

Yom Yerushalayim 2014

Lesson Plan for Video Conference

Length: 45 min

Grade: Middle School

Rational: For centuries, Jerusalem has been found at the heart of the Jewish nation. It is written of in songs, prayers, poems, and psalms. The famous words "If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand wither" make clear the regard and affection with which the city is held. But, while the sentiment itself is clear, the reason behind it must be emphasized to each generation. We cannot stop at merely teaching *that* Jerusalem is important, but rather we must teach *why* Jerusalem is important. This lesson is deigned to make students think, to bring them to their own understanding of how the city came to hold such a significant place in our history and culture as Jews.

Precursor to lesson: Each student must approach 5 people and ask them to give 5 words which they associate with Jerusalem. The list must be brought to the classroom on the day of the lesson

Topic: What does Jerusalem mean to me?

Introduction

10 minutes

The teacher should write the word "Jerusalem" on the board. Have students discuss "What comes to mind when you think about Jerusalem." Go around the room and have students share their ideas. Make a 'web' with the word Jerusalem in the middle, and draw lines to their ideas

Appoint a "secretary" who will right down all of the words used to describe Jerusalem

Looking at the board, decide as a class how you would categorize the adjectives (or other words) used to describe Jerusalem (ex: places, emotions, events, etc...)

Erase the board and in place of the web draw up a chart of the categories (to be named by the class based on the words they came up with)

Using the list of words recorded by the pre-appointed secretary, read off the words one by one and try to categorize them (leave room for a "miscellaneous" column)

Timeline

5 minutes

After having seen as a class what the general impressions of Jerusalem are, the class should look back through time and begin to understand the city's history in order to better understand how they have come to associate the abovementioned words to the city itself. The teacher might want to ask students what famous events they can recall from memory to have taken place in Jerusalem. Constantly ask them to dig deeper- *why specifically Jerusalem? why did it all have to take place there as opposed to anywhere else?* Ultimately, in looking at the time-line students will see that since the creation of the world, Jerusalem has established its importance in hosting the foundation stone, from which the world itself was created.

Teacher uses dated images to create a timeline on the board depicting various events of historical significance which took place in Jerusalem

List of events:

Foundation stone

Creation of Adam and Eve

Sacrifice of Isaac

First Temple (standing and destruction)

Second Temple (standing and destruction)

Six Day War

Discussion Groups

15 minutes

Having now seen the time-line, and gained a deeper understanding of what made Jerusalem so important to the Jewish nation throughout the years, students should be given time to process the information together and enhance their understanding of the Jewish relationship to Jerusalem through group discussion.

Break up into groups of 4/5 students.

Discuss the following points:

- Why is Jerusalem so important to the Jewish nation?
- Can Jerusalem be replaced by any other place?
 - If yes- try to explain how (what aspect of Jerusalem that you think serves as the root of its importance do you feel could be something transferable?)
 - If no- explain what makes it so unique

Individually, each student should write a short paragraph explaining how they feel about Jerusalem.

Project

Students will now create something which reflects not only the history of Jerusalem that learnt through the time-line, but the way in which that history has impacted their perception, as well as that of their peers, by using the associations previously gathered to make a creative presentation of what Jerusalem means to them.

Each student should take out the list of words they have collected prior to the class regarding people's associations with Jerusalem. The students are to choose at least 15 out of the 25 words and utilize them in a creative presentation about Jerusalem.

- Ideas: Write a poem, make a travel brochure, make a short skit, create a piece of art... etc

Video Conference- The guide will talk to students about the meaning of Jerusalem. He will talk to them about the things they learned on the timeline and show them the virtual model which documents the history of Jerusalem. Students will then present their presentation on Jerusalem to the guide, showing how they and those around them see Jerusalem today.

The guide will tell students about Yom Yerushaliym, and all of the things which take place in Jerusalem (especially the Kotel) on this day.