.org/> (Scholars for Peace in the Middle East)
 - l. <http://www.honestreporting.com/> (Honest Reporting)
 - m. <http://www.camera.org/> (CAMERA: Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America)
 - n. <http://www.memri.org/> (MEMRI: The Middle East Media Research Institute)

What Does Israel Mean to Us Culturally?

Rabbi Steven Morgen, Congregation Beth Yeshurun

Culture: “the quality in a ... society that arises from an interest in and acquaintance with what is generally regarded as excellence in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.” Also: “the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.”

I. Arts

- A. **Paintings, sculptures, etc.** (Chagall, Gavrieli Tallitot, Tzfat Artists, others)
- B. **Television:** all variety (children’s, soaps, news, cultural, comedy, etc.) <http://www.iba.org.il/>
<http://wwitv.com/portal.htm?http://wwitv.com/television/103.htm>
- C. **Radio:** talk radio (much more serious there), music (classical to pop/rock/etc.), news and “magazine” programming (huge amount), etc. <http://www.kolisrael.com/> and
<http://multilingualbooks.com/online-radio-hebrew.html>
- D. **Motion pictures** (political, historical, intense)
<http://www.israel-music.com/browse/dvd/> and
<http://www.sisuent.com/>
- E. **Music/Songs** <http://www.israel-music.com/browse/music/> and
<http://www.sisuent.com/>
 - 1. Huge variety, different periods: idealistic, realistic, peace, war, love, heartbreak, silly (Danny Sanderson and others), Zionist-Land, pioneer, *shirim ivri'im* (see **Popular Music and National Culture in Israel** by Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi **Paperback** - April 26, 2004)
 - 2. Music Archive at Hebrew University <http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/default.asp>
 - 3. Mann Auditorium <http://www.hatarbut.co.il/English/Index.htm>
 - 4. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra <http://www.ipo.co.il/eng/HomePage/.aspx>
- E. **Israeli dance** – all over the country, always new dances
<http://www.israelidance.com/>

II. Letters - <http://www.alma.org.il/default.asp?lang=en>

- A. **Hebrew Language:**
 - 1. Modern History: Eliezer Ben Yehudah
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/ben_yehuda.html and others

2. Woven into fabric of the country: street signs, store front signs, newspapers, food product labels, everywhere

- B. **Poetry** (see contents from *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*)
http://israel.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw_cms/cms/cms_module/index.php?obj_id=3135
 - C. **Journalism** (Ha'aretz <http://www.haaretz.com/>, Yediyot Ahronot <http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html>, Jerusalem Post <http://www.jpost.com/> others)
 - D. **Humorists** – Ephraim Kishon
<http://www.ephraimkishon.de/neuenglisch.htm>, others
 - E. **Prose** – David Grossman, Amos Oz, S.Y. Agnon, A. B. Yehoshua, Abba Kovner, Yosef Haim Brenner, and others
 - F. **Theater**: Habimah National Theater <http://www.habima.co.il/>, Binyanei HaUma convention center
- III. **Manners = prevailing customs, ways of living**
- A. **Government** – Knesset <http://www.knesset.gov.il/main/eng/home.asp>
Supreme Court Building <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/eng/home/index.html>,
President http://www.president.gov.il/defaults/default_en.asp
<http://www.knesset.gov.il/president/epresident.htm>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>
 - B. **Calendar**: Jewish holidays are national holidays, Christmas is hardly noticed, but you can't miss Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover, Shavuot, Hanukkah, Purim, Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzma'ut.
 - C. **Life Cycle**: Wedding parties at hotels are mostly Jewish, cemeteries are mostly Jewish, mohels are easy to find, etc.
 - D. **Synagogues** – *everywhere*, even in a small village (like Bustan haGalil) there are enough Jews for a minyan
 - E. **“Implied Familial Relationships”** (*kol Yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh*) – everyone feels loss of a terror victim, in time of need you can often count on your neighbor, also very intense, sometimes like family fights
 - F. Embodiment of Humanitarian/Ethical imperatives of Judaism on national scale (E.g. <https://www.israaid.org/> and https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/aid/pages/israel_humanitarian_aid.aspx)
 - G. **Nature Reserves**
<http://www.science.co.il/Nature.asp> and
http://www.parks.org.il/BuildaGate5/general2/company_search_tree.php?mc=378~All
 - H. **Sports**: Olympics and other competitions
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/sportstoc.html>

