

# Session 4

## Challenges for children in the region



**'Buildings not far from my house were hit at least with 20 airstrikes... it was terrifying for the kids. My eldest didn't leave my side. I could hear her throbbing heartbeats all night.'**

Rana Abdallah, Women's Affairs Center in Gaza (taken from [www.bit.ly/3eFJk1m](http://www.bit.ly/3eFJk1m))

Some walls keep us safe and warm, but others divide and separate people and can stop freedom of movement. In the West Bank there is a 'wall of separation'. This wall was built by the Israeli government who felt that it was needed to protect their communities from Palestinians on the other side who might threaten them. It helps Israeli families feel safer. Some of it is an 8-metre-high concrete wall, some of it is a fence. Palestinians living near to the wall report that it has separated them from their families. It stops them from getting to work or to land that they own or to schools or hospitals. As you will see from the pictures, it has been decorated on the Palestinian side with prayers and graffiti.



Freedom of movement is a big challenge for Palestinians living in occupied territory. A check point is a barrier staffed by the Israeli Military Police, the Israel Border Police, or other soldiers to prevent those who might wish to do harm to Israel from crossing into those areas from areas of OPT. Palestinians have to show a pass to get through. There are 593 checkpoints and roadblocks scattered throughout the West Bank (OCHA 2020) and these are used by more than 100,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank every day, mainly to get to work or school.

148 girls and boys attend Cordoba Primary School in Hebron. It is set in part of the town controlled by the Israeli army and 500 Israelis have built five settlements there. Every day the children pass through checkpoints controlled by soldiers, sometimes being searched in order to get to school. Sometimes the children feel threatened and attendance at school can be affected by danger and fear. The fear of violence can also lead to poor concentration and lower marks in class. (Taken from Razor Wire and Olive Branches case study 2)

### Access to water

Because of controls on access to water supplies, and regulations which mean that they cannot dig wells without a permit, Palestinians rely on Israel for their water supply. On average, West Bank Palestinians have access to about 73 litres each per day for domestic use and personal hygiene. This is much lower than the 100 litres minimum recommended by the World Health Organization. In some areas of the OPT, people survive on as little as 20 litres. Palestinian villagers depend on water delivered by truck. It can be expensive, unreliable, and impure, which can especially impact the poorest people. In some parts water is only received once every 15 days! Black-and-white water tanks can be seen on the roofs of Palestinian homes across West Bank cities and towns. These are used during water shortages or stoppages.



Such tanks are rarely seen in the neighbouring Israeli settlements because water is always available and never shut off because of 'shortages'. There is always enough water for their needs and for activities such as swimming and washing the car. Their clean water supply provides three times as much as for Palestinians – 250 litres per day. ([www.bit.ly/3ShGcGH](http://www.bit.ly/3ShGcGH))



## Bible Link Psalm 91:2

*I will say to the Lord, "You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God, and I trust you".*

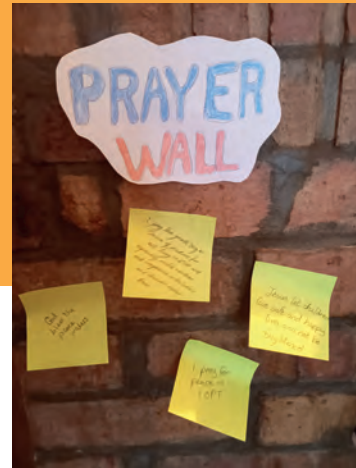
I wonder what it means to trust in God.

## Prayer

Dear God, help us to recognise and appreciate the freedom we enjoy in this country, that we can walk to school relatively safely and easily and access hot and cold running water 24/7. We pray for things in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory to change so that people can live side by side in peace and share resources fairly. Amen.

## Active Prayer

Graffiti prayer wall. By either using some brick patterned paper, or using sponges, paint the outline of a brick wall on to a large piece of paper and stick it on to a wall. Use this as a prayer wall. Ask the children to write or draw prayers about living in peace and loving one another direct onto the wall or on post-it notes and stick them to the wall or board.



## Game

### Fill the bucket

You will need two buckets and paper cups per team. Sit each team down in a straight line, one behind the other, with the last person in the line turning so the last two players are back-to-back. Put one full bucket of water in front of the first person in the team and an empty second bucket in front of the last player. Give the first player an empty cup. They dip the cup into the full bucket of water and pass it over their head backwards to the next child. The second child then passes it over their head to the third child and so on, until it reaches the last child who then empties the water into the empty bucket. The cup is then passed back down the row to the first child and the whole process is repeated. The first team to fill their bucket wins. For a shorter game set a time limit and the team that has collected the most water in the time wins. Remember to have a mop ready for spillages, or to play the game outdoors.



## Greta Wonders...

- In which places do you feel most safe?
- What fears or worries do you have? What helps you to feel less afraid?
- How would you feel if you had a limited supply of water, yet the people across the street from you had an abundant supply of water or vice versa?

## Activity

Make some stress balls. You need balloons, flour or cornflour, a funnel, black Sharpie pens. Stretch the opening of the balloon over the end of the funnel. Scoop the flour into it and shake it down until it fills the balloon. Tie a knot in the end of the balloon. With the black Sharpie, draw a face on it. Whenever things get stressful, or difficult, giving the balloon a squeeze can help relieve some of the tension.

## Action Point

The World Health Organisation recommends individual water usage per day is 100 litres! In Britain we use 150 litres per day. Israelis use over 250 litres per day, Palestinians use 70 litres per day and Palestinians in the Jordan Valley use 20 litres per day.

How much water do you use? A litre is the size of a medium sized carton of milk. Guess how many litres of water you use in a week.

List all the things you use water for in a day, eg showering, bathing, washing up, flushing the toilet, cleaning your teeth, food, and drink etc.

If there was a water shortage, what do you think you could happily manage without? Can you put them in order of importance?

