“Jerusalem, Forever Ours” (Pages 12-15)
Lesson Plan by Abigail Uhrman

The article about Jerusalem, תי转化 — the City of Peace, recounts the story of the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967. In this lesson, students will study both a liturgical text and a popular song to discover the centrality of Jerusalem to Judaism and to help them explore their own relationship to the city.

Concepts and Objectives
- Students will examine their own relationship and the relationship of the Jewish people to Jerusalem.
- Students will explore Jerusalem’s centrality to Judaism and in Jewish life.

Key Quotes and Questions
“...Avraham recognized the holiness of the site and said, ‘This is the place where God is seen.’”
What do you think Avraham meant in describing the place he was in as a place where “God is seen”?
What constitutes a place where “God is seen”? Are there places in your life where “God is seen”? Where?

“The Jewish people were then scattered amongst the nations, but we always remembered Jerusalem.”
In what ways do the Jewish people remember Jerusalem? (pray facing Jerusalem, break a glass at a wedding, etc.)
Why do you think remembering Jerusalem is particularly important to the Jewish people?
How does remembering Jerusalem affect the cohesion of the Jewish people?

“Surrounded by exhausted paratroopers who were crying tears of joy, Rabbi Goren recited a blessing and blew a long, powerful blast of the shofar.”
Why do you think Rabbi Goren chose to mark the moment by reciting a blessing and blowing the shofar? What other ways would you choose to mark such a moment?

What blessing do you think Rabbi Goren recited? (Sheheheyanu)

Motivation and Development
1. Choose a segment of the article and ask the students to respond to the events as if they were soldiers during the Six Day War. Try a facilitated psychodrama in which the teacher asks guiding questions and the students respond to the questions by assuming the identity of the character in the article and writing and/or performing a dramatic monologue. For example, you might ask:

How does it feel to know that the Old City of Jerusalem is in enemy hands?
How does it feel to be fighting for the reunification of Jerusalem?

What are you thinking when you stand next to Rabbi Goren as he recites the blessing and blows the shofar (see the photo in the magazine on page 15)?

What is your initial reaction when you see the Kotel for the first time?

An alternative is for the students to write the diary entry of a soldier during the siege of Jerusalem.

2. Following this activity, ask the students to share their responses.

What kind of emotions do you think the soldiers experienced? How do you think it felt to see the Kotel for the first time?
If you have been to the Kotel, how did you feel the first time you saw it? How do you think you would feel now that you have learned the recent history of the Kotel?
Why do you think capturing the Old City was so powerful and significant?

3. Examine the sources that relate to Jerusalem. Explain that the theme of Jerusalem pervades Jewish sources, history, culture, and artistic expression and encompasses strong religious, emotional, and historical connections. The two examples highlighted are from prayer and popular music. Focus the discussion on the following questions:

How is Jerusalem portrayed in these sources?
According to the texts, why is Jerusalem important to the Jewish people?

4. Conclude the lesson by introducing the terms ירושלים השלוала and ירושלים השלמה, the vision and dream of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem that exists in reality. Ask the students if these two ideas of Jerusalem are similar or different and in what ways. Have the students share their dreams and wishes for Jerusalem to help bridge the gap between ירושלים השלוала and ירושלים השלמה. Some options are:

A. Write a note to put in the Kotel that contains your prayer for Jerusalem. Find someone in your community traveling to Israel to deliver the notes in person.

B. On a large piece of butcher paper or in journals, ask the students to draw a picture or write a paragraph that shares their hopes for Jerusalem. Hang the finished banner on the eastern wall of your school’s prayer space.
C. Ask the students to think of popular songs about peace. Are any of these images of peace what you want for Jerusalem? What would you change? What would you keep?

**JEWISH TEXTS**

**Weekday Amidah**

Have mercy, Lord, and return to Jerusalem, Your city. May Your presence dwell there as You have promised. Build it now, in our days and for all time. Re-establish there the majesty of David, Your servant. Praised are You, Lord who rebuilds Jerusalem.

What is asked for in this prayer?

What does it mean for God’s presence to dwell in Jerusalem? What would that look like? Feel like?

Do you see the fulfillment of this prayer in our days? How? If you do see the fulfillment of this prayer, what exactly are you asking for when you say this tefillah?

“Jerusalem, the Golden City,” by Naomi Shemer

Jerusalem of gold, of copper, and of light
Behold, I am a harp for all your songs...

Above is the chorus to the song. Visit www.babaganewz.com for a printable version of the complete lyrics in both Hebrew and English.

The lyrics quoted here and on our web site for Yerushalayim Shel Zahav (Jerusalem, the Golden City) are used with permission. Music and original words by Naomi Shemer-Sapir © 1967 (renewed) Chappell & Co., Ltd. All rights in the U.S. and Canada administered by Chappell & Co. All rights reserved. Lyrics reprinted with the permission of Warner Bros. Publications, Miami, FL 33014.

What images are used to describe Jerusalem in this song?

What emotions is Shemer trying to convey?

What relationship between herself and Jerusalem is Shemer describing? Between the Jewish people and Jerusalem?

This song was written in May 1967, only three weeks before the reunification of Jerusalem. The final stanza was added after the reunification. Ask students to compare the second and fourth stanzas of the song and to consider the images that each presents.

**FOLLOW-UP AND ENRICHMENT:**

1. Explain that wherever Jews pray they face Jerusalem. Ask the students why they think Jews pray facing Jerusalem. Following the discussion, have the students design their own Mizrach signs. They may use felt, tissue paper, poster board, or the media of your choice.


3. Read the poem “Tourists” by Yehuda Amichai (found in any anthology of his work or at http://www.csuohio.edu/tagar/tourists.htm.) Ask the following questions:

   Why is Amichai upset in this poem?

   What is Amichai’s wish?

   Do you agree with Amichai’s message? Why or why not?

4. Encourage your students to read stories about Jerusalem. A good anthology is *Next Year in Jerusalem: 3000 Years of Jewish Stories* by Howard Schwartz, available from the Baba Bookz book club.

**RELATED WEB SITES/ADDITIONAL SOURCES**

Background to Naomi Shemer’s song

www.jerusalemofgold.co.il

See a real-time picture of the Kotel

www.aish.com/wallcam

**VOCABULARY FOR YOUR STUDENTS**

**Army**)

soldier

**Wall**

wall

**Gold**

gold

**BONUS PULLOUT POSTER:**

Encourage your students to carefully remove the poster in the center of the magazine. The photo of Jerusalem can be used as a beautiful decoration in the sukkah, classroom, or home.