



## World Day of Prayer Youth Resource 2024

World Day of Prayer is an international prayer movement in more than 180 countries and over 1000 languages. Every year, Christians of many traditions and all ages celebrate a common, Global Day of Prayer on Friday 1st March 2024. Worship services and prayer events are held all around the world on this day.

Each year a different country is chosen to produce the material that we use for worship services, informing our prayers for that country.

The idea of this leaflet is to inform and resource you for World Day of Prayer, so that young people and youth groups can use this to engage with the country and to pray for the people who live there. The Country for 2024 is Palestine

### Palestine



### What do we know?

Palestine is known as the state of Palestine, and it is in area of the world called the Middle East. It is a mostly Muslim territory, and it is involved in a conflict with another country called Israel. Palestine is a vibrant, colourful and amazing place, nonetheless, daily life of Palestinians is being impacted by a conflict with Israel, causing oppositions and dividing opinion. When we speak about historic Palestine, we are talking about parts which have become known as the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel. Historic Palestine includes Bethlehem (where Jesus was born), Nazareth (where Jesus spent his childhood), the River Jordan (where Jesus was baptized), and Jerusalem (where Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead). The Mediterranean Sea lies to the west of historic Palestine, where Paul and the apostles traveled on missionary journeys to spread the good news of Jesus the Christ. As such, this is an important and sacred area of the world.

## What has happened between Israel and Palestine?

At its core, the conflict is based on who gets what land and how it is controlled. After the Second World War, persecuted Jewish people had to flee their homes in Europe and they felt that Israel was their rightful home. The people who were living there already, known now as Palestinians, did not want to give up their land and homes. As such, conflict broke out and two wars took place, one in 1948 and another in 1967. From these wars, Israel was able to gain land and it left Israel in control of two main areas: West Bank and the Gaza Strip, home to large Palestinian populations. Consequently, Palestine became occupied by Israel

The 4 maps below show the loss of Palestinian land from 1946-2000.



In 1988, Palestine proclaimed its independence only on the land Israel had occupied since 1967. For the sake of peace, Palestinians agreed to live on only 22% of their original land. As of July 31, 2019, 138 of the 193 United Nations member states have recognized Palestine as a state, and the Palestinian flag now flies outside of the United Nations.

Sadly, whenever there is conflict, war and struggles, it is the everyday people who suffer the most, whilst the Politicians argue it out to decide what is the best course of action. The people of Palestine have suffered greatly and whilst we realise it is a complicated situation, from both sides of Israel and Palestine, it is hard not to think about people who have lost their homes, their families and their lives in an occupied Palestine.

## What can we do?

Whilst the politicians look at either a 'two state solution' where Palestine would be established as an independent state in Gaza and a lot of the West Bank, leaving the rest of the land to Israel, it is helpful to turn our focus onto the real lives of people and examine how they are impacted by the conflict.

*My name is Lina.*

*On May 11, 2022, I lost my Aunt Shireen, a famous journalist who was killed in Jenin. For me, Aunt Shireen was like the branch of an olive tree, resisting the strong winds that threatened to erase the truth of Palestinian experience.*

*When Aunt Shireen died, Palestine lost an icon, a legend, and a famous Al Jazeera journalist. And yet, Shireen is all of the above and more. She was also my aunt, my godmother at baptism, and my best friend. Shireen has been my role model for as long as I can remember. She was also a role model to many young Palestinian women. Growing up, I aspired to be as successful, professional, and empathetic as her. I will cherish all the moments I spent with her talking about art, politics, and life, watching shows, going on vacations, and spending time with the family.*

*For 25 years, Aunt Shireen dedicated her life to telling the stories of Palestinian experience, and to being the voice of truth. She entered every house in Palestine and the Arab world through the TV screen. The day of her funeral was proof that she had also entered the hearts of Palestinians. The outpouring of solidarity we witnessed at her funeral will forever be ingrained in my memory and the collective memory of Palestine. We are forever grateful to the strong and courageous Palestinians who resisted the threats from Israeli forces and carried Shireen's casket on their shoulders.*

*Many people did not know that my aunt was a Palestinian Christian. Shireen's faith led her to bear with all in love, despite differences in faith traditions. She stood with all who were being harmed. She struggled for both Muslims and Christians to have access to the holy sites in Jerusalem. Her truth telling was even a way of bearing with the occupiers in love. Speaking the truth is a form of loving resistance, because it calls the oppressor back to their humanity.*

*Although Shireen, a branch of the olive tree, was cut down too soon, her legacy lives on. Her memory now nourishes the earth, from which we will gain strength to continue telling the truth and demanding justice.*

