PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and sits in the center of the country. Over 3,000 years ago, King David conquered Jerusalem and made it the special place where God's holy name would dwell, just as He promised in Deuteronomy 12:5 and 11. David's son, King Solomon, built the Temple there, and it became the center of worship for the Israelites. Many years later, Jesus came to Jerusalem—He died, rose again, and ascended into heaven there. One day, the Bible says, the Messiah will return to Jerusalem. That's why Jerusalem, the city of gold, bronze, and light, is at the very center of God's plan to save the world.

Jerusalem is very important to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Each group has holy sites in the city. Over thousands of years, different empires and nations have ruled Jerusalem. After World War I, the British governed Jerusalem until the United Nations took charge. During Israel's War of Independence, East Jerusalem came under Jordan's control. In 1967, Israel re-unified Jerusalem, and it has been completely under Israeli control ever since.

Today, Israel works hard to protect Jerusalem's holy places for people of all faiths. For Christians, there are many special sites to visit—such as the Garden of Gethsemane, the Pool of Bethesda, and even the ancient steps that Jesus climbed to go to the Temple! The Bible tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and the word "Jerusalem" is mentioned more than 800 times in Scripture.

PSALM 122:6–7 (NKJV)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces.

The Old City of Jerusalem is divided into four main quarters, or neighborhoods: the Christian Quarter, Jewish Quarter, Muslim Quarter, and Armenian Quarter. Each one has its own history and community.

THE FOUR QUARTERS

- **The Christian Quarter** is home to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was built over the place where early Christians believed Jesus was crucified and buried. It also includes the Via Dolorosa, the path Jesus is said to have walked on His way to the cross.
- **The Armenian Quarter** belongs to the Armenian Christians, one of the oldest Christian groups in the world. Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity in the 300s A.D., and Armenians have been present in Jerusalem ever since.
- **The Muslim Quarter** is full of life, with a busy marketplace called a shuk. It is also home to two of the most important sites in Islam — the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- **The Jewish Quarter** includes the Western Wall, a remaining part of the ancient Temple built by King Herod, and many yeshivas where Jews study the Torah and Talmud.

Christians and Jews believe that one day the Messiah will come through the Eastern Gate, also called the Golden Gate, which faces the Mount of Olives.

Every Friday night in Jerusalem, Jewish families gather to observe Shabbat, the Sabbath. God established the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments while the Hebrews were traveling through the wilderness for forty years. As the sun sets, families walk to the synagogue together to welcome Shabbat, which is often described as greeting a bride. Afterward, they enjoy a special meal filled with songs, prayers, and traditional foods. For about twenty-five hours, from Friday evening to Saturday night, Jews rest from work and avoid using electricity, focusing instead on worship, rest, and time with loved ones. On Saturday morning, many return to the synagogue to pray and continue celebrating this special day with family and friends.

In addition to its religious significance, Jerusalem is the center of Israel's government. It's where the Prime Minister, the President, the Knesset (Israel's Parliament), and the Supreme Court all meet. After Israel's War of Independence in 1949, the new nation declared Jerusalem its capital. In 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish people and moved the American Embassy there.

CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Students will read the Old City Map Maze prompt and use the clues it contains to solve the maze and get Dov to the Western Wall in time for Shabbat.

Resources Needed:
- One printed map maze per student
- One pencil per student

Instructions:
Use the map to help Dov find the fastest route while avoiding streets marked with construction barriers. Dov begins at the Shuk, must stop at the Blue and White Art Gallery, and then finish at the Western Wall. Use a pencil to trace the route he will need to take.

🚧 = ***blocked by construction***

FOR THE STUDENTS

Prompt:
It's almost sunset! Dov glances at his watch and realizes he's been schmoozing (Yiddish for "chatting") with Yael and Benyamin in the busy shuk (market) for way too long. Shabbat is about to begin, and he promised to pick up a new watercolor painting for his mother from Udi at the Blue and White Art Gallery before meeting his father and brother at the Kotel (Western Wall) for evening prayers.

Dov hurries through the crowded market stalls, dodging shoppers and tourists. The sweet smell of baklava tempts him from a nearby stand, but he resists—there's no time to stop! When he reaches the art gallery, he greets Udi with a cheerful, "Good Shabbos!" and Udi smiles back, "Shabbat Shalom!" Dov pays Udi, carefully tucks his mother's watercolor painting under his arm, and steps back into the lively streets of the Old City.

Around him, voices mix in Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino, German, and English, echoing through the stone alleyways. He tries to remember the fastest way to the Western Wall, nervously adjusting his kippah (Jewish skullcap worn by men as a sign of devotion to God). "I can't be late again," he mutters to himself.

Suddenly, a sharp siren pierces the air. Flashing blue and red lights reflect off the ancient walls as a United Hatzalah ambucycle speeds down Cardo Street. A volunteer medic races to help someone nearby. Dov realizes the street ahead is blocked by construction—he'll have to find another path to reach the Western Wall before sunset.

Can Dov make it in time for Shabbat prayers? Help him find his way through the maze to the Western Wall!

Help Dov reach the Western Wall in time for Shabbat. Observe carefully! You must visit the art gallery first!

START



The Shuk





Blue & White



Art Gallery





END



Western Wall

CUFI

MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

GOLAN HEIGHTS

The Golan Heights is a high area in northern Israel that borders Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. It is very important because it gives whoever controls it the “high ground,” which is helpful for defense and watching over the area. On the west side, the land suddenly drops 1,700 feet down to the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. The south is bordered by the Yarmouk River, the north by Mount Hermon, and the east by a flat area called the Hauran. The Sea of Galilee at the base of the Golan Heights provides about 15% of Israel’s water.

In the Bible, the Golan Heights was called Bashan. The name “Golan” comes from the ancient city of Golan in Bashan (Deuteronomy 4:43, Joshua 21:27). The land was given to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 13:29-31). In early Bible times, the northern kingdom of Israel and the Arameans of Damascus fought over the area. King Ahab of Israel (who ruled from 874–852 B.C.) defeated Ben-Hadad I of Damascus near where Kibbutz Afik is today. The prophet Elisha later said that King Jehoash of Israel (801–785 B.C.) would defeat Ben-Hadad III of Damascus in the same area. After the Babylonian exile, Jewish families returned and lived in this region during the late 500s B.C.

When Israel was founded in 1948, Syria controlled the Golan Heights. Because it was higher ground, Syrian forces often fired down at Israeli farmers living below. In 1965, Palestinian terrorists also used the Golan Heights to launch attacks into Israel. During the Six-Day War in 1967, Syria increased its attacks on Israeli towns. To protect its citizens and stop the attacks, Israel captured the Golan Heights. Israel’s control of the area prevents enemies from using the high ground to fire down on Israeli communities, as Syrian forces had done for many years.

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
In this activity, students will work in small groups to create a short “News Flash” about an event that took place in or around the Golan Heights in Bible times. Each group will receive an event prompt with a brief description and a Scripture reference. Students will look up the verse(s), quickly read what happened, and then prepare a 30–60 second news report as if they were reporters covering the event live.

Students may choose roles such as news anchor, field reporter, or eyewitness, depending on group size. They should explain what happened, who was involved, and why it was important. After 5-7 minutes of preparation, each group will take turns presenting their “News Flash” to the class.

Resources Needed:

- Printed and cut-apart event prompt cards
- Blank notecards for students to write their news reports on

Instructions:

- Put students in pairs or trios.
- Cut apart the prompt cards on the following page. Give each group one card featuring a biblical event from the Golan/Bashan region.
  - *Prompt cards may be used by more than one group if needed.*
- They have 5-7 minutes to create a quick “News Flash!” announcement explaining what happened.
- Students may read relevant Scriptures to help create their report.
- Each group performs a 30-60 second mini-report.

CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“BREAKING NEWS: LAND ASSIGNED TO MANASSEH!”

Report on how the tribe of Manasseh received the region of Bashan (the Golan Heights).

SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 13:29–31

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“BATTLE IN BASHAN! KING AHAB DEFEATS BEN-HADAD!”

Explain how King Ahab of Israel defeated the Aramean king near today’s southern Golan.

SCRIPTURE: 1 KINGS 20:26–30

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“CITY SPOTLIGHT: GOLAN IN BASHAN NAMED A CITY OF REFUGE!”

Report on Golan being chosen as a city of refuge where people could flee for safety.

SCRIPTURE: DEUTERONOMY 4:43; JOSHUA 21:27

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“GEOGRAPHY UPDATE: BASHAN’S FAMOUS HIGH GROUND!”

Explain why the high ground in Bashan was important for protection and farming.

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 68:15; DEUTERONOMY 3:1–17
(DESCRIBES THE REGION OF BASHAN)

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“PROPHECY ALERT! ELISHA PREDICTS VICTORY FOR KING JEHOASH!”

Tell how the prophet Elisha said that King Jehoash would win a victory over the Arameans.

SCRIPTURE: 2 KINGS 13:14–19

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“BORDER TENSION: ISRAEL VS. ARAM!”

Describe how Israel and the Arameans fought over the Golan Heights region in early Bible times.

SCRIPTURE: 1 KINGS 20; 2 KINGS 13

(GENERAL CONFLICTS)

GOLAN HEIGHTS

“MOUNT HERMON WEATHER REPORT!”

Explain how Mount Hermon’s high elevation and snowfall would help provide water to the surrounding regions.

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 133:3; DEUTERONOMY 3:8–9

CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

TIBERIAS & SEA OF GALILEE

Much of Jesus' ministry took place around the Sea of Galilee and the nearby region known as the Decapolis, a group of ten cities. Many well-known New Testament stories unfolded here. This is where Jesus walked on water, calmed the raging storm, and called Peter and Andrew to follow Him and become "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). In this region, our Lord healed Peter's mother-in-law, cast out demons, and taught in synagogues. Eighteen of Jesus' 33 recorded miracles took place in this region of Israel, and His most well-known teaching—the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5–7—was delivered on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

Despite its name, the Sea of Galilee is actually a freshwater lake, also called Lake Tiberias. It lies about 680 feet below sea level and reaches depths of 60 to 180 feet. In Jesus' day, ten major cities surrounded this area, but today Tiberias is the only one still standing along its shores.

Tiberias itself is a modern city with ancient roots. Named after a Roman emperor, it contains an old cemetery that predates the time of Jesus and holds the tomb of Maimonides, one of the most influential Torah scholars in Jewish history. Because of this, Tiberias is significant to religious Jews, while its connection to Jesus' ministry makes it a meaningful destination for Christian visitors as well. Today, it's also known for hot springs, beaches, and water activities.

The Galilee is rich with spiritual and historical heritage, connecting the events of the past to our faith in the 21st century.

SEA OF GALILEE ESCAPE ROOM PUZZLE

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

Students must unlock the correct order of three major events around the Sea of Galilee to "open" an envelope in the care of the club leader. When they solve the puzzle, they discover a message about Jesus' ministry in the Galilee.

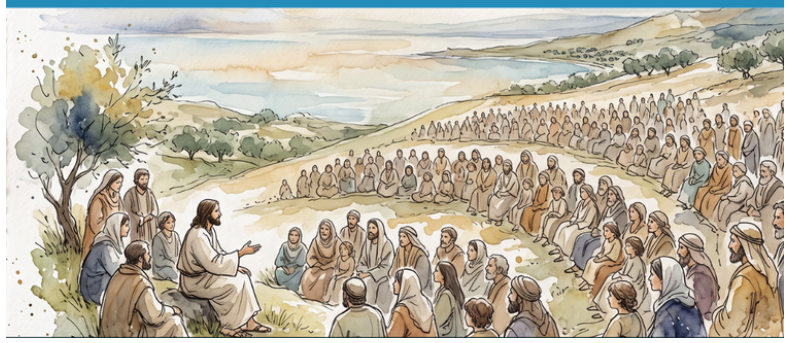
Resources Needed:

- One Event Card Envelope per group
- One set of three event cards per group
- One Final Message Envelope for the class
- Bibles

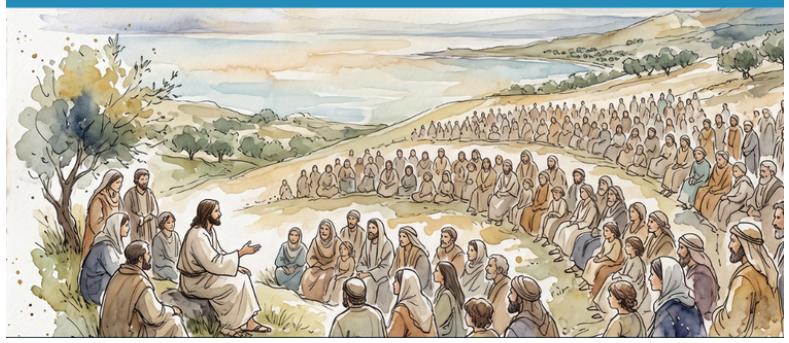
Instructions:

- Put all three event cards into one envelope.
- Create groups of 2-3 students and give an envelope containing each of the three event cards to each group. The events should be shuffled.
- Students will have ten minutes to put the three event cards in chronological order.
- They must use their Bibles to find the correct order.
- Once students have ordered their event cards, the teacher will review their answers.
- The first group to correctly order the three events wins!

