

# Session 5

## Jubilee and Peacemakers



2022 marked a special year of Jubilee in several ways – Our late Queen Elizabeth II celebrated 70 years on the throne; the United Reformed Church celebrated 50 years since its formation; and it was a special year for *Commitment for Life*, which has been going for 30 years. In the Bible, the word Jubilee – a celebration every fifty years – reminds us that we worship and follow a God who wants to bring freedom and peace.

### The Galilean Flavour of Business for Peace

In the Autumn of 2019, a group of people went on an educational visit from the United Reformed Church to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While they were there, they visited Sindyanna, which is near Cana in Galilee.

Sindyanna was founded in 1996. It is the only fair trade olive oil producer in Israel. The business is a female-led non-profit business that promotes ‘business for peace’ and fair trade in Israel. It does this by selling Arab producers’ olive oil and other products internationally, paying the farmers and workers a fair wage for their goods. The money the business makes is put into educating Arab women. Its work aims to bring people together and to support and encourage organic and eco-friendly farming. It has a visitor centre, which welcomes tourists from abroad as well as Israelis. It is staffed by both Arab and Jewish women who all believe in living together in peace. They work side by side with skill, care, and a passion for what they do. You can try Sindyanna soap by contacting *Commitment for Life*, or see a full product range at [www.sindyanna.com](http://www.sindyanna.com).



### Learning together at Oasis of Peace (Wahat al-Salam or Neve Shalom)

Often, even within Israel, Jewish children and Arab children don’t get to meet or play together. Oasis of Peace is a cooperative village set up by Israeli Jews and Arabs in an attempt to show that two peoples can live side by side peacefully and that working together and learning about each other is the best way towards peace. There is a school for all the children and they learn together to speak each other’s language, to understand each other’s culture and religion, and to do all the usual school subjects and extra curricular activities together. On their website you can see interviews with three children: Ya’ara Zer (9 ½), Aya Hamdan (10) and Yoni Zer (7) [www.bit.ly/3CKfikG](http://www.bit.ly/3CKfikG) They were asked what was special about learning in a school with Arabs and Jews together:

**Yoni:** I love making peace!

**Ya’ara:** I really love our school, because I love peace. I think it is really nice that we Arabs and Jews learn all together.

I can tell you, a lot of people try to make peace, but they do it the wrong way. You can’t use force to make peace; you have to be sensitive and ask first. Should I be prime minister, you ask? A lot of people have told me that. I think I would like to try to be prime minister one day, and to make peace.

**Aya:** In our school, you can make more friends, get to know a bit more about the world. I get along with just about everyone. We learn that people have all kinds of religions – it is not just ours. And some of the things we learn are outside the regular lessons. We learn how to behave around other people, for example, ones who speak a different language and stuff like that.

When I am big, I want to be a teacher – to work with children – or to be prime minister, so I can make peace.

Perhaps one day all Israeli and Palestinian children will be able to learn side by side and understand each other.



## Bible Link Leviticus 25:10

*Make the fiftieth year a special year. Announce freedom for all the people living in your country. This time will be called Jubilee.*

*Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

2022 was the URC's Jubilee year and reminded us that we are all called to be peacemakers. Who needs setting free? How can you be a peacemaker?

## Prayer

Dear God, we know that you are a God of celebration, peace, and love. We pray that all people living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory will find ways to break down the barriers that separate them so that they may live together in peace side by side. May this begin with the children. Amen.

## Active Prayer Bubble Prayers

You will need small pots of bubbles. God loves you and wants to take care of you. Tell God something that you are worried about or are fearful about and ask God to help you. Blow the bubbles and burst the bubbles as a sign that you are giving your worry and fear to God. Blow some more bubbles, thinking about your own prayers for IOPT.

## Game

Matkot – a popular paddleball game played in Israel, similar to beach tennis. It is often referred to by Israelis as their national beach sport. There are no rules! The goal is to hit a rubber ball (similar to a squash ball) with a racket from one player to the other as many times as they can without dropping it. It's usually played between two players but can be played with more. It's fun to play a game which is cooperative instead of competitive, with everyone on the same team!



## Greta Wonders...

- Why do people build walls? Do you think walls are good things or bad things?
- What other ways can we build 'peace' between ourselves and others and overcome our differences, rather than building barriers between us?
- Is it easy to be a peacemaker? Why do you think people do it?

## Activity

Make a Dove of Peace. A dove has been used for thousands of years as the universal sign for peace. You need: paper plate, template, scissors, marker pen, glue, or stapler. Using the scissors, cut out the body of the dove while making sure the tail is lined up against the edge of the plate. When cutting out the wings, ensure they are lined up with the rimmed edge for texture. Stick or staple the wings on to the body. Using coloured pens, add a beak and eye. Write on the dove **'Peace is .....**' and finish the sentence in your own words. (*Christian Aid*)



## Action Point

Look up some famous walls that have been built over the years, for example the Berlin Wall, Hadrian's Wall, the Great Wall of China, peace walls in Northern Ireland, the Separation Wall in Bethlehem and any other walls you know of. When and why were these walls built? Are these walls still standing today? Build a wall out of boxes and use paints or Sharpies to cover it with graffiti. Then, once finished, have fun in knocking the wall down and celebrating the freedom that it brings!

