



# OUR HOMELAND

Israel is the home of the Jewish people. The holiest places in the world for Jews—the places that help Jews feel close to God—are in Israel. There are also beaches, zoos, schools, parks, and museums in Israel.

**What do you think it would be like to visit Israel? Why?**

## Let's Discover Israel

### CORE CONCEPT

Israel is the ancient and modern homeland of the Jewish people.

### TEACHING OBJECTIVES

**Students will:**

1. Explain the Biblical and historical Jewish connection to the Land of Israel.
2. Describe the impact of the founding of the state of Israel.
3. Identify Hebrew as the main language of Israel.

### Getting Started

Ask students, “What do you like best about being home?” (*My family is there; I belong there; my things are there.*) Explain that Israel is also our home. Read the opening paragraph and ask the question on page 1. (*Visiting Israel would be fun; would make me feel close to God; would make me feel close to my Jewish family; would help me learn to speak Hebrew.*) Have any students visited Israel? Ask them to share their experiences.



### Using the Photograph

The girl in the photograph is holding up an Israeli flag. Tell students that this flag is a symbol of Israel. Ask, “How do you think the girl feels about her country?” (*She loves her country; she is waving the flag proudly.*) Challenge students to find three other Israeli flags in this folder. (*One more flag at the top of page 1; at least four flags at the bottom of page 3.*)



### Hands-on Activity

**Finding Israel on the Map:** Point to Israel on a world map or globe. Can your students find the United States? Ask, “How would you get to Israel? Can you walk there?” (*No, you need to travel over the ocean.*) Have a competition to see which student can guess how many hours it would take to fly to Israel. (*Answers will vary: about 11 hours from New York; about 14 hours from Los Angeles.*)

## WORDS TO KNOW

**ERETZ YISRAEL** Hebrew for “the Land of Israel”

**Holy Temple** the spiritual center for all Jews in ancient times, built by King Solomon

## A Second Home

To explore the notion of feeling comfortable in a place, help students brainstorm places that feel like a second home. Ask them to think about how it feels to visit the home of a close friend or relative, or a favorite vacation spot. (*Comfortable; familiar; warm; cozy.*) Where else do they feel this way? (*Grandma’s house; at my neighbor’s home; in my tree house.*) Have students draw their home and a place that feels like a second home.



## Let’s Talk About It

**The Land of Israel:** Ask students, “Who lives in your home?” (*Me, my parents, other family members.*) “Who do you see at your second home?” (*Friends, grandparents, or other family members.*) “How do you feel connected to these people?” (*They are my friends and relatives.*) Read the text. Help students understand how ERETZ YISRAEL might feel like a home to anyone who is Jewish. We are all connected to the Jews who once lived in ERETZ YISRAEL and shared holy places there, like the Holy Temple.



## Making Connections

**The Synagogue:** Read the caption under the photograph. Ask students where they can celebrate Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. (*At home; in the temple or synagogue; at a friend or relative’s house.*) Ask, “How is a temple or synagogue like the Holy Temple? How is it different?” Make a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles on the board to show similarities and differences. (*Similarities: both are holy places; both are buildings where Jews worship God. Differences: the Holy Temple existed long ago, in Jerusalem; temples and synagogues can be found in many places today. In fact, your students may be learning in one right now!*)

## A Second Home

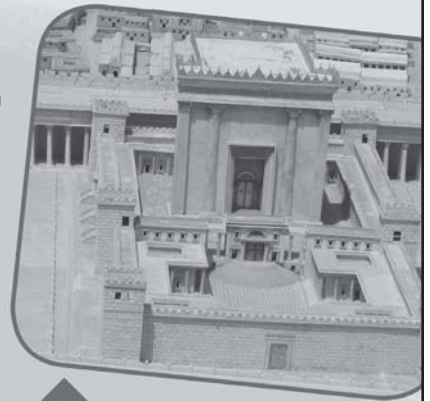
1 Draw a picture of your home.

2 Draw a place you love to visit, a place that feels like a second home.

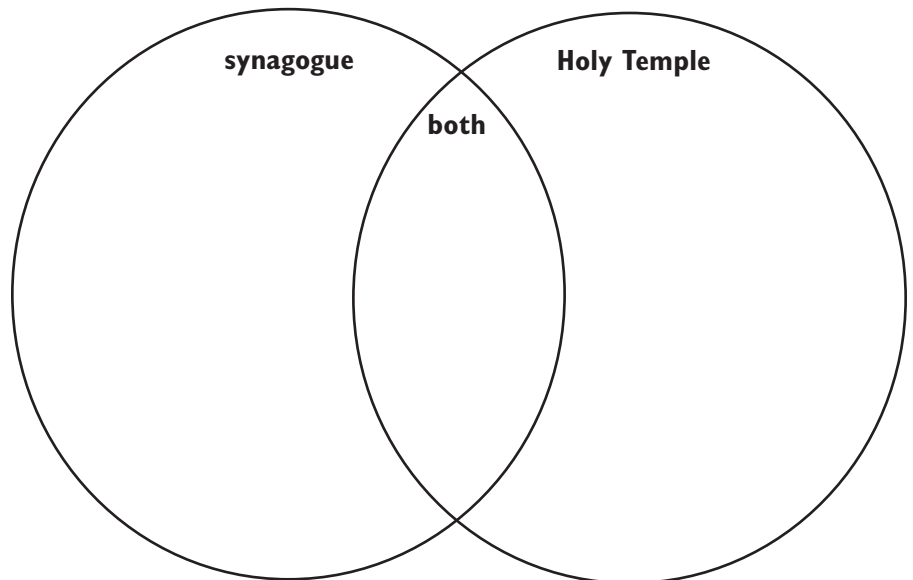
## The Land of Israel

The Bible teaches about a time when *all* Jews lived in the Land of Israel—**ERETZ YISRAEL**. It also teaches that King Solomon built the **Holy Temple** in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.