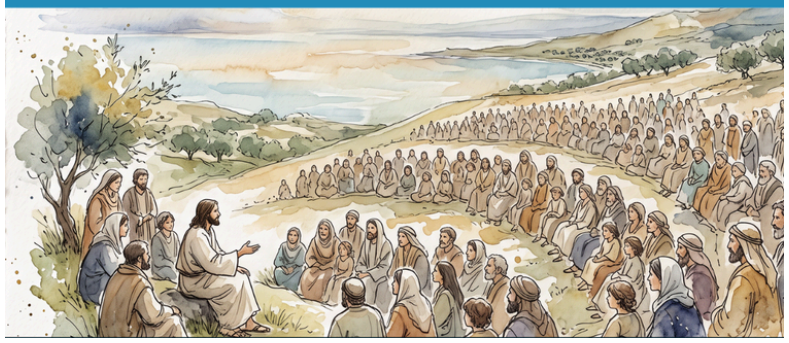
SERMON ON THE MOUNT



SERMON ON THE MOUNT



SERMON ON THE MOUNT



HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT



HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT



HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT



JESUS CALMS THE STORM



JESUS CALMS THE STORM

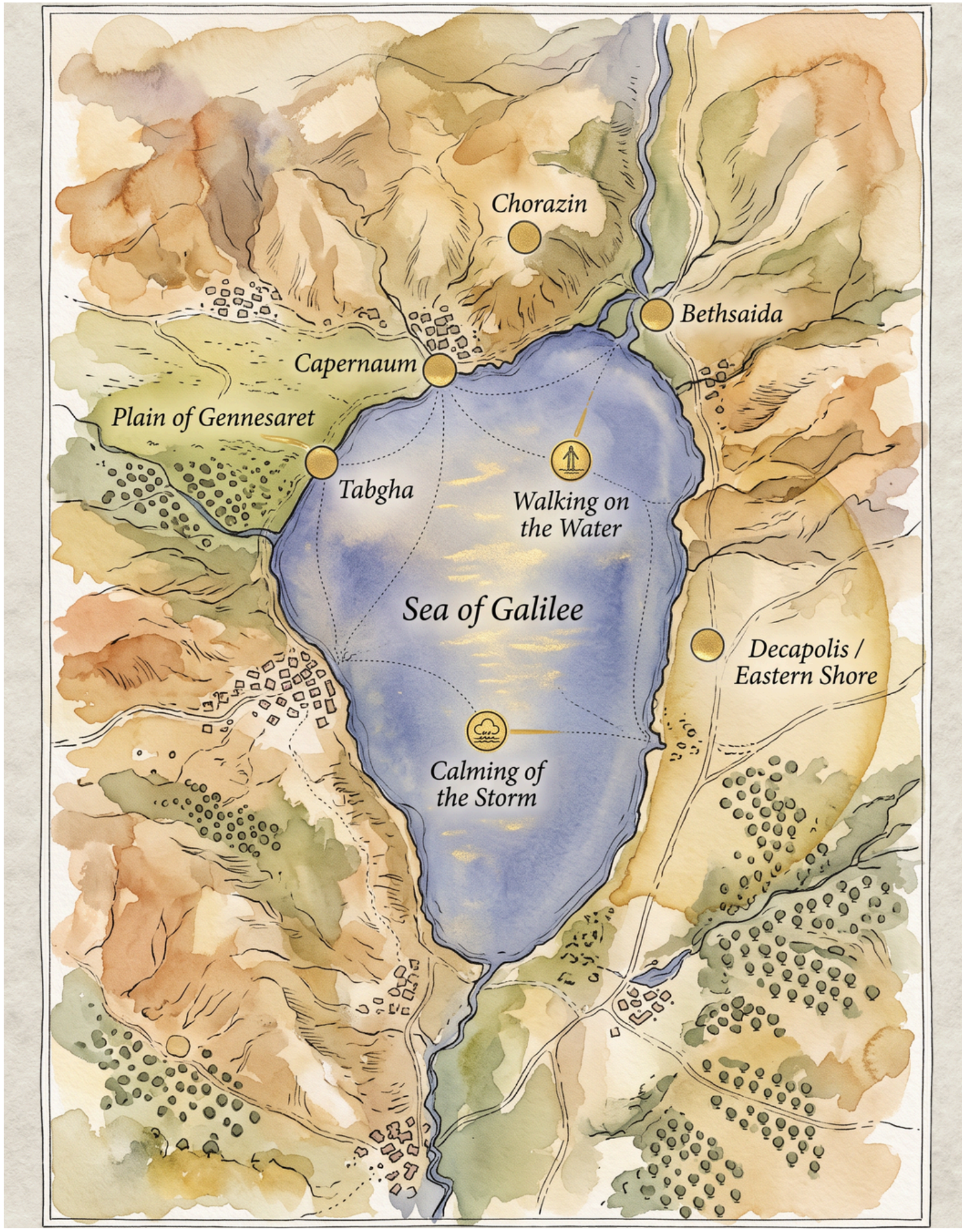


JESUS CALMS THE STORM



GREAT JOB! YOU UNLOCKED THE MIRACLE MAP.

Most of Jesus' ministry happened around the Sea of Galilee. Here, He taught crowds, healed the hurting, and showed His power. Just like the disciples learned to trust Him on the waters, you can trust Him in every part of your life, too.



CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

TEL AVIV

Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 by 66 Jewish families next to the ancient port city of Jaffa (also called Joppa in the Bible). The name “Tel Aviv” comes from a book called Old New Land, written by Theodor Herzl, the man who dreamed of creating a Jewish homeland in Israel. These early pioneers worked hard to turn the dry land of Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) into what is now a modern, high-tech city known as the technological powerhouse of the Middle East.

While Jerusalem is Israel’s religious heart, Tel Aviv is its center for business, creativity, and culture. The city is full of life; it has art museums, theaters, music concerts, and parks.

Tel Aviv sits right on the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, where people love to swim, surf, and play beach volleyball. Along the coast, you’ll see bike paths, cafés, and locals enjoying the sunshine. It’s also an amazing city for food lovers! Visitors can eat at fancy restaurants or explore outdoor markets called shuks, where they can find fresh fruits, colorful spices, and local treats.

A typical day for a young person in Tel Aviv might start with a fruit smoothie from the shuk before catching a bus to school. After class, they might meet up with friends at the beach to play Matkot, one of Israel’s favorite games. Matkot is like beach tennis—two players use wooden paddles to hit a small rubber ball back and forth as fast as they can. It’s fun, active, and a perfect reflection of Tel Aviv’s lively spirit!

MATKOT (ISRAELI PADDLE GAME)

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Matkot is a favorite game of beachgoers in Tel Aviv. Students will work with a teammate or by themselves to keep the ball going back and forth (or up and down!) as long as possible without it touching the ground.

If playing individually, use a paddle or your hands to keep the ball or balloon in the air as long as possible.

WATCH THIS VIDEO
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ISRAEL'S SECOND-LARGEST CITY!

Resources Needed (Outdoor/Gym Matkot):
- Two paddles per pair
- One rubber ball, soft foam ball, or balloon per pair
- Gym floor space or taped-off ‘courts’ (optional)

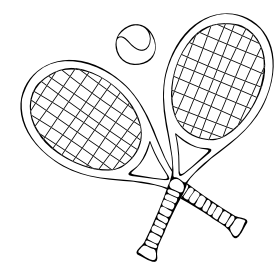
Resources Needed (Classroom Matkot):
- One soft foam ball or balloon per pair
- Two paddles per pair

Instructions:
The club leader may choose between playing Matkot outdoors or a modified indoor version. The goal of the game is to keep the ball going back and forth as long as possible without letting it hit the ground!

FOR THE STUDENT

How to Play (Outdoor/Gym Matkot):
- Pair up with a partner. Stand about 6–10 feet apart to start.
- **Serve the ball:**
  - One player gently tosses and hits the ball toward their partner to start the rally.
- **Rally back and forth:**
  - Players take turns hitting the ball back and forth, trying to keep it in the air as long as possible.
  - The goal is cooperation, not competition — you’re both trying to keep the rally going!
  - You can count how many successful hits you get in a row.
- **If the ball drops:**
  - Just pick it up and start again! Try to beat your last rally score.

How to Play (Classroom Matkot):
- Find a partner. Choose to stand or sit 5–8 feet apart.
- One player will gently serve the ball or balloon to their partner.
- Keep it going back and forth, counting how many times you can pass it between you.
- If the ball or balloon falls, start again and try to beat your last score!



CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

JAFFA

Jaffa is an ancient coastal city located right next to modern Tel Aviv. For thousands of years, Jaffa's port was an important connection point between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The city is mentioned in the book of Jonah when the prophet tries to run away "from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). Jonah went to Joppa and boarded a ship headed for Tarshish. Today, Jaffa even has a whale statue to remind visitors of this famous story.

Joppa was also the port where wood from Lebanon was brought to King Solomon to build the First Temple (2 Chronicles 2:16). Later, the materials for the Second Temple were also delivered to Joppa (Ezra 3:7). In New Testament times, a disciple named Tabitha (also called Dorcas), who was known for helping others, lived there. When she died, Peter came to her home, prayed, and God brought her back to life. Peter also had his important vision of a sheet full of animals while he was staying in Joppa, "by the sea," which prepared him to share the gospel with the Gentiles.

Throughout history, many groups and empires controlled Jaffa. In more recent centuries, the Ottoman Empire had a major influence on Jaffa. The Ottomans rebuilt the city walls and improved the port. During the 1800s, Jaffa became famous around the world when Arab farmers developed Jaffa Oranges.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jewish people began returning to the Land of Israel, and many arrived through Jaffa's port. New Jewish immigrants built a neighborhood nearby, which eventually grew into Israel's second-largest city, Tel Aviv. In 1950, Jaffa officially became part of Tel Aviv, and the city is now known as Tel Aviv–Yafo.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

In the Bible, Dorcas (also called Tabitha) was known for her kindness and good works in Joppa. She made clothing, helped the poor and widows, and encouraged the people around her. In this activity, students will follow her example by writing short letters or notes of encouragement to someone who may need support, kindness, or a reminder that they matter.

Resources Needed:

- Small cards, paper, or decorative note sheets
- Pens, markers, or colored pencils
- Optional: stickers or envelopes
- Optional: a basket or box labeled 'Jaffa Letters' for collecting them

Instructions:

- Introduce the story of Dorcas (also called Tabitha), someone known for helping others and showing kindness in Joppa.
  - Read Acts 9:36-43.
- **Students will consider who in their community could use encouragement.**
  - A friend
  - A teacher
  - A family member
  - Someone who is sick or struggling
  - Someone who serves the community (nurse, firefighter, custodian, etc.)
- **Students will write a short, kind, and uplifting letter to the person of their choice.**
  - "I appreciate you because…"
  - "You make a difference by…"
  - "I'm praying for you today."
  - "You matter."
- **Students can:**
  - Put letters into the "Jaffa Letters" basket for students to take and deliver later.
  - Deliver the letters themselves before they leave class.
  - (Optional) Read one encouraging message aloud —no names needed.

CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

JORDAN RIVER

The Jordan River is the site of some of the most important redemptive and theological moments in the Bible.

In Genesis 12 and 15, God made a promise to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. God promised that Abraham and his family would one day receive the land of Canaan. Hundreds of years later, after 400 years of slavery in Egypt and 40 years in the wilderness, the Israelites finally reached the edge of that Promised Land. In Joshua 3, God did a miracle. As the priests stood in the Jordan River holding the Ark of the Covenant, the water stopped flowing, and the people crossed over on dry ground. The Israelites crossed into the land God had promised to give them, leaving behind a life of slavery and stepping into a new life of freedom and promise with God.

The Jordan River was also a place where God showed His power through the prophets. The prophet Elijah struck the river with his cloak, and the water parted so he could cross (2 Kings 2:6–14). A Syrian army commander named Naaman was healed from leprosy after washing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1–14). The prophet Elisha even made a heavy iron axe head float on the water of the Jordan (2 Kings 6:1–7).

In the New Testament, the Jordan River became a place of repentance and new beginnings. John the Baptist preached and baptized beside the river, calling people to turn back to God because God's kingdom was coming (Matthew 3:2). It was in the Jordan River that Jesus was baptized, marking the beginning of His public ministry and showing His obedience to God (Matthew 3:13–17).

For thousands of years, people have traveled to the Jordan River to pray, be baptized, and remember their commitment to God. Even today, believers are baptized there as an expression of their faith and commitment to God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38).

The Jordan River flows between Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. It begins on Mount Hermon, runs through the Sea of Galilee, and ends at the Dead Sea. Mount Hermon is an important source of water for the Jordan River. Psalm 133 uses the dew of Hermon as a picture of the blessing that comes when God's people live together in unity.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Students will complete a crossword puzzle using clues based on key Bible events connected to the Jordan River.

Resources Needed:

- One printed crossword puzzle per student
- One pencil per student
- Bibles

Instructions:

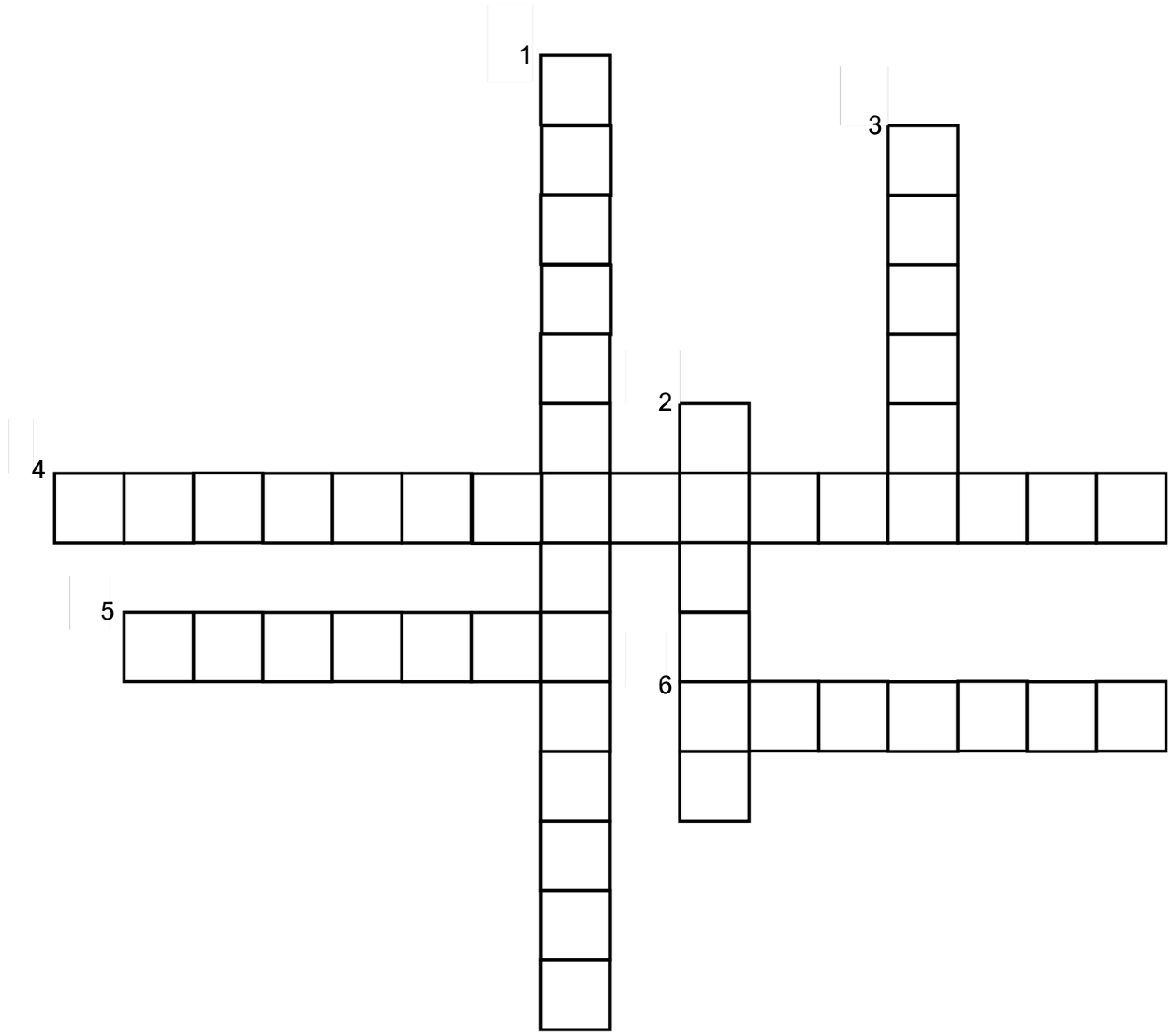
- Print and distribute one crossword puzzle to each student.
- Students will fill in the crossword by answering the clues using what they learned about the Jordan River from the Bible lesson.
- Students must read the clues carefully.
  - Clues are divided into Across and Down.
  - Each box holds one letter.
  - Students should write neatly so that letters fit in the boxes.
- Students may work alone or in groups.
- Students may use the Bible and discuss the answers.
- Remind students that answers cross each other, and correct letters will help solve other clues.
- Once the students have completed the activity, use the answer key to check their answers.

CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

JORDAN RIVER

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

STUDENT WORKSHEET



Down:

1. The leader who baptized people in the Jordan and called them to repent
2. The general healed of leprosy after washing in the Jordan
3. The river where Jesus was baptized

Across:

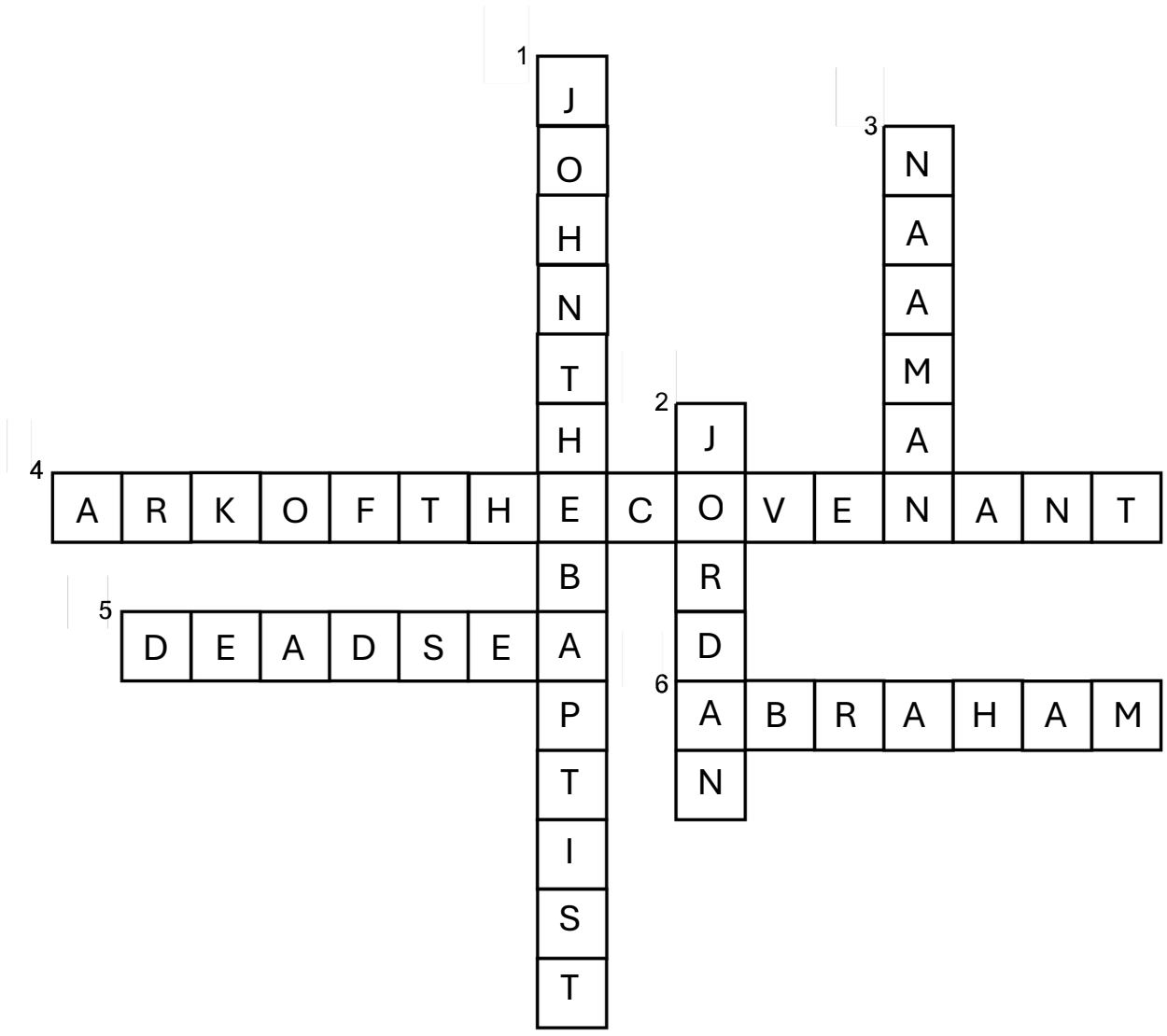
4. What the priests carried into the Jordan River
5. The final body of water where the Jordan River ends
6. The father of the Jewish people who received God’s promise

CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

JORDAN RIVER

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ANSWER KEY



Down:

1. The leader who baptized people in the Jordan and called them to repent JOHN THE BAPTIST
2. The general healed of leprosy after washing in the Jordan NAAMAN
3. The river where Jesus was baptized JORDAN

Across:

4. What the priests carried into the Jordan River ARK OF THE COVENANT
5. The final body of water where the Jordan River ends DEAD SEA
6. The father of the Jewish people who received God’s promise ABRAHAM

CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

BETHLEHEM

The city of Bethlehem is located just a few miles south of Jerusalem. The first time Bethlehem is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 35:19, which says, “And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.” Today, you can still visit Rachel’s Tomb, a special place where Jews, Christians, and Muslims come to pray and remember the matriarch Rachel. Although the tomb has faced attacks over the years, it continues to stand.

Bethlehem appears again in the Bible during the time of the Judges, when there was a famine in the land. A woman named Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, left Bethlehem to live in Moab. Later, Naomi returned home with her daughter-in-law Ruth, who married a kind and wealthy man named Boaz. Their family line became very important—Boaz and Ruth had a son named Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who became the father of King David. That means Bethlehem was the hometown of Israel’s greatest king, David!

About 1,000 years later, Bethlehem became famous again as the birthplace of Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy written long before in Micah 5:2:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting.”

The Gospel of Matthew also tells us that wise men followed a star that led them to Jesus (Matthew 2:1–11). Today, visitors can still see the traditional Shepherds’ Fields, associated with the place where angels appeared to shepherds on the night Jesus was born. You can also visit the Church of the Nativity, which stands above the grotto where tradition says Christ was born.

In modern times, Bethlehem has changed a lot. A century ago, most of its people were Christians, but now the majority are Muslims. Bethlehem is known for its beautiful handmade crafts, especially carvings made from olive wood, which are sold all over the world as reminders of the city where Jesus was born.

STAR OF BETHLEHEM ORIGAMI CRAFT

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Create a Star of Bethlehem Origami Craft with students to remember the star the wise men followed to find Christ.

Resources Needed:
- Square sheet of paper
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil or pen
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers for decorating (optional).

WATCH THIS VIDEO FOR VISUAL INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE STUDENTS

Instructions:
Start with a square sheet of paper (If your paper is rectangular, trim it to a square first.)
- Fold the square paper in half diagonally (corner to corner) to form a triangle.
- Rotate the paper so the point of the triangle is facing up and the long side is closest to you.
- Take the right bottom corner and fold it to the left corner and crease.
- Without unfolding the paper, take the top corner, fold it to the left corner, and crease.
- Take the top corner and fold it straight down so that you have two right triangles along the long side of the triangle.
- Unfold the paper and place a mark along the left side where the crease is.
- Using your crease mark as a starting point, take a pen and ruler and measure 5 cm along the crease and place a mark.
- Using the ruler, draw two straight lines from the 5 cm mark to the top and bottom left points of the triangle.
- Using scissors, cut along the lines you just created. Discard the scraps.
- Unfold and re-crease each side as shown in the video.
- Completely unfold and puff your star. Add color and decorations for some fun!

CUFI
MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

HAIFA

Haifa is a busy port city in northern Israel. It is built on the slopes of Mount Carmel, which gives the city beautiful views of the Mediterranean Sea. Haifa also has nice beaches and green hills. It is a mixed city, where people from different backgrounds live together, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, and Baha'i.

The Bible tells an important story that takes place on Mount Carmel. In 1 Kings 18, the prophet Elijah faced off against the prophets of the false god Baal. Elijah challenged the people of Israel to choose who the true God was. He said the real God would answer by sending fire to burn the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal shouted, danced, and hurt themselves, but nothing happened. Then Elijah prayed to the Lord, asking God to show the people that He alone was God. God answered Elijah's prayer by sending fire from heaven that completely burned the sacrifice. Today, people can visit Mount Carmel National Park, where there is a statue of Elijah that reminds visitors of this powerful moment.

Jews have lived in Haifa for many centuries, and the city has a long and sometimes difficult history. It has been ruled by many empires, including the Crusaders, Mamluks, and Ottomans. In the years during and after World War II, many Jewish refugees tried to escape Europe after the Holocaust. Even though the British tried to stop them, brave ship captains brought Holocaust survivors to the land of Israel. For many of these survivors, Haifa's port was the first place they saw when they arrived home to Israel.

Today, Haifa is Israel's third-largest city and an important center for learning and innovation. It is home to the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, one of the top science and engineering schools in the world. Haifa is also famous for the Shrine of the Báb and the beautiful Baha'i Gardens, which are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Haifa is a city where biblical history, modern science, and many cultures come together.

MINI BRIDGE CHALLENGE (TECHNION ENGINEERING ACTIVITY)

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Students become engineers for a day, inspired by the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. Working in small groups, students are challenged to design and build a paper bridge that spans a gap between two desks or tables. Using only paper and a limited amount of tape, students must think carefully about shape, balance, and strength. Once time is up, each bridge is tested by adding weight (such as coins) to see how much it can hold before collapsing.

Resources Needed:

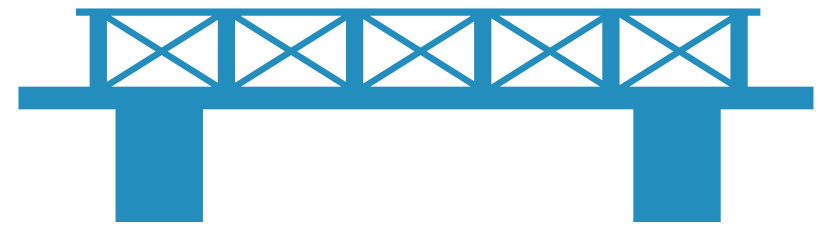
- Paper and tape for each group
- Coins, washers, or other small objects for testing
- Two desks or tables per group to create a gap

Instructions:
Students will design and build a bridge made only of paper and a limited amount of tape that can span a 1–2-foot gap between two desks or tables and hold as much weight as possible. Review the rules clearly before starting:

- Students may only use the provided materials.
- The bridge must rest only on the desks.
- Once testing begins, they may not touch or adjust their bridge.
- Students will have 20 minutes to complete the task.

