

The GlobalChurch Project
www.theglobalchurchproject.com



Jack Sara

Local Church Small Group Resource

This resource is designed to help your small group discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways for understanding the mission of the church. Questions are organized in themes. Consider choosing the themes appropriate to your small group context. You don't need to cover all the questions. Allow for a time of response.

Small Group Preparation:

- Video: Jack Sara, 36 minutes.
- Scripture: Matthew 5:9 and Matthew 5:43–48.
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- **Personal Journey to Follow & Serve Christ**
- **Life in Palestine**
- **Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) & Palestinian Christianity**
- **Challenges Facing the Church Today**
- **The Mission of God and of His Church**
- **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice**
- **Seeing the Gospels**

Beginning the conversation

Consider the questions suggested below to start the conversation for your small group. They'll consolidate the content of the video, after you've viewed it.

1. What were the major themes in Jack Sara's responses?
2. How does Jack Sara describe Palestinian Christianity?
3. Discuss the difficulties of the content. What was difficult to understand? Was there anything you would like to clarify with the group?
4. Theological method: How is Jack Sara's theology informed and shaped by his practical ministry and cultural context? What approaches does he take in understanding God in the context of his day-to-day experiences and leadership of a Bible college?

Going deeper

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with Jack Sara's theology. Consider the questions that respond to the issues raised in your preliminary discussion.

1. **Personal Journey to Follow & Serve Christ:** Discuss the key themes that emerge in Jack Sara's story of coming to follow and serve Christ. How does he describe the way the Spirit was working in his life?
2. **Life in Palestine:** How does Jack Sara describe life for the Palestinian people during the First Intifada? (The First Intifada was the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, from 1987 to 1993).
3. **Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) & Palestinian Christianity:** Discuss Jack Sara's passion for mobilizing Palestinian Christians and his enthusiasm for mission among Palestinians and Arabs (and throughout the Middle East). How have those passions shaped his church planting and pastoral and Bible college ministries?
4. **Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) & Palestinian Christianity:** Jack Sara says that instead of thinking only about "church" or "para-church" he thinks about "the Kingdom." He thinks about "expanding the Kingdom of God." What does he mean?
5. **Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) & Palestinian Christianity:** What courses and programs does Bethlehem Bible College offer? What's the purpose of these courses and programs? How does mission shape these courses and programs? How does the Palestinian context shape what this college offers?
6. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** What does Jack Sara name as some of the great challenges facing the church today?
7. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** Why have churches grown "wider but not deeper"?
8. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** According to Jack Sara, why do churches become isolated from the world?
9. **The Mission of God and of His Church:** How does Jack Sara describe the mission of the church?
10. **The Mission of God and of His Church:** How does mission start within us, and then spread out locally, and then globally? Jack Sara uses the word *glocal*. This word combines *local* mission and *global* mission. How does Jack Sara describe *glocal* mission?
11. **The Mission of God and of His Church:** Why does Jack Sara see all Christians as missionaries? How does this change the way he sees people? And when people see themselves as missionaries, how does this change the way they see themselves and their jobs?
12. **The Mission of God and of His Church:** How has consumerism and individualism affected the church, discipleship, service, and mission?

13. **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice:** According to Jack Sara, how have Palestinians struggled with this? Why is reconciliation and “love of enemies” a daily decision for Palestinian Christians?
14. **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice:** Why does Jack Sara believe that Palestinian Christians can be models of love and reconciliation to the whole world?
15. **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice:** Disciples of Jesus build bridges, not walls. How will you express this truth in your daily life?
16. **Seeing the Gospels:** How do Palestinian Christians *see* the gospels (they don’t just *read* the gospels, they *see* the gospels)? What does it mean for Christians in the Middle East to be *living stones* that testify to Christ?

Application

Ensure the discussion is specifically drawing on your local setting. Make sure the discussion is relevant to the lives of faith for your small group. Encourage relevant and thoughtful examples from each participant.

