



MEJDI TOURS

Seeking Peace in the Footsteps of our Ancestors

An 11-Day, 10-Night Interfaith Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Itinerary

Sunday, February 16, 2020

- Depart Kansas City (group flight information)

Day 1, Monday, February 17, 2020: Arrival/Tel Aviv

- Estimated arrival mid-morning. Airport transfer to the hotel.
- Have a group welcome and orientation at the hotel.
- In the afternoon, take a walking tour in Jaffa covering: Its history from biblical time through modernity and how Jaffa has become an incubator for coexistence. The tour includes:
 - The Tabeetha School. Jane Walker-Arnott, a mid-19th century young Scotswoman who came to Jaffa on a Christian Mission, founded the school after observing the lack of educational opportunities for girls under Turkish rule. The school remains supported by the Church of Scotland and continues to provide education for youngsters of all faiths. Visit the school's Museum of Coexistence and meet students and faculty.
 - Stop outside of the Physicians for Human Rights-Israel clinic and learn about the communities they serve.
 - Visit the Bustan Yaffa Bilingual (Hebrew, Arabic) Kindergarten that operates in the spirit of the Waldorf method and meet with its director Ihab Balha. For more the 18 years, Ihab has been an Islamic cleric and a researcher of the Sufi Movement - the mythical Islamic movement. Ihab is sanctifying values of Islam for Peace and Love which constitute powerful tools to bridge and join hearts between people.
 - End the tour with an innovative text study of Israel's Megilat Ha'atzmaut (Declaration of Independence) facilitated by a Jewish educator from BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change.
- Have dinner on your own.

Hotel: ArtPlus or similar, Tel Aviv

Day 2, Tuesday, February 18, 2020: Jaffa, Gaza Border Region, Ramla, and Jerusalem

- Check out after breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Visit to the newly redesigned Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Jaffa with a member of the Kansas City community who works there. The Center, founded in 1996 by the late President of Israel, Shimon Peres, develops and implements impactful and

meaningful programs with a focus on promoting a prosperous Israel, nurturing and highlighting Israeli innovation, and paving the way for shared-living between all of Israel's citizens and lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.

- Muslim trip participants will have time for personal prayer at the nearby Jabalia Mosque.
- Have lunch at Cassis, a Mediterranean restaurant located on the waterfront at the spectacular beach of Givat Aliya in Jaffa.
- Travel to the border region with the Gaza Strip to meet local residents from a variety of political perspectives to hear firsthand about how shelling, sirens, bunkers, tunnels, Iron Dome, and war have affected the border communities.
 - Meet an activist from Other Voice – a grassroots volunteer initiative comprised of citizens from the communities bordering the Gaza border – knows that our violent reality can and must be altered. Other Voice keeps in contact with Gazans, calls for an end to the siege, works for an end to the attacks from both sides (that target primarily innocent citizens), and strives toward the co-creation of a sustainable reality for all.
 - Contribute tiles to the Path to Peace Mosaic Wall, a joint mosaic creation, by thousands of people, towards hope, love, and happiness among all people. The creation is placed upon the border wall that divides the Gaza Strip and Israel, adjacent to the homes of Moshav Netiv Ha'Asara.
 - Other Voice will organize a phone or video call between the group and Gaza residents.
- Have an early dinner in Ramle, Kansas City's sister city, at the Keshetot 360 Youth Center. Keshetot will present the unique multiculturalism and diversity of the city of Ramle. Representatives of the various communities in Ramle, the absorption center for Ethiopian immigrants in the city, and the Ramle Youth Parliament group will prepare foods along with traditional music and dancing from their different cultures.
- Ascend to Jerusalem and check into hotel.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

Day 3, Wednesday, February 19, 2020: Ancient Jerusalem

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Then travel to the Old City.
- Ascend to the Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif and tour the precinct. An imam from the mosque will explain the importance of the site to Muslims (FYI – Only Muslim can enter the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque).
- Then tour the Davidson Center's Archeological Park with artifacts from the First and Second Temple periods, the Byzantine Muslim period, the ancient Crusades period, as well as others. The most exciting findings are: the walls of the city from the First Temple period, the steps leading up to the Temple, the original street from the time of the Second Temple period, shops, ritual baths and more. Experience a virtual reality reconstruction of the Herodian Temple Mount as it stood prior to its destruction by Roman troops in the year 70 CE. Learn about the current state of affairs to create an egalitarian section at the Kotel (Western Wall).