Students will have 10 minutes to strategize before building and 10 minutes to build their bridges.

When time is up, test each bridge by carefully adding weight to the center. Count how many coins or how much weight it holds before breaking. The group with the strongest bridge wins the title of best designers!



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MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

CAESAREA

Herod the Great—the Herod from the Christmas story—was a powerful king who ruled Judea. By the end of his life, he became very paranoid and cruel. When he was younger, Herod was a skilled politician who earned the respect of the Roman Empire. He was well educated and enjoyed debating history and philosophy. The Bible describes Herod as responsible for the Massacre of the Innocents. In archaeology, Herod is also known for the enormous building projects he ordered. Some of his greatest building projects were the expansion of the Temple in Jerusalem, his desert fortress at Masada, and the port city of Caesarea Maritima.

Caesarea Maritima shows how advanced Roman engineering was. The city had one of the largest man-made harbors in the ancient world. It also included temples, aqueducts, a theater, a racetrack, and a palace. These buildings made Caesarea an important center for Roman rule in the region. Roman engineers used a special type of hydraulic concrete in the construction of Caesarea's harbor, portions of which survive underwater today. Herod named the city Caesarea after Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor mentioned in Luke 2:1.

Caesarea is very important in Christian history. It was the first place where the Holy Spirit was given to Gentiles when the Apostle Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and those gathered in his home (Acts 10). They were then baptized. Later, the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea. While there, he shared the gospel with the Roman leaders Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa II.

In later years, Caesarea became a major Christian city during the Byzantine period. One of its most famous leaders was Eusebius of Caesarea, an early church historian. In 1265, Mamluk forces captured Caesarea from the Crusaders and destroyed much of the city. Over time, sand covered the ruins and helped protect them. Today, Caesarea Maritima is an important archaeological site and a national park in Israel.

Hannah Szenes was a poet who lived in the Land of Israel during World War II. She was trained by the British military as a paratrooper and sent on a mission to help rescue Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. She was captured by Hungarian authorities and executed in 1944. During her short life, she wrote a poem called "A Walk to Caesarea," which is still famous today. The poem remembers the beauty of the land and the deep connection people feel to it.

"My God, My God,
I pray that these things never end,
The sand and the sea,
The rustle of the waters,
Lightning of the Heavens,
The prayer of Man."

ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
Using photos of the city's harbor, theater, aqueducts, and palace, students will examine the ruins, take notes on what each structure might have been used for, and give it a fun or creative name. Finally, they will share their discoveries with the class, imagining what life was like in this ancient city.

Resources Needed:

- Printed images of Caesarea ruins
- Paper and pencils
- Sticky notes or note cards

Instructions:
Give each student a photo of a Caesarea ruin or structure to investigate. Students will write what they think the building or structure may have been used for, who might have used it, and any interesting details or unusual features they notice. Students can create their own name for the ruins they "discover." When finished, students can take turns presenting their discoveries, interesting observations, and imaginative names.

CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

CAESAREA

ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE KEY

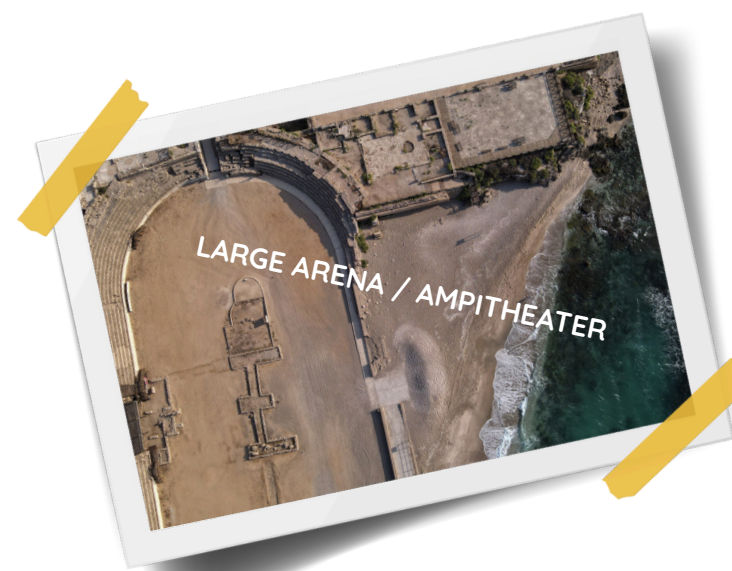












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PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

SDEROT

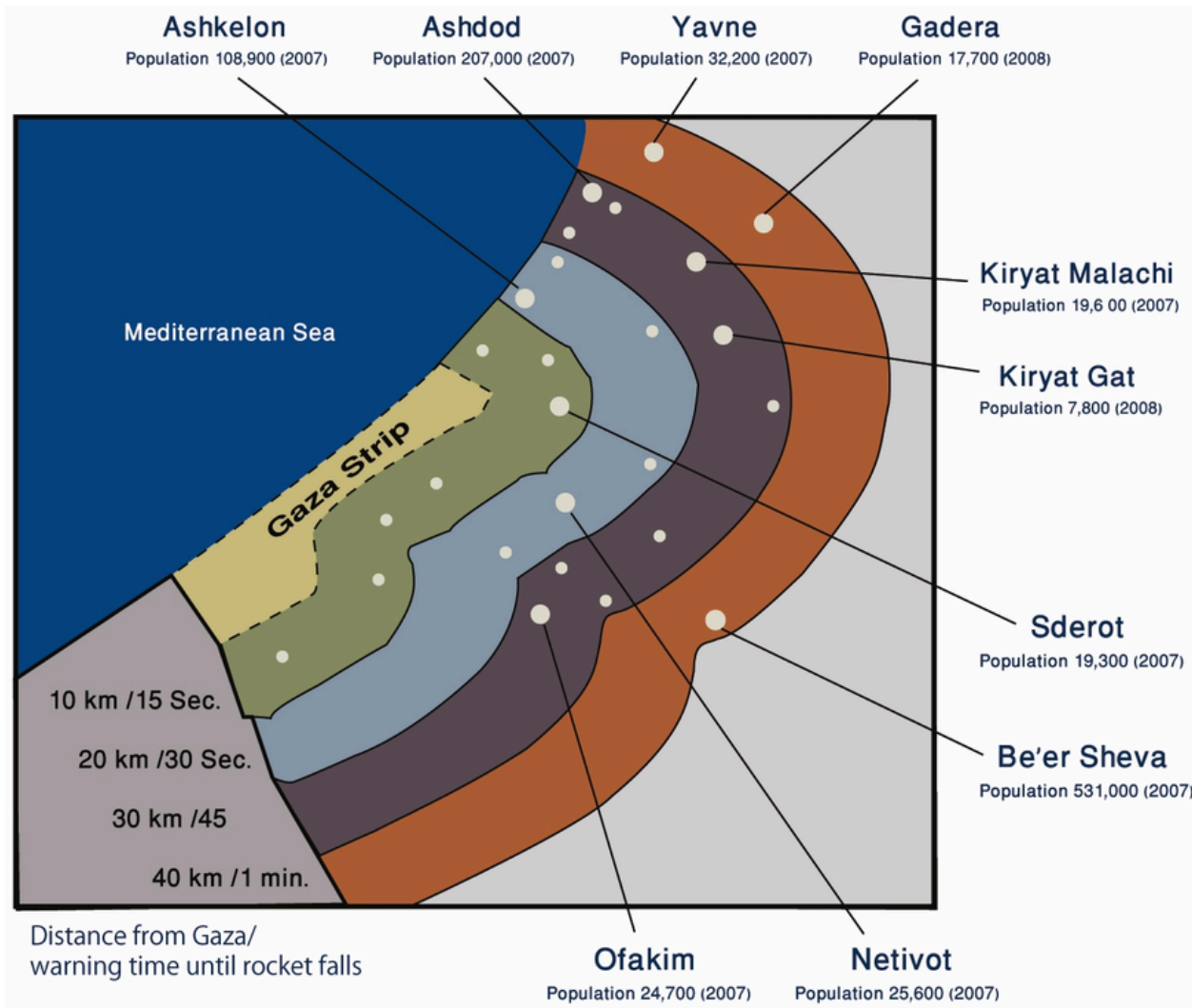
Sderot is a city in the western Negev Desert, less than one mile from the Gaza Strip. It was founded in 1951 as a transit camp for many new immigrants coming to Israel. Many of these immigrants were Jewish families who had been forced to leave countries in the Arab world, such as Morocco and Kurdistan. Jewish immigrants from Romania, Iran, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union also made Sderot their home.