*My name is Sara.*

*Sometimes, I feel like the leaf on an olive tree, connected to the roots, blooming from within.*

*I was born and raised in Jerusalem as a Lutheran Christian. Life as a Palestinian woman surely has been, and still is challenging. I am glad that things are changing in society through my church by having ordained the first female pastor.*

*Throughout the years, I have seen and admired the persistence of Palestinians. My own family history is connected to our Palestinian history, which is the case for many. I want to share a story with you that shows what it means to be a Palestinian in our land.*

*My grandparents used to live in Jaffa. They grew up there before 1948, living alongside other Christians, Muslims and Jews. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, it was a catastrophe for Palestinians who had lived on the land for thousands of years. We call this catastrophe the Nakba. The Israeli forces came to my grandparents' home and kicked them out by force. This caused my grandparents to become refugees in Jordan.*

*Many years later, my grandparents came for a visit to Jerusalem and my parents took me and my sibling on a trip to Jaffa. They were excited to show us the home they used to live in. My grandpa told us stories about his childhood, and how he used to plant trees with his father. In fact, that's how we found the house! Everything had changed except for the trees, which helped us to identify the place.*

*Sadly, the people currently living in the house were hostile towards us. I was quite young, but I do remember them shouting and kicking us away from the house. It wasn't like we wanted to go into the house, we were just viewing it from the outside. My grandpa was trying to explain to them and telling them that this used to be his house. However, they refused to hear any part of it and chased us away. The feeling must have been even worse for my grandfather, being kicked out of his own house twice.*

*Later in time, when I visited my grandparents in Jordan, my grandma showed me the keys that her mom had kept when leaving their house. She kept the keys with the hope that one day they would be able to return to their home. Sadly, this is the case for many. Following the two Nakbas of 1948 and 1967, and even until today, people are still being kicked out of their homes. Many have kept their keys with the hope of return, a hope that is passed on through many generations.*

*I know that the tree from where I came is strong and resilient. I am nourished by the love of my ancestors. I can bear with others in love because they did. Their love is what made me bloom as the leaf on an olive tree. Their love has helped me become strong and resilient.*

Although bearing together in love under occupation is a challenge, Palestinians are determined to remain a community.

*"I Beg You...Bear With One Another in Love"* (Ephesians 4:1-7)

## Discussion Points

Have you ever been in a situation where you have faced conflict?

What type of uncertainties have you faced in your life?

What kind of uncertainties do you think young people in Palestine face?

What does it mean to be a peacemaker in our homes, schools, relationships?

*"I Beg You...Bear With One Another in Love"* (Ephesians 4:1-7) What does this scripture mean to us? What's our responsibility as Christians when we hear about when we hear about the struggles in Palestine?

## Prayer Activities

Could you as a youth group create a Tik Tok which spreads a message of hope?

Cactus plants are not originally from Palestine, but they have been in the country for many years. Cacti have become natural boundaries between one village and another in Palestine. After the destruction of many villages in 1948, cactus plants still survived in fields where there was nothing else. The cactus plant is a symbol of resilience and survival in the harshest of circumstances. Could you decorate a plant pot for a mini cactus that can be displayed somewhere in your house to remind you to pray for Palestine.

As we reflect on what it means to be marginalised could you paint only one nail on your finger or toe to remind you to pray throughout the week. It might be that people will ask why you only have one nail painted; this will open discussion about what you have understood about Palestine.



**“Peace of Cake”** Citrus fruits grew abundantly in historic Palestine and were exported all over the world. Could you make a Lemon drizzle cake as a group to show what happens when Gods people come together to work in unity? Everyone takes an ingredient to add in, once cooked the process of eating together is symbolic of unity.

### Ingredients

225g unsalted butter, softened.  
225g caster sugar  
4 eggs  
225g self-raising flour  
1 lemon, zested

### For the drizzle topping

1½ lemons, juiced  
85g caster sugar

### Method

Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

Beat together the butter and caster sugar until pale and creamy, then add the eggs, one at a time, slowly mixing through.

Sift in the self-raising flour, then add the lemon zest and mix until well combined.

Line a loaf tin (8 x 21cm) with greaseproof paper, then spoon in the mixture into the tin.  
Bake for 45-50 mins until a thin skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.

While the cake is cooling in its tin, mix together the lemon juice and caster sugar to make the drizzle.

Prick the warm cake all over with a skewer or fork, then pour over the drizzle – the juice will sink in and the sugar will form a lovely, crisp topping.