IV. Scholarly Pursuits

- A. **Scientific/medical advances** <http://www.science.co.il/>
1. Jewish Nobel Prize winners (not all Israeli)
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/nobels.html>
 2. Modern examples (See university list below, also Hadassah Hospital (<http://www.hadassah.org.il/english>), other places where cutting edge research and technology; the “colonoscopy pill,” stem cell research, computer software and hardware advances, cell phone, etc.)
- B. **Universities** (*cf.* Judaic Studies departments at Diaspora Universities, one or two professors at most of them)
1. List: Hebrew U. (<http://www.huji.ac.il/>), Tel Aviv U. (<http://www.telavivuniv.org/>), Haifa U. (http://www.haifa.ac.il/index_eng.html), Technion (<http://www.technion.ac.il/>), Bar Ilan U. (<http://www1.biu.ac.il/indexE.php>), Ben Gurion U. (<http://web.bgu.ac.il/Eng/Home/>), Weizmann Institute of Science (<http://www.weizmann.ac.il/>)
 2. Many of these have leading, world-class departments
- C. **National Library** (at Hebrew University) – like Library of Congress for Jewish People <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/eng/> and http://www.huji.ac.il/huji/eng/library_e.htm
- D. **Yeshivas:** too many to name (also Pardes <http://www.pardes.org.il/>, Hartman Institute <http://www.hartmaninstitute.com/>, Schechter <http://www.schechter.edu/>)
- E. **Museums:**
1. **Jerusalem**
 - Israel Museum <https://tours.imj.org.il/en/>
 - Bible Lands Museum <https://www.blmj.org/en/>
 - Yad Vashem <http://www.yadvashem.org/>
 - Ne’ot Kedumim <https://www.neot-kedumim.org.il/>
(Biblical Landscape Museum)
 - Jerusalem Biblical Zoo
<http://www.jerusalemzoo.org.il/en/>
 - Herzl Museum <http://www.herzl.org/English/>
 - City of David Archaeological Park
<https://www.cityofdavid.org.il/en>
 - Davidson Center and Jerusalem Archaeological Park
<http://www.archpark.org.il/>

- Tower of David Museum <https://www.tod.org.il/en/about>
- Western Wall Tunnels <https://thekotel.org/en/>

2. Tel Aviv

- Museum of the Jewish People <https://www.anumuseum.org.il/>
- Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv
<http://www.erezmuseum.org.il/main/site/index.php3?mod=firstPage&langId=1>
- Palmach Museum
http://www.palmach.org.il/show_item.asp?itemId=8572&levelId=42850&itemType=0
- Tel Aviv Museum of Art
<http://www.tamuseum.com/museum/index.htm>

3. Haifa

- Naval and Illegal Immigration Museum
<http://www.tour-haifa.co.il/eng/modules/article/view.article.php/c21/76>
<http://hnsa.org/ships/afalpichen.htm>
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Immigration/afalpi.html>

4. Other locations

- Underwater Observatory, Marine Park, Eilat
<http://www.coralworld.com/eilat/eng/>

V. Ways of living transmitted from one generation to another

A. Israel as cradle of Jewish culture – in the past

1. Archaeological evidence (see map)
http://www.bible-history.com/links.php?cat=2&sub=59&cat_name=Ancient+Israel&subcat_name=Archaeology+%26+Sites
2. Biblical references all over the land
3. Mishnaic references
4. Prayerbook references

B. Israel as cradle of the “rebirth” of Jewish culture

1. The center of Jewish life in the world today
2. That’s why we send our children there: year abroad, birthright, pilgrimage, etc.