The name Sderot means “boulevards” in Hebrew. David Ben-Gurion chose this name because eucalyptus trees lined the city’s main street. The Bible verse Isaiah 35:1 says, “The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” We see this verse reflected in Sderot, Israel, today. Jewish pioneers worked hard to turn the Negev Desert into a place where people could live and grow crops, and Sderot represents that biblical vision.

Because Sderot is so close to Gaza, it has often been targeted by rockets fired by Hamas. The city is called the “Bomb Shelter Capital of the World.” One example is a children’s playground that looks normal at first, but in the center is a concrete bomb shelter painted like a caterpillar. When sirens sound, warning of incoming rockets, families have only 15 seconds to reach safety. Because of these constant threats, many people in southern Israel suffer from anxiety and post-traumatic stress (PTSD).

On October 7, 2023, Sderot was attacked by an elite group of Hamas terrorists. Fifty-three residents were killed, including thirteen elderly people who were on a bus heading to relax at the Dead Sea. Many residents are observant Jews and were not using their phones that morning, so they did not receive warnings about the attack. A memorial has been built over the Sderot police station, where heavy fighting took place.

Even after years of attacks, Sderot continues to grow and move forward. New homes, parks, and factories are being built, and the city now has more than 38,000 residents. The people of Sderot are known for their strength and resilience, choosing to keep building and living despite the challenges they face.



CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
In this activity, students explore what daily life can be like for kids and families living in Sderot, a city in southern Israel. Through short, realistic scenarios, students think about how people make everyday choices while showing courage, preparation, and resilience. The goal is not to focus on fear, but on how communities continue living, growing, and caring for one another even in difficult situations.

Resources Needed:
- Scenario cards
- Paper or student notebooks
- Pencils or pens

Instructions:
Students will reflect on daily life in Sderot by thinking through real-life situations that kids and families experience in the "Bomb Shelter Capital of the World." The goal is to think, discuss, and reflect.

- Form small groups of two or three students.
- Give each group paper or a student notebook, a pencil or pen, and a scenario card.
- Students will imagine they are middle schoolers living in Sderot and consider the scenario on the card they are given.
    - **Scenario 1:** You are at a playground when a warning siren sounds. What choices would need to be made quickly or in advance? Who do you help? You have 15 seconds.
    - **Scenario 2:** You are walking home from school and hear a warning siren. How do you stay calm and safe? You have 15 seconds.
    - **Scenario 3:** Your family is planning a birthday party. If a warning siren sounds during the party, everyone will have 15 seconds to find shelter. What plans would your family need to make in advance to keep everyone safe?
    - **Scenario 4:** You are at home doing homework when a warning siren goes off. What could each family member do to help everyone reach shelter safely? You have 15 seconds.
- Remind students they have 15 seconds in their scenario to find shelter.
    - Set a timer for 15 seconds to help students understand how quickly they would need to respond.
    - Students should remain seated and discuss what they would do rather than physically rushing to find shelter.
- Using the guiding questions below, each group will work together to write a response of at least one paragraph.
    - **Question 1:** What choices do you need to make quickly?
    - **Question 2:** How do people help one another?
    - **Question 3:** What shows courage or preparation in this situation?
- After 10 minutes of small-group discussion and writing, ask each group to share one decision it made and explain why.
- After the class discussion, have each student write a short individual reflection using one of the prompts below.
    - **Prompt 1:** One way people in Sderot show strength and resilience is…
    - **Prompt 2:** If I lived in Sderot, I think I would learn how to…

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

MASADA & DEAD SEA

In addition to building the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem and the man-made port city of Caesarea, Herod the Great also built a huge desert fortress called Masada. Construction began in 37 BC, the same year Herod became king, and took six years to complete.

Herod was known for being paranoid, so he designed Masada to be a luxurious but heavily protected hideout in case of rebellion. Masada was built on the flat top of a mountain in the Judean Desert, overlooking the western shore of the Dead Sea. The fortress included two palaces, barracks, storerooms, baths, swimming pools, water cisterns, and thick defensive walls. Large amounts of food were stored there in case the fortress was ever attacked.

In 66 AD, the Jews in Judea revolted against their Roman rulers. Even though Judea was a small province in the Roman Empire, the Jews resisted Roman rule for seven years, until 73 AD. They refused to give up their faith or submit to pagan worship, idolatry, and harsh treatment. The last Jewish stronghold to fall was Masada. A group of Jewish fighters was determined to resist the Romans until the very end.

Today, groups of Israeli soldiers are sworn into service at Masada, ending the ceremony with the words, “Masada shall not fall again.” Masada has become a symbol of courage, survival, and the determination of the Jewish people to live free in their Promised Land.

From the top of Masada, visitors can see breathtaking views of the Dead Sea. In the Bible, the Dead Sea is often called the Salt Sea because it contains an extremely high amount of salt. The water is so salty that it makes people unusually buoyant, allowing them to float without effort. Fish and aquatic plants cannot survive in its extremely salty water, although certain microorganisms can, but many people visit because the mineral-rich water and mud are believed to be good for the skin. The Dead Sea is also the lowest land-based place on Earth.

In 1947, a teenage Bedouin shepherd was searching for a lost goat in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea. While he was searching, he discovered ancient manuscripts containing portions and whole books of the Hebrew Bible.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were one of the most significant archeological discoveries of the twentieth century. The scrolls, hidden for two thousand years, show that the Bible was faithfully copied and preserved. The manuscripts showed remarkable consistency with biblical texts that had been preserved and passed down for generations. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a reminder of the truth of the prophet’s words in Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

SCROLL SCAVENGER HUNT

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

Students become “archaeologists” searching for hidden scrolls around the classroom. Each scroll contains a Bible verse about God’s Word. When they find it, they will use their Bible to locate and read the verse. This activity should take about 10 minutes and can be completed individually or in groups. The scavenger hunt combines movement, discovery, and learning in one activity.

Resources Needed:

- Bible verse reference cards as “scrolls.”
- Optional: envelopes for each “scroll.”
- Bibles

Instructions:

- Hide the provided Bible verse scrolls around your classroom (under chairs, behind books, taped to walls, on shelves, etc.).
- ***Read this to your class:***

In 1947, a teenage Bedouin shepherd boy was looking for a lost goat and throwing stones. One stone fell into a cave, and he heard something break. Curious, he went inside and found clay jars filled with ancient scrolls. These scrolls turned out to be priceless. They contained parts of almost every book of the Old Testament, except for Esther. One of the most important discoveries was a nearly complete copy of the book of Isaiah. Hidden for over two thousand years, the scrolls show how carefully God’s Word was copied and preserved. Now you will be the “archaeologists” looking for ancient scrolls.

- Have students search the room to find the hidden scrolls.
- Once all scrolls are found, bring the class together.
- Have students take turns looking up the Scriptures they found in their scrolls and read them to the class.

CUFI MIDDLE SCHOOL

1 The Lord had said to Abram,
“Go from your country, your people and your
father’s household to
the land I will show you.
2 “I will make you into a great
nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will
curse; and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

GENESIS 12:1–3

18 On that day the Lord
made a covenant with
Abram and said, “To your
descendants I give this
land, from the Wadi of
Egypt to the great river, the
Euphrates—

GENESIS 15:18

7 I will establish my covenant as an
everlasting covenant between me and
you and your descendants after you for
the generations to come, to be your
God and the God of your descendants
after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan,
where you now reside as a foreigner, I
will give as an everlasting possession to
you and your descendants after you;
and I will be their God.”

