

How Are the Children?

Palestinian Children in Israeli military detention

May newsletter

Promotion and viewing of the *How Are the Children?* film and curriculum are driven by grassroots efforts. We count upon your personal involvement to present the curriculum to your local UCC congregation, peace and justice committee, or conference-wide gathering.

This month's newsletter is chock full of information for anyone planning to present the *How Are the Children?* curriculum.

More information about the film and curriculum, including resources for presenters, can be found here: www.HATCnow.org.

Rep. Betty McCollum introduces a new bill for Palestinian children



Rep. Betty McCollum

In the *How Are the Children?* curriculum, we emphasize the importance of advocating to elected officials on behalf of incarcerated Palestinian children. For the current session of Congress, Rep. Betty McCollum of Minnesota has introduced a new, powerfully worded piece of legislation – **HR 2407, the Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act**, a bill prohibiting U.S. taxpayer support of abuses of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system.

McCollum's eloquent statement to Congress can be found here: www.mccollum.house.gov/media/press-releases/mccollum-introduces-promoting-human-rights-palestinian-children-living-under.

This timely article by Global Ministries emphasizes that, in supporting this bill, *we too* are recognizing the special place that Jesus accorded vulnerable children: www.globalministries.org/advocate_for_the_rights_of_palestinian_children.

A host of advocacy resources for the new bill HR 2407 is provided by the *No Way to Treat a Child* campaign, a leading source of information and coordination for legislative advocacy on behalf of incarcerated Palestinian children: https://nwttac.dci-palestine.org/resources_on_hr2407.

We are presently updating the *How Are the Children?* curriculum to reflect the introduction of this new bill HR 2407, which replaces the earlier (and now-inactive) bill HR 4391.

Now available: DVD of *How Are the Children?* film & trailer



Our long-awaited DVD has arrived. The DVD is especially useful for viewing at home, presenting to groups, and educating friends and colleagues about the oppression of children in occupied Palestine. Also, it makes a great gift – perhaps for your extended family or next door neighbor.

Contents include:

- ▶ *How Are the Children?* DVD
 - *How Are the Children?* Trailer, 3 minutes, 44 seconds
 - *How Are the Children?* Part 1, 41 minutes
 - *How Are the Children?* Part 2, 29 minutes
- ▶ Class Handout document, suitable for photocopying
- ▶ Protective DVD case.

Cost of the DVD package is \$18, which includes shipping.

To order the DVD: [How Are the Children? DVD](#).

Presenting *How Are the Children?* when you have just one time slot

Many persons have asked how to present the video when they have available just one short time slot. The video is designed to be presented (ideally) in two one-hour sessions, for example two one-hour adult education classes. However, this is not always possible. For this article, we interviewed several persons who tried various approaches to shortening the content. The recommendations are divided between two types of audiences: those with lesser knowledge of the situation in Palestine and those with greater knowledge.

Audiences with relatively little understanding of Israeli occupation and detention of Palestinian children. These are audiences whose understanding of the situation in Palestine-Israel comes principally from media silence and misinformation.

These audiences will benefit from a dose of hard reality – stories of real Palestinian children and their families exposed to ill-treatment and trauma from Israeli military forces. For these audiences, we recommend showing (only) Part 1 of *How Are the Children?* Part 1, with its highly credible portrayal of individual Palestinian children, their families, and local social/medical workers, produces a visceral reaction in viewers who are seeing for the first time the ordeal of Palestinian children. Audiences typically experience cognitive dissonance – the powerful facts they learn seem to fly in the face of everything they’ve believed about Israel and Palestine. These viewers need time to process this new information before moving on and gathering even more information about the system of occupation which is provided in Part 2.



Photo: Moralist



*Palestinian children living in a refugee camp.
Photo: Anonymous*

Following the presentation of Part 1, avoid the temptation to answer the many questions which will arise. Instead, affirm the power of the questions and strongly encourage your audience to view for themselves Part 2 of the film. If possible, write down the questions and comments on a flip chart for discussion at a later date. Explain that, in Part 2 of the film, answers are provided for many of their questions. They will also discover specific steps they can take to help challenge Israel's system of child detentions, including study resources to learn more. Provide this address where they can find and view Part 2 of the film: www.HATCnow.org.