- Then have personal time for lunch and individual prayer at the Kotel and/or a nearby mosque.
- Visit the Museum of Psalms to participate in a text study of a selection of Psalms through art. The Museum of Psalms features the Psalms Collection, 150 paintings for each of the Psalms created by Moshe Tzvi Halevi Berger, one painting for each one of the Psalms.
- See the Cardo, the Old City's ancient thoroughfare.
- Exit the Old City and visit Mount Zion with a representative of the Jerusalem Intercultural Center. Mount Zion is a holy site to Jews, Muslims, and Christians that is associated with both King David's Tomb and the Jesus Last Supper.
- Return to the hotel and have a presentation from the Parents Circle-Families Forum, an organization of Israeli and Palestinian parents who have lost loved ones to the conflict and who have come together to work for peace.
- Have time for dinner and shopping on your own.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast included]

Day 4, Thursday, February 20, 2020: Modern History of Jerusalem

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Visit Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust memorial, for a special tour of the campus grounds focused on: The Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations, dedicated to non-Jews who saved the lives of Jews during the Holocaust; the Hall of Names containing the personal details of millions of victims filled out by survivors in memory of their loved ones; Hall of Remembrance a memorial site that allows visitors to pay their respects to the memories of the martyred dead; the Pillar of Heroism that commemorates Jewish resistance during the Holocaust; the Children's Memorial that pays tribute to the approximately 1.5 million Jewish children who perished during the Holocaust; Janusz Korczak Square that pays tribute to the great Polish-Jewish educator Dr. Henrik Goldschmidt, known by his pseudonym Janusz Korczak, who ran an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto; the Valley of the Communities that contains the names of over 5,000 Jewish communities that were destroyed or barely survived in the Holocaust; the Cattle Car Memorial to the Departed; and Warsaw Ghetto Square Wall of Remembrance.
- Visit the neighborhood of Ein Kerem, the birthplace of John the Baptist and location of Mary's Well. There, hear competing narratives about the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the displacement of the native Palestinian population. Have time for lunch and personal prayers on your own in Ein Kerem.
- Opt in or out of a visit to the Museum on the Seam, a socio-political contemporary art museum located in a building that was built in 1932 by the Barmki family. Following the war of 1948 until the Six Day War of 1967, the building served as an army outpost on the border between Israel and Jordan alongside the Mandelbaum Gate that connected the divided city. The location will serve as an opportunity to learn about the history of Jerusalem from 1948-1967 and how the Six Day War change the political realities on the ground for Jerusalem and its residents.

- Have dinner on your own with the option of checking out the dynamic evening scene at the Machane Yehuda Market (the Shuk).

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast included]

Day 5, Friday, February 21, 2020: Rachel's Tomb, Hebron, Settler Peacemakers, and Shabbat

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Visit the grave of the matriarch Rachel. Many religious Jewish women who are pregnant or who experience fertility problems pray here. The site is in a walled enclave that juts into the city of Bethlehem.
- Continue into the West Bank to Hebron's Old Town. Provide Muslim participants to join the jum'ah prayers at the Ibrahimi Mosque.
- Walk down Shuahada Street. Visit the Women in Hebron Cooperative shop. See the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.
- Have lunch together.
- In the afternoon, meet an Orthodox Jewish peacemaker from a West Bank settlement who is involved in the Abrahamic Reunion movement.
- Return to the hotel, have a group processing session, and prepare for Shabbat.
- Join with Kol Haneshama, Jerusalem's leading Reform synagogue, for Shabbat services.
- Have dinner at Hebrew Union College with a few American rabbinical students.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