GENESIS 17:7–8

16 and said, “I swear by myself,
declares the Lord, that because
you have done this and have not
withheld your son, your only son,
17 I will surely bless you and make
your descendants as numerous as
the stars in the sky and as the
sand on the seashore. Your
descendants will take possession
of the cities of their enemies, 18
and through your offspring all
nations on earth will be blessed,
because you have obeyed me.”

GENESIS 22:16–18

24 God heard their
groaning and he remembered
his covenant with Abraham,
with Isaac and with Jacob

EXODUS 2:24

44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. 45 But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.’ ”

LEVITICUS 26:44–45

6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. 7 The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 7:6–9

5 It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

DEUTERONOMY 9:5

23 And who is like your people Israel—
the one nation on earth that God went
out to redeem as a people for himself,
and to make a name for himself, and to
perform great and awesome wonders
by driving out nations and their gods
from before your people, whom you
redeemed from Egypt? 24 You have
established your people Israel as your
very own forever, and you, Lord, have
become their God.

2 SAMUEL 7:23–24

8 He remembers his
covenant forever,
the promise he made, for
a thousand generations,
9 the covenant he made
with Abraham, the oath he
swore to Isaac.
10 He confirmed it to
Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an
everlasting covenant:

PSALM 105:8–10

4 indeed, he who
watches over Israel
will neither slumber
nor sleep.

PSALM 121:4

2 As the mountains
surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds
his people
both now and
forevermore.

PSALM 125:2

8 “But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
you descendants of Abraham my friend, 9
I took you from the ends of the earth,
from its farthest corners I called you. I
said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen
you and have not rejected you. 10 So do
not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I
will strengthen you and help you; I will
uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:8–10

17 no weapon forged
against you will prevail,
and you will refute every
tongue that accuses you.
This is the heritage of the
servants of the Lord,
and this is their
vindication from me,”
declares the Lord.

ISAIAH 54:17

8 For this is what the Lord
Almighty says: “After the
Glorious One has sent me
against the nations that have
plundered you—for whoever
touches you touches the
apple of his eye—

ZECHARIAH 2:8

35 This is what the Lord says, he who
appoints the sun to shine by day, who
decrees the moon and stars to shine by
night, who stirs up the sea so that its
waves roar—the Lord Almighty is his
name: 36 “Only if these decrees vanish
from my sight,” declares the Lord, “will
Israel ever cease being a nation before
me.” 37 This is what the Lord says:
“Only if the heavens above can be
measured and the foundations of the
earth below be searched out will I reject
all the descendants of Israel because of
all they have done,” declares the Lord.

JEREMIAH 31:35–37

24 “Have you not noticed that these people are saying, ‘The Lord has rejected the two kingdoms he chose’? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. 25 This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’ ”

JEREMIAH 33:24-26

22 “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23 I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes. 24 “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

EZEKIEL 36:22-24

1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:

ROMANS 11:1-2

28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.

ROMANS 11:28-29

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

EIN GEDI

Ein Gedi is a desert oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea in the Judean Mountains. It is near Masada, King Herod's desert fortress, and Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The name Ein Gedi (also spelled En Gedi in some Bible translations) means "Spring of the Young Goat." Even though it is surrounded by desert, Ein Gedi has freshwater springs, plants, and trees, showing how God provides life in the wilderness.

After David was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be Israel's future king, King Saul became jealous and tried to kill him. In 1 Samuel 23–24, David fled from Saul and eventually took refuge in the strongholds of En Gedi, where Saul pursued him with 3,000 men. David hid among the rocks and caves. When Saul entered a cave, David had the chance to kill him — but he didn't. Instead, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe and spared his life. David showed integrity and trust in God, refusing to harm the man God had chosen as king. When Saul realized what David had done, he admitted that David was more righteous than he was.

Ein Gedi is also mentioned in the Song of Solomon: "My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En Gedi" (1:14). This verse shows that Ein Gedi was known as a place of beauty and refreshment. Travelers could rest there, drink fresh water, bathe in the springs, water their animals, and enjoy the shade. Ein Gedi is home to waterfalls, palm trees, and wild goats.

Today, people can hike and explore ruins at Ein Gedi. The oasis was destroyed during the Jewish revolt against Rome, about 30 years after Jesus' resurrection. Archaeologists have discovered homes, fortresses, synagogues, and farms from ancient times. Long ago, Ein Gedi was famous for its balsam plants, which were used to make perfumes, medicine, and anointing oils.

THE WILDERNESS ROAD PUZZLE

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:
In this activity, students will study an illustrated map of ancient Israel and carefully read a story describing David's journey. Multiple roads appear on the map, but only one route matches the details of the story. Students will use observation, logic, and close reading to determine which path David most likely traveled.

This is not a race. It is a thinking puzzle. Every clue matters.

Resources Needed:

- A worksheet with a map of ancient Israel and a story prompt.

Instructions:
Read the story on the worksheet and pay attention to clues about direction, land, and details about the journey. You may underline or highlight clues in the story. Examine the map and possible routes starting from En Gedi. Based on the story, identify which route David took. Use the clues to eliminate routes that don't fit. Only one path matches all the clues in the story.

Consider:

- Is David moving toward cities or away from them?
- Is the land becoming safer or more dangerous?
- Is he staying near water, or going deeper into the wilderness?
- Which direction does the story describe?

Answer Key:
David is taking his men to the Wilderness of Paran. This journey follows David's confrontation with King Saul at En Gedi in 1 Samuel 24 and his departure for the Wilderness of Paran in 1 Samuel 25:1. If students are unable to solve the puzzle, encourage them to look for the answer in 1 Samuel 25:1.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

EIN GEDI

STORY PROMPT FOR STUDENTS

The following is an imagined retelling based on the events of 1 Samuel 24–25.
Some details have been added to help you picture David's journey.

David stirred awake as the camp around him began to move. The night chill still clung to the air, and the faint light of dawn revealed jagged rocks and dry hills stretching endlessly before him. For a moment, he lay still, trying to gather his thoughts. Where was he going now? Only yesterday, he had been hidden in the caves of En Gedi, listening as King Saul passed by—close enough to touch.

The memory made David's heart pound. He had spared Saul's life. He had trusted the Lord instead of taking the kingdom by force. Saul's words still echoed in his mind: "You are more righteous than I." And yet David knew better than to believe the danger had passed.

Around this time, word reached David that Samuel had died. The prophet who had anointed him king was gone. David mourned deeply, feeling the weight of waiting grow heavier. God's promise still stood—but the path toward it felt longer and lonelier.

Around him, his men quietly gathered their belongings. None of them spoke of a destination. They had followed David through valleys and wilderness before, trusting that the Lord who had delivered them so many times would do so again. David watched them move and wondered, Lord, where now?

David gathered his men and left the place of springs and cliffs behind.

The land he entered grew quieter and wider. The roads faded. Cities disappeared. He traveled farther south, away from the hills of Judah and the places where Saul's power was strongest. The wilderness stretched before him—dry, open, and unforgiving.

David had lived among caves, rocks, and strongholds, learning to depend on God day by day. He had seen the Lord provide water in dry places and protection in hidden ones. But now the land offered fewer trees, fewer streams, and fewer places to hide. This was a wilderness remembered from ancient days, a place where God had once taught His people to trust Him completely.

Here, shepherds watched their flocks at the edge of the desert. Wealthy landowners grazed sheep far from towns, relying on the land and the Lord for survival. David and his men lived quietly among them, guarding flocks, sharing the dangers of the wilderness, and depending on kindness rather than command.

In this dry and desolate land, David would face another test. Not the spear of Saul, but the struggle within his own heart. Here, far from the palace and far from applause, David would be shaped by restraint, humility, and obedience.

He did not yet know how God would lead him next.

But in the wilderness, David waited—trusting that the same God who called him would not abandon him, even in the most barren place.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

En Gedi Activity
The Wilderness Road Puzzle

Mediterranean Sea

Bethel

Ramah

Jericho

Jordan River

Ammon

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

Ashdod

Ashkelon

Gaza

Gath

Lachish

Hebron

En Gedi

Dead Sea

Moab

Ziklag

Arad

Beer Sheva

Amora

Wilderness of Paran

Gomorrah

Negev Desert

Mountains of Edom

Kadesh-barnea

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