

## **Jerusalem through the Windows of the Light Rail – Lesson Plan for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jerusalem**

### **A Tour around the City by the Light Rail Stops**

In the context of a previous lesson plan (“My Jerusalem”) we deepened our familiarity with Jerusalem as a capital city, and as a multi-cultural and vibrant city, where Arabs live side-by-side with secular, religious, traditional, and ultra-orthodox Jews. Due to its uniqueness and complexity, Jerusalem invites us to encounter challenges in various areas of Israeli society as a whole.

The tour is an opportunity to integrate the educational content with the experience of a real encounter with the city of Jerusalem: with its residents, sights, smells, tastes and sounds that are unique to this city. Meeting the city will be through a ride on the light rail, and visiting its various stops along the route. The tour is an experiential and meaningful ending to the classroom learning.

Riding the light rail invites us to a direct encounter with the diverse population of Jerusalem. It is an opportunity for the students to conduct short interviews with various passengers, city residents, and to familiarize themselves with the city through them.

Throughout the journey we will disembark from the light rail at four stations. At each station we will get to know a different side of the city, in accordance with a topic that we learned in class. At the different stops we will receive a geographic, demographic, and historical explanation of the place itself, we will learn the texts together that deal with the relevant issue, and we will discuss them in the context of the location.

After learning, we will alight the light rail together from the same stop and ride to our next learning station.

We recommend encouraging the students to take an active role in all parts of the tour.

#### **1. Before Alighting the Light Rail**

It is recommended to provide the students with a map of the route of the light rail. You can download the map on the “Citypass” website and print it out.

## Discussion Questions

- Look at the map of the light rail and think: How many places do you know? What do you know about these places?
- If you would have to present Jerusalem to a prominent world leader, which stations of the light rail would you take him? What other places in Jerusalem do you think are important? Should the light rail pass through those places as well?

## 2. Alighting the Light Rail and Handing out Interview Questions on the Train – Activity for the Duration of the Ride

Divide into small groups. Each group should interview three people during the ride on the light rail. It is important to be sensitive and polite and to respect the passengers that are not interested in participating.

Use the following format:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am a student at \_\_\_\_\_. Today we are on an education tour of Jerusalem in order to get to know the city and its residents. May I ask you a few questions?

Name of interviewee \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Where do you live in Jerusalem?
2. What do you love about Jerusalem?
3. What would you like to change about Jerusalem?
4. What does a “United Jerusalem” mean to you?

## 3. First Stop: The Chords Bridge – the Main Entrance to the City

- If you were in charge of designing the architecture for the entrance to Jerusalem how would you design the entrance to the city?
- Is the entrance to Jerusalem different or similar to the entrance to Tel Aviv? What characterizes each city?

At this stop you can give a short explanation about the Chords Bridge, pause for a view of the Supreme Court, the Knesset, and the International Convention Center (ICC).

## Learning Together

### I Stand with Tel Aviv / Amos Oz

We must decide what we have come here to accomplish. It will be an interesting time, this matter of identity. I guess that this country will become more Mediterranean, like Barcelona, Marseilles, Piraeus...and it will become secular down to the core. It is already like this: loud, hedonistic, materialistic, shrewed, even vicious, yet kind...The future is the present, Tel Aviv, the coastal plain. I think that degradation has already won, and that Jerusalem will become a city that people visit like travelling abroad, like seeing the past. In the war between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, I stand with Tel Aviv – sanity, secularism, and the present. It is a sick thing, that society only lives in the past and the future. It is very dangerous, it kills...

Interview of Billie Moskona-Lerman with Amos Oz, in *Maariv* newspaper, 1995

- What does Amos Oz call the connection between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv? Why?
- What does Tel Aviv represent and what does Jerusalem represent?
- What would you respond to Amos Oz?

### Assignment

Visit the Jerusalem Municipality website on your smartphone and look at the cultural events calendar. What would you add to the cultural agenda and which activities would you choose for Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?

## 4. Second Stop: Mahane Yehuda Market

Rabbi Joshua ben (son of) Levy says: "Jerusalem is built is a city that is compact together" (Psalms 122:3) – a city that makes all of Jerusalem friends.

Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Hagigah 3:6

Let's ask ourselves – is this saying relevant for the Mahane Yehuda Market of 2017? In order to answer this question, divide into groups. Each group will explore the alleyways of the market and will perform individual interviews according to these instructions:

Conduct a short interview with 2-3 stall owners in the market:

- Who is the seller?
- Where is he from?
- How many years has he been there?
- How would he describe his customers?
- Does he feel like the market has changed in the past few years? If yes, how has it changed?

Continue touring the market and check:

- Which type of stores do you recognize?
- Describe the type of people you see shopping.
- Where do you see the poor versus the rich in the market?

Share amongst yourselves what you have found and suggest ways to make the market a place that makes all of Israel friends.

### **5. Third Stop: Kikar Shabbat**

Disembark on Jaffa st. (Jaffa Center, near Kikar Shabbat) and walk to Kikar Shabbat (corner of Strauss, in the Meah Shearim neighborhood).

A short explanation about the background of Kikar Shabbat and the fight for Shabbat around the square in general and particularly in Jerusalem.

Read the following passage: a secular blessing for Shabbat.

Blessed is your arrival, Sabbath,  
 blessed is your arrival.  
 Bring with you the calm, the peace,  
 after a week of multifaceted of strenuous effort,  
 the space in which you can embroider  
 endless dreams, together and alone,  
 burrows of time in which  
 we can listen to the heartbeat of our fellow man.  
 Sabbath, blessed is your arrival,  
 blessed is your arrival, blessed is your light.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What values can you find in this blessing?
- Do you identify with this text and agree with it?
- Does this blessing allow different ways to observe Shabbat?
- Look at the ultra-orthodox population around you and think is it possible to reach an agreement on the subject of deep controversy in Israeli society regarding the Sabbath? Think and suggest some ways to do this.

The following passage is taken from a speech by President Rivlin at an international forum that discussed the fate of the era of secularization. Read it and answer the questions afterward.

### **Allowing Local Authorities to Decide about Public Transportation on Shabbat – President Reuven Rivlin**

"I do not wish to solve unsolvable matters, just asking you to think whether it may come time to copy the debate about religion and state, to a regional and community level. Maybe, just maybe, we can produce compromises that are better for all parties and all tribes, if it is possible to fulfill the demands of all the different sectors," said President Reuven Rivlin, who also said that the decision to run public transport on Shabbat must be made at the local level and not the national level.

In any case, it is clear that when public transportation on Shabbat is a national question, we are dragged into a "zero-sum game", between the "State of Tel Aviv" and the "State of Bnei Brak". Whereas we all know and understand that these are two important cities in Israel, who know and can hold excellent neighborly relations and can make the right decisions when away from the spotlight and spins and constraints of politics. Indeed, some of the traffic arrangements on Saturday already embody the local logic of this theory.

"The reality of tribes in Israel requires us to make room for regional solutions that are not achieved by imposing the power of the majority over the minority, that by design, allow flexibility and cultural sensitivity, and which saves us from a political collision at the national level. Perhaps the time has come to give all parties what they want, however, not all over Israel, but in the concentrations of the distinct residence."

Ynet, Nov 30, 2016

Following Rivlin's speech, conduct a short survey with passerby: remember to be polite and tolerant with the residents!

- Do you think that there are "tribes" in Israel? What are they?
- Can these tribes coexist?
- With which "tribe"/sector do you identify yourself?
- Choose one "tribe" that you are not familiar with and decide what would you like to know about it?

Share the findings amongst your classmates and discuss the coexistence of the different tribes.

## 6. Fourth Stop: Damascus Gate

A. Divide into groups of 3-4 students.

B. Look around and try to see if there are types of people that you can stereotype. Write down these groups.

C. Formulate 4-5 questions that you would like to ask these people. Think of questions that would help understand the social reality in Jerusalem. The feelings of the respondents about the present and the future, and about coexistence in the city. You must interview at least 3 people, preferably from different groups.

Now answer the following questions:

- Did the passerby willingly go along with your survey assignment? What were you feeling during this assignment?
- Does the outcome of the surveys present an optimistic or pessimistic picture?
- Are there differences in the answers between the Arab and Jewish residents?
- Did any of the answers that you received surprise you?
- Has something changed your mind regarding coexistence in Jerusalem and in Israel as a result of the survey and lesson?

Discuss amongst yourselves the survey and your conclusions regarding coexistence.

### Learning Together

In this land, we are confronted with many others who are connected to the land in such different ways. When Mormons start to build a university in Jerusalem, religious zealots try to stop them, claiming that it is a missionary plot. The muezzin calls thousands of Muslims to their mosques as thousands of hasidim go to the Western Wall. Believers of different faiths rub shoulders in the narrow alleys of the Old City as the musics of different faiths ring out simultaneously

We have come home, yet to a home that does not offer us security and serenity but forces us to interact with "the other." Usually, when you come home, you expect to be free of the need to integrate all the dissonance you encounter outside. paradoxically, it was easier to do that in the diaspora, where we could build ghettos. A ghetto is not only a physically bound area but also a framework that allows Jews to define themselves in their own terms and language, without having to confront "otherness." It is a social and cultural opportunity for self-definition, where our immediate surroundings confirm our internal communal language, making cultural monism a real possibility. In coming home to Jerusalem, however, we are invaded by multiple experiences of radical diversity. Here, in our home, "the other" invades our self definition.

David Hartman, "A Heart of Many Rooms"

Discuss the question: How can we implement David Hartman's vision of a mixed city in this complicated reality?