

How Are the Children?

Palestinian Children in Israeli military detention

March newsletter

This month's newsletter highlights a **variety of ways that individuals have found to promote or present the new video curriculum**. We on the UCC PIN Steering Committee hope you find inspiration and encouragement in these stories. Information about the *How Are the Children?* film and curriculum, including resources for presenters, can be found here: www.HATCnow.org.

Soup and bread suppers: An Advent film series about Palestine (December 2018)

Portland, Oregon "When I visit Palestine, I feel compelled to tell the story about what's happening there," states Rev. Catherine Alder, a member of Ainsworth UCC Church in Portland, Oregon. "Films are a great way to introduce people to Israel-Palestine. We decided to host a video series focused on the children of Palestine. We selected the film *How Are the Children?* because it's a good entry point for people to discover what's happening in Israel-Palestine. The testimony of the children and interviews of UCC national staff are especially compelling." As speakers to accompany the film screenings, Alder invited a local member of Jewish Voice for Peace and several UCC members who had recently returned from the Holy Land. Additionally, she arranged for Rev. Loren McGrail to describe her recent experiences living in East Jerusalem. "Everyone who attended our film series was powerfully moved," reports Alder.



Presentation at a New Hampshire Conference gathering (February 2019)

Pembroke, New Hampshire "Prepared to Serve" is an annual event of the New Hampshire Conference providing a multitude of workshops covering local and wider church concerns and projects. With workshops led by clergy, lay persons, and invited guests, the event attracts some 400 congregants. Revs. John Buttrick and Faye Buttrick used the 75-minute workshop format to present portions of the "How Are the Children?" film and engage in discussion with attendees. "Attendees connected issues raised in the *How Are the Children?* film with realities they recognized from their own lives," says John Buttrick. "One woman related the child detentions in Palestine to what such detentions



would mean for her own family and children. Others made a clear connection between Palestinian children’s detention and the situation on the U.S.-Mexico border. They personalized it that way.” Faye Buttrick states, “It’s worth noting that no one challenged the information presented in the film. A Jewish person in the audience asked if it was fair to focus on this particular issue when there are other worse situations in the world.” Faye reports, “This question led to a highly productive conversation among the attendees about the urgency of exposing and challenging Israel’s system of military detention.”

Inviting ecumenical activists to a home luncheon (January 2019)

Lake Oswego, Oregon Esther Nelson is an advocate for Palestinian human rights who worships



at the Portland (Oregon) Mennonite Church. She recently invited local Portland, Oregon activists from diverse denominations to her home to learn about *How Are the Children?* and discuss opportunities to present the film and curriculum in their own congregations. “For individual congregations not already engaged in this issue, it can be difficult to find something that catches their interest, attention, and concern. They’re looking for something that resonates,” says Nelson. “This film is a doorway. Many are open to this information. The film paints a picture of what’s going on in Palestine with children, and provides an immediate way to follow up, to take next steps. As well, the film can be a tool to help congregations re-engage with this issue and move to the next level.”

“The fact that this film features testimonies from top elected officials of the UCC is a real plus for activists in other denominations,” explains Nelson. “When individuals want to engage their local congregations, they feel more grounded knowing the UCC and other denominations cited in the film are actively embracing the cause of advocacy for Palestinian children.”

Inviting UCC clergy to an event at the Palestine Museum US (April 2019)

Woodbridge, Connecticut Opened in April 2018, the Palestine Museum US is dedicated to researching and preserving Palestinian history, as well as presenting art and stories from Palestinians living in Palestine and in diaspora around the world today. By special arrangement with museum director Faisal Saleh, the Connecticut UCC Palestine Israel Network (CT UCC PIN) is organizing and hosting a gathering of UCC clergy at this museum on April 30th. Those attending will be introduced to the *How Are the Children?* film and curriculum and to the museum itself.



Webinars with Conference Ministers (March 2019 and ongoing)

On March 14th at 10 am EDT, Connecticut Conference Minister Rev. Kent Siladi will join Revs. Allie Perry, Nancy McLaren, and Dean Ahlberg in presenting a webinar. The title for the webinar is: “How Are the Children: Advocating for the Human Rights of Palestinian Children.” See this announcement: [Connecticut Conference webinar](#). The webinar will be taped and posted, so others can watch it any time thereafter. We are also happy to report that additional Conference Ministers plan to host webinars on this same topic.

Promoting the curriculum at a “Super Saturday” multi-conference gathering (March 2019)

Wilbraham, Massachusetts Super Saturday is a full day of skill building, discussion of best practices, shared worship, and an opportunity for lay and ordained church leaders to network with one another. This significant collaborative effort of the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences includes presenters and attendees from each conference. At this year’s Super Saturday event on March 16th, Rev. Allie Perry and Gay Harter are offering a 90-minute workshop about *How Are the Children?* including presentation of portions of the video.



Promoting the curriculum via conference or association electronic newsletters

Among the many persons promoting awareness and use of the curriculum in their conference or association newsletters are Rev. Kimberlee Whisler-Vasko of Illinois Conference, Johnette Orpinela of Central Pacific Conference, and Rev. Marcia Hoffman of the Central Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference. Continue spreading the word!

Educating Marco Rubio’s foreign policy staff (February 2019)

A United Methodist human rights activist residing in Central Florida says he was “fed up” with Marco Rubio’s promotion of measures to silence those who speak out about Israel’s systematic abuse of Palestinian children and families. When he learned of the *How Are the Children?* curriculum, he saw an opportunity. He found the name of Rubio’s foreign policy staffer, and sent a copy of the film trailer along with a request for a personal meeting. “How can this fellow see the contents of the video and hold the positions he does about Israel?” asks this activist, who is encouraging other activists in Florida to contact their local Rubio offices with the same request. We’ll keep tabs on this creative use of the video and let you know of future developments.



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