Day 6: Saturday, February 22, 2020: Masada, Dead Sea, and the Jericho Area or Shabbat in Jerusalem

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Have the option of remaining in Jerusalem to join Shabbat morning services and/or visit the city's museums that are open on Saturdays.
- Tour the ruins of Masada.
- Visit the Dead Sea at Ein Bokek and enjoy a dip in the salty waters. Have an included lunch at a hotel on the beach (Crown Plaza), with entrance to the spa included, along with a towel (beach will have shower/changing facilities). While there, have personal time for prayer.
- Learn about the Dead Sea Scrolls as you pass by Qumran.
- Visit the Baptism site at Qasr al Yahud (The Jews' Castle or Palace) on the banks of the Jordan River. Christian tradition associates Qasr al Yahud with the site of Jesus' baptism by Matthew. In Jewish tradition, this is considered the location where Joshua led the Israelites into the Land of Israel.
- Return to Jerusalem and have a quick casual dinner on your own.
- Regroup and experience the (literal and figurative) underground Burnstein Basement Klezmer show located in large Yiddish library in the heart of an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood. The show includes havdallah, music, humor, and kugel.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast and Lunch included]

Day 7, Sunday, February 23, 2020: Christianity in the Old City of Jerusalem and Musrara

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- At 9 am, worship at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer English-speaking congregation service in the Old City. Built by Kaiser Wilhelm in the late 1800s, he personally dedicated the church in 1898, when he and his wife, Augusta Victoria, became the first western rulers to visit Jerusalem.
- Then visit the Terra Sancta Museum, whose mission it is to make known to the world the roots and historical presence of Christianity in the Holy Land by displaying the archaeological and art collections of the Franciscans of the Holy Land.
- Muslim trip participants will have the opportunity for personal prayer at a mosque in the Old City.
- Walk the Christian “Stations of the Cross” along the Via Dolorosa. The guides will lead the group through the incense-filled halls of the Holy Sepulchre Church, the place identified as both the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus.
- Weave through the shops and alleyways of the Arab *shuk* (market) in the Old City, where you can practice your haggling skills.
- See the historical photos in the storefront of Elia photography, a legendary Armenian family owned photography shop that began using photography to document the history of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1924.
- Exit the Old City and visit the Ma’aleh Film School, screen 2-3 short films produced by their graduates, meet with one of the filmmakers. Ma’aleh’s unique, cutting-edge films foster deeper understanding and dialogue between religious and secular Jews. Ma’aleh films primarily deal with the Israeli experience, Jewish identity and Israeli society and culture.
- Have dinner on your own.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast included]

Day 8, Monday, February 24, 2020: Bethlehem and Gush Etzion

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Meet with Danny Tirza- the Israeli Colonel, who planned and designed the wall.
- Enter the West Bank and visit the Walled Off Hotel, set up and financed by world renowned Street Artist Banksy, to see their museum and art gallery.
- Take a tour of the Aida Refugee Camp.
- Have a vegetarian lunch at Afteem’s near Manger Square.
- Have time for personal prayers.
- Meet Dr. Mitri Raheb, President of Diyar Consortium and of Dar al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem, as well as the president of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, and in the leadership of Kairos Palestine. Dr. Raheb will lead the group on a visit to Manger Square and Nativity Church, one of the oldest continuously used churches in the world at the site of the cave in which Christ is said to have been born. Continue to Shepherd’s Field, believed to be the site at which the

angel came to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, according to the gospel of Luke.

- Then travel south to the Tent of Nations and Dahers' Vineyard on the land owned by the Nassar family in the Gush Etzion region of the West Bank. The Nasser family seeks to bring people from all over the world together to build bridges of understanding, connecting people to each other, and to the land to which we all belong.
- Return to Jerusalem for dinner at Sarwa Street Kitchen, and then an interactive program with Israeli and Palestinian youth from Kids4Peace: A Grassroots Interfaith Youth Movement.

Hotel: Arthur Boutique Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

Day 9, Tuesday, February 25, 2020: Neve Shalom and Nazareth

- Check out of the hotel after breakfast.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Travel to Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam, an intentional cooperative village of Jewish and Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel committed to peace. Hear about the diverse religious mosaic of Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam, from its Jewish, Muslim and Christian residents, see their binational educational system, and participate in prayers for peace in the Pluralistic Spiritual Center. Have time for personal prayers and reflection.
- After lunch continue north to Nazareth.
- Visit the Basilica of the Annunciation and meet Father Nael Abu Rahmound an interfaith peace activist from Abrahamiic Reunion. Many Christians believe that the Basilica of the Annunciation is the location where the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear the son of God.
- Visit the White Mosque and meet interfaith peace activist Sheikh Abed Alsalam Manasra. He is an ordained Sheikh in the Tariqat Qadriyya As-Salaam (Qadiri Sufi Order Of Peace). He is a musician and works with young adults and youth to organize interfaith dialogue and gatherings in and around Nazareth.
- Have dinner at Chef Johnny Goric's Oud Restaurant. Learn about his activism in an organization called Chefs for Peace.

Hotel: Legacy, Nazareth [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

Day 10: Wednesday, February 26, 2020: Galilee and Haifa

- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Learn about Cana as you pass through the Arab village of Kfar Kanna. According to tradition, Jesus performed the miracle of the wine, when he went to a wedding of a poor couple and turned water into wine.
- Continue to Magdala, the hometown of Mary Magdalene along the Sea of Galilee. It is one of the most exciting newly open archaeological sites in the region. The site includes a first century synagogue, where it's believed Jesus taught, mikva'ot (ritual baths), a market, and the "Magdala Stone," all pre-dating the destruction of the Second Temple. The visitor center particularly highlights the role of biblical era women in the area.
- Have lunch at Magdalena in Migdal.
- Have time for personal prayers.

- Begin the afternoon at the Mount of Beatitudes, traditionally accepted by Christians as where Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount.
- Learn about the New Testament holy sites of Capernaum and Tabgha, traditionally accepted as the place of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, as you pass by these sites.
- Have an early dinner in a Druze village.

Hotel: Legacy, Nazareth [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

Day 11, Thursday, February 27, 2020: Haifa and Caesarea

- Check out of the hotel after breakfast.
- Begin the day with a brief morning inspiration led by a group member.
- Travel to Haifa. The city of Haifa is a fascinating cultural mosaic made up of Jews and Arabs, veterans and new comers, and Eastern and Western influences. Visit the Center at Beit HaGefen and explore Haifa's origins as a tolerant cosmopolitan city with diverse cultural treasures and religious traditions. Visit the Museum Without Walls in the Wadi Nisnas neighborhood, a public open-air museum meant to signify unity in a multicultural city and embody the concept of open dialogue between Jewish and Arab culture. Visit the Baha'i Gardens, Stella Maris Church, The German Colony, and the Ahmadi (Ahmadiyya) mosque (where Muslim participants will have time for personal prayers).
- Have lunch on your own.
- In the afternoon, travel to the Herodian port city of Caesarea, whose extensive sandstone ruins overlook the peaceful blue waters of the Mediterranean. There, see the theater, hippodrome, and learn about the area's Crusader history and the old Bosnian Muslim community that lived there.
- Have a final group processing session at the Caesarea Port.
- Conclude the tour with a farewell meal at Chef Amos Sion's Helena Restaurant in the port. Effortlessly picturesque, the port is also the source of the locally harvested fish and seafood caught daily and used as a premier ingredient in Chef Sion's kitchen, in addition to locally grown meats, seasonal fruits and vegetables, and local wild herbs and plants, indigenous to the Levant.
- Group transfer to the airport for late night flights back to the US.

[Breakfast and Dinner included]