The Jewish people lived in Israel for more than 1,000 years. When the Temple was destroyed by Israel’s enemies, and the Jews no longer ruled their land, most of them moved to other countries.



This is a model of the Temple. Jews from all over Israel went to the Temple on Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Where can you celebrate those holidays?



Venn diagram

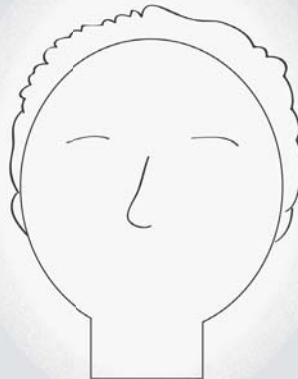
## Our Hopes and Prayers

For almost 2,000 years, our people hoped and prayed that we could rebuild our **homeland**. In 1948, we finally were able to start building a new Jewish state in ERETZ YISRAEL. Many Jews returned to live there.

Every spring, on the fifth day of the Jewish month of Iyar, we celebrate Israel's birthday. The holiday is called Israel's Independence Day, or **YOM HA'ATZMA'UT**.

Think of a time when you were away from home and missed your family. Fill in the first face to show how you felt. Fill in the second face to show how you felt when you returned home.

Which face shows how you think our people felt when they returned to our homeland. Why?



On YOM HA'ATZMA'UT, Jews around the world march in parades and sing Israel's national anthem, "HATIKVAH," The Hope. Why do you think Israel's anthem has this name?

## WORDS TO KNOW

**homeland** people's country; a person's birthplace

**YOM HA'ATZMA'UT** Hebrew for "Day of Independence," Israel's birthday, the day Israel became a Jewish state

**"HATIKVAH"** Hebrew for "The Hope," Israel's national anthem

## Our Hopes and Prayers

Read the text. Ask students, "What special things do you do on your birthday?" (*Have a party; eat cake; sing "Happy Birthday."*) "How does a country like the United States celebrate its birthday or Independence Day?" (*Fireworks; parades; concerts.*) Then ask, "How can we celebrate YOM HA'ATZMA'UT?" (*Listen to Israeli music; decorate Israeli flags; eat Israeli food; have parades.*)



## Let's Talk About It

Have students illustrate the two faces. Ask, "How did you feel when you were away from home and missed your family?" (*Sad, lonely.*) "How did you feel when you returned home?" (*Happy, excited.*) "Which face shows how you think our people felt when they returned to our homeland? Why?" (*The happy face; Jews were excited to come "home" to ERETZ YISRAEL after almost 2,000 years away.*) Invite students to show these feelings with their own faces or even with their bodies.



## Hands-on Activity

**"HATIKVAH"** Teach students to sing "HATIKVAH." You can hear it sung at [www.behrmanhouse.com/jam](http://www.behrmanhouse.com/jam). Choose "Yom Ha'atzma'ut," and then click on the song. Tell students that "HATIKVAH" means "The Hope." Ask, "Why do you think Israel's national anthem has this name?" (*For a long time, Jews hoped to return to ERETZ YISRAEL; Jews had hope even when they were living away from Israel.*)



## Arts and Crafts

**YOM HA'ATZMA'UT Parade Float:** Have students build a model float for a YOM HA'ATZMA'UT parade. You can build it as a class project or work in groups. Have students cover a shoebox in white paper, and then decorate their floats by drawing pictures related to ERETZ YISRAEL or by pasting on pictures from newspapers, magazines, or the Internet. (*Pictures might include the Israeli flag; the number 1948; Jews praying; beaches; Hebrew letters.*) When the floats are finished, organize a class parade!

## WORDS TO KNOW

**Hebrew** the language of the Jewish people, the Bible, prayer, and modern Israel



### Using the Photograph

Tell students that Israeli children read some of the same stories we do. The book on the left is *Peter v'haZe'ev, Peter and the Wolf*. The book on the right is *Ami v'Tami*. These are the Hebrew names for Hansel and Gretel! Ask students, "What can you buy in the third place?" (A *kippah*—plural: *kippot*—the head covering Jews wear when they pray.) The large Hebrew words in the top photograph indicate that this is a digital photography booth. (Students should circle the top and underline the middle photograph.)

### Hebrew Show and Tell

Ask your education director if your school or synagogue library has Hebrew books or games you can show your students. If not, find out how you can purchase some, particularly ones made specifically for children. You may also wish to ask your students or their parents if any of them have Hebrew books, newspapers, games, or Israeli music at home that they can bring in to share with the class.



### Hands-on Activity

**Scavenger Hunt:** Organize a 15-minute scavenger hunt through the synagogue (or classroom) to find Hebrew writing. If possible, take the class to different rooms in the synagogue, such as the sanctuary, the lobby, and various classrooms. Which room has the most Hebrew? If a camera is available, help students photograph their Hebrew discoveries.

### Hebrew

**Hebrew** is the language of the Jewish people. The Bible is written in Hebrew, and we recite prayers in Hebrew. Hebrew is also the main language of Israel.

Underline the store where you can buy a book.

**Circle** the place where you can take a picture of yourself.

What can you buy in the third place? a Kippah



### For the Family

Read or tell a Bible story set in the Land of Israel. Also, you can learn the Hebrew alphabet at [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com). Select "Families," then "Click-n-Read Hebrew at Home."



### For the Family

Photocopy a simple retelling of a Bible story set in the Land of Israel for parents to read to their children. Try to choose a story with both male and female characters. Send the story and this *Let's Discover Israel* folder home with students.