

Explaining the Palestinian crisis to children

1) From: <https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2021/05/explaining-palestine-to-a-9-year-old/>

- Palestine is like a family who have been living in a home for generations, but then some other group of people (Zionists) came over and took their homes, claiming their great-grandparents used to live there, then they told them they could basically live in the basement or a small bathroom. Not only that, but Palestinians could not move out of that basement without permission, and the Israeli Zionists controlled when and how the Palestinians could get food and water. They also occasionally banged loudly on their doors or threatened them with violence. They occasionally threw bombs and killed some of them. The Palestinians sometimes tried to get out, but risked their lives each time. Sometimes they threw stones out of anger, but they had few real weapons to defend or attack. If they ever managed to get out, all the way out the front door, they might never be able to get back in again—definitely not without permission from the new owner.

That's basically the very abstract idea. Missing lots of nuance, of course.

- I also felt the need to mention the role of English colonization in the region and how the English gifted Palestinian land to Zionist Jews. My kid knows already about the Holocaust. It was one of the worst tragedies of human history against Jews. Possibly the worst genocide. But I don't believe Israel exists because of the Holocaust, simply because Zionism predates it. The Balfour Declaration promising Palestinian land to Jewish people was in 1917, nearly 40 years before Hitler and the Holocaust.

I also explained to my daughter the parallels between this situation and the colonization of America and Australia. The original inhabitants were killed and eventually relegated to small pieces of land they could control (in the United States, at least, reservations).

- Why Jerusalem Matters

And now ... the religious significance of Jerusalem. First, Jesus was born in Palestine. Even though of course many Jewish prophets are also from the region, I think the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem alone and the fact Jerusalem is a site of pilgrimage for Christians is the most significant thing.

Moreover, before Muslims took over the Kaaba in Mecca during the Prophet Muhammad's time, they prayed by facing towards what is now the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. This is the third holiest site in Islam. Eventually, the Kaaba became the most holy site and Muslims pray towards it and do pilgrimage there. But Jerusalem was the first. During the Prophet Muhammad's time there was a miracle (Israa and Mi'raj) involving him traveling overnight to Jerusalem and praying with Abraham and other prophets.

2) From:

<https://babesabouttown.com/2021/05/talk-to-our-children-about-palestine/>

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Here's a very simple framework for how to talk to our children about Palestine (and other big topics).

What do we know? Find out what they know so far. Explain what you know about the situation, sticking to basic facts from trusted sources.

How do we feel? Encourage them to share their feelings. Talk about your own emotional response too, acknowledging how this might be shaped by your values, personal relationships, life experience or other biases.

What can we learn? Talk about what they understand and remember that you are both still learning. Discuss universal themes like 'Every person deserves a home' and 'Violence harms everyone'. Encourage questions and don't offer easy answers. Help them engage and empathise through stories from the region.

What can we do? Share ideas about simple things you can do e.g. read books and watch movies to understand better, have another conversation, make a sign, support friends who are hurting, donate to families in urgent need. Teach your child that every action creates ripples that can be felt around the world. So, focus on doing small things that promote kindness and common ground.

3) From:

<https://www.schoolshouldbe.com/post/we-cannot-champion-diversity-inclusion-in-schools-if-we-do-not-champion-the-history-of-palestine>

Share the history of Palestine and what it was like pre-1948 – representation is everything. It can be difficult to find these images online . . . students associate protest, poverty, violence and rubble to name but a few things, with Palestine. But, its history is so much richer than that and the beautiful architecture, the people, the culture and place can make great research projects, interesting discussions and dispel prejudices and inaccuracies that are in constant circulation about Palestine. There are also websites dedicated to lessons and resources about Palestine – share them, use them and create schemes of work around them.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights