

THE LAND OF ISRAEL

YOU WILL NEED:

- Basket
- Brown felt underlay
- Magnetic Map of The Land of Israel
- Magnetic names – Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem
- Flag to represent Nazareth - Flame
- Flag to represent Bethlehem - Star
- Flag to represent Jerusalem - Cross
- Small box to place flags and magnetic names in

PREPARATION - Invite the children to enter the storytelling space, have them seated in a semi-circle, ready to listen to the story. Ensure that all materials are prepared in a basket.

TELLING THE STORY - Story is a key part of our faith tradition. Young children, with their capacity for intuitive learning, are particularly able to find meaning through story.

Begin by saying...

This map will help us to understand where Jesus lived and walked. If we went up high and looked down over this land, this is what we would see. This story will help us think about the land of Israel. The land of Israel is where Jesus was born and lived his life.

Use your hand and point to each of the blue seas and river as you say...

The seas and rivers are blue.

Place the magnetic names on the seas as you say...

This sea is called the Mediterranean Sea.

This sea is called the Sea of Galilee.

This sea is called the Dead Sea.

Use your hand and point to the river as you say...

There is a river that flows between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

Use your hand and point to the sea, moving along the river, to the opposite sea as you say...

You can go from one sea, along the river, to another sea.

Place the magnetic name on the river as you say...

This river is called the Jordan River.

Use your hand and point to each of the two green land masses as you say...

Some of the land on this map is green.

Use your hand and point to each of the yellow and brown land masses as you say...

On the other side of the river, it is yellow and brown. It is very rocky and dry like a desert on this side.

Hold up three fingers over the top of the map as you say...

There are three places on this map that are very important in Jesus' life.

Place the magnetic name of Nazareth on top of the word Nazareth on the map as you say...

The first place is Nazareth.

Place the flag with the flame next to the magnetic name of Nazareth and say...

We have a flame to represent the important story that happened in the town of Nazareth. The angel came to Mary to tell her she would be having a baby boy, Jesus. She asked "How?" the angel said by the power of the Holy Spirit. The red flame is a sign of the Holy Spirit.

Place the magnetic name of Bethlehem on top of the word Bethlehem on the map as you say...

The second place is Bethlehem.

Place the flag with the star next to the magnetic name of Bethlehem and say...

We have a star to represent the important story that happened in the town of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph had to travel here, up in the hill country, for a census. This is where Jesus was born. We have a yellow star to mark this place. It was the place where a star appeared in the sky.

Place the magnetic name of Jerusalem on top of the word Jerusalem on the map as you say...

The third place is Jerusalem.

Place the flag with the cross next to the magnetic name of Jerusalem and say...

We have a cross to represent the important story that happened in the town of Jerusalem. This is the most important place for people who believe in Jesus. This is where Jesus died and rose again. Our flag is a cross.

WONDERING - Following the story, "I wonder" statements engage children with the story and invite reflection. Wondering together teaches the art of dialogue, of listening to others, accepting and learning from others' ideas and contributions.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder...

- if you have been to a special place where you were able to see the sea or river
- why the flame represents Nazareth
- why the star represents Bethlehem
- why the cross represents Jerusalem
- if we can travel to any of these places today
- if people can travel to any of these places today

EXPLORING - Provide an opportunity for individual/small group exploration in order to respond to the story. This provides students with time to focus on and explore the story or aspects of it, which have significance for them. For this reason, students choose from a variety of materials and types of work. This is an opportunity for students to respond to what they have heard in whatever way they choose, it should be seen as a prayerful opportunity for dialogue between the student and God. The 'work' itself is often an expression of the child's experience or feelings. Children may share their 'work' only if they wish.

PRAYER - Conclude the session with prayer. Children come closer to God through the experience of prayer. Teachers help students to pray by praying with them, providing a variety of prayer experiences. These may include laying of hands over students' works, spontaneous prayer, prayer related to the Scripture, prayers found in KWL, informal or formal prayers, or a hymn.