- If a full hour or more of time is available, you can show all of Part 1, including the *Detaining Dreams* short documentary.
- If a half hour of time is available, consider showing the movie trailer (3 minutes, 44 seconds) followed by the short documentary *Detaining Dreams* (included in Part 1 of the film). Include also the film segment immediately following *Detaining Dreams* which explains how Palestinian girls, too, are arrested and incarcerated. We members of the UCC PIN Steering Committee have shown *Detaining Dreams* on many occasions. It always evokes strong emotions. The content is highly credible and convincing, showing Palestinian children and adults as relatable, intelligent persons undergoing the trauma of Israel's state-sponsored system of arrest and detention.

This documentary can change hearts and minds. It opens people's minds to receiving more information about the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. You may be invited for a follow-up session not previously scheduled, so the entire *How Are the Children?* curriculum can be viewed!

- If less than a half-hour is available, consider showing just the film trailer (duration is 3 minutes, 44 seconds). Showing the trailer is an ideal way to promote the curriculum. It will spark interest about what's happening to the children. It will spark curiosity regarding the movement across religious denominations (and elsewhere) to challenge Israel's system of child detentions. Following our presentation of the trailer, pitch your request for a follow-up session(s).

Audiences who are aware of the situation in occupied Palestine. These are audiences who have learned about Israel's military occupation of Palestine through a combination of books, films and speakers, or who have participated in alternative ("responsible") travel to the West Bank or Gaza.

These audiences don't need to be convinced of the plight of Palestinian children living under occupation. For this audience, if scheduling does not permit showing both Part 1 and Part 2, we suggest showing Part 2 of *How Are the Children?* Viewers will benefit from knowing more about the role of international law and Israel's system of detaining and abusing Palestinian children. As well, they'll benefit from seeing the many opportunities (highlighted in Part 2) to advocate in defense of Palestinian children. Your audience will also appreciate learning that many other Christian denominations are also working to bring an end to the abuses.

A request. After you present the curriculum in any form, please let us know how it went. Use the simple reporting form at the bottom of this web page: www.HATCnow.org/info-for-presenters/.

What struck viewers the most about *How Are the Children?*

Here's what several presenters and viewers told us about the film's impact.



Photo: United Church of Christ

Clear parallels with abuse of immigrant children in the U.S. “What really struck me,” said Rev. Kimberlee Vasko of Lombard, Illinois, “are the parallels which Rev. Blackmon drew between militaristic police response to black children and families in the U.S. and Palestinian families in the West Bank. Also, as highlighted by Rev. McGrail, how immigrant children in the U.S. and Palestinian children living in the West Bank are both separated from their families through government-sponsored policy.”

The role of international law. “Viewers were most interested in the role of international law, especially the rights of detained children under international law and Israel’s legal obligations to protect children,” reports Rev. Diane Dulin of Hillsboro, Oregon. “It really resonated with people when they learned Israel routinely violates the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international laws, with children as the victims.”

How come we’ve never heard about this? Rev. Catherine Alder of Portland, Oregon reports “Audience members were surprised – even shocked – they had not previously heard about this systematic mistreatment of Palestinian children. They questioned how our U.S. media could be silent for so long on this clear and pressing humanitarian issue.”

Israeli training of U.S. police “Members of our audience were aghast to learn that U.S. police forces are trained in Israel,” reports John Berg of Lynnwood, Washington. “This issue of militarized police is a sensitive issue in the Seattle area, as ICE is arresting and detaining many hundreds of vulnerable children and families and using SeaTac airport to transport them to other countries.”

Two separate legal systems. “Several audience members struggled to understand how Israel can impose two different legal systems, one of which discriminates so blatantly against Palestinian citizens,” explains Tom Beilman in Madison, Wisconsin. “They were distressed to learn about this situation, comparing it to the days of apartheid in South Africa.”

Abuse of children. Many viewers were especially struck by the abuses they saw portrayed in the film. Several nurses and social workers remarked that such abuse is profoundly damaging to the children, with impacts lasting for a lifetime.

UCC leaders speaking prophetically about this issue. We have received consistent positive feedback regarding the UCC leaders featured in the film. Several viewers told us they had not previously seen these leaders of the United Church of Christ. They were proud to see our national leaders speak so eloquently and prophetically on this issue.