1. **Personal Journey to Follow & Serve Christ:** In small groups, discuss how the Spirit led you into discipleship and ministry. Listen to each person in your group, as they describe the way the Spirit was (and is) working in their lives.
2. **Life in Palestine:** How much do you know about life in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories today? Take some time to understand the region by doing the following three things:
 - A. Visit Israel and the West Bank (and Bethlehem Bible College).
 - B. Attend the *Christ at the Checkpoint Conference* at Bethlehem Bible College.
 - B. Work through the material listed under the heading: *Movies, Literature & Short Videos on Palestine & Israel*
3. **Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) & Palestinian Christianity:** Are you passionate about mobilizing the church for mission and ministry? Are you enthusiastic about joining with God in his mission, wherever he has placed you? How is passion for the mission of God shaping your studies? Shaping your ministry? And shaping your engagement in mission and evangelism today?
4. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** How will you help people in your church develop deep faith (through things like biblical knowledge, theological understanding, missional action, spiritual growth, and ministry competence)?
5. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** What does it mean for you and your church to engage in mission in the world? How will you separate yourself from the world, but not become isolated from the world? How will you live in such a way (individually and corporately) that you announce and demonstrate the reign of God, in word, sign, and deed?
6. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** What will you do to build unity in the church? How will you do this in your local church, among churches in your region, and further afield?
7. **The Mission of God and of His Church:** Are you engaged in *glocal* mission? Do you see yourself as a missionary in your setting? How will you help people in your church see themselves as missionaries in their local context, and serve accordingly?
8. **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice:** Think about this: Reconciliation and “love of enemies” is a daily decision for Palestinian Christians. How will you make reconciliation, peacemaking, and conflict-transformation a daily and concrete part of your life? How will you seek to address injustices as a peacemaker?
9. **Being Peacemakers in a World of Conflict & Injustice:** Today, choose to be a disciples of Jesus who builds bridges, not walls. Express this in your political and religious views, and in your daily life.

Informing community

Facilitate the space for your group to respond to the discussion. You might consider this section as a personal time of written journal responses to the following questions.

1. What is God encouraging our class and me, to do?
2. In response to the issues raised in the video, what are areas I want to ask God for forgiveness in? How do I need to change? What does God want me to stand up for?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community, for us to better engage with the contextual issues of our community?
4. How can I gain a better understanding of what God is doing in Palestine and Israel? What do we ask that God would do in our hearts?

Prayer

Spend time in prayer over what you've learnt.

Invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit to clarify, heal, and inspire change for your participants and communities.

Links

Website: www.theglobalchurchproject.com

Book: Graham Hill, *GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (IVP Academic, 2015)

Movies, Literature & Short Videos on Palestine & Israel

The following resources have been compiled (thanks to World Vision Australia) to help you get your head around Palestine and Israel. Although it is in no way compulsorily for you to use any of these resources (and this isn't any kind of exhaustive list), we highly recommend these as a starting point to understanding Palestine and Israel.

Over the next few pages, I list movies, literature and short videos on Palestine and Israel.

Movies Set in Palestine/Israel

Film	Director / Year	Synopsis
With God on Our Side	Porter Speakman Jr / 2010 / USA	With God On Our Side looks at the theology of Christian Zionism, which teaches that because the Jews are God's chosen people, they have a divine right to the land of Israel. Aspects of this belief system lead some Christians in the West to give uncritical support to Israeli government policies, even those that privilege Jews at the expense of Palestinians, leading to great suffering among Muslim and Christian Palestinians alike and threatening Israel's security as a whole. This film demonstrates that there is a biblical alternative for Christians who want to love and support the people of Israel, a theology that doesn't favor one people group over another but instead promotes peace and reconciliation for both Jews and Palestinians.
5 Broken Cameras	Emad Burnat & Guy Davidi / 2012 / Israel & Palestine	5 Broken Cameras is a first-hand account of protests in <u>Bil'in</u> , a <u>West Bank</u> village affected by the <u>Israeli West Bank barrier</u> . The documentary was shot almost entirely by Palestinian farmer Emad Burnat, who bought his first camera in 2005 to record the birth of his youngest son. In 2009, Israeli co-director Guy Davidi joined the project. Structured around the destruction of Burnat's cameras, the filmmakers' collaboration follows one family's evolution over five years of turmoil. The film won a 2012 <u>Sundance Film Festival</u> award, it won the <u>Golden Apricot</u> at the 2012 <u>Yerevan International Film Festival, Armenia</u> , for Best Documentary Film, and was nominated for a 2012 <u>Academy Award</u> .
Waltz with Bashir	Ari Folman / 2008 / Israel	Waltz with Bashir is a 2008 Israeli animated documentary film written and directed by Ari Folman. It depicts Folman in search of his lost memories of his experience as a soldier in the <u>1982 Lebanon War</u> .
Paradise Now	Hany Abu-Assad / 2005 / USA	Paradise Now is about two <u>Palestinian</u> men preparing for a <u>suicide attack</u> in <u>Israel</u> . It won a <u>Golden Globe</u> for best foreign language film and was nominated for an Academy Award in the same category. "The film is an artistic point of view of that political issue," Abu-Assad said. "The politicians want to see it as black and white, good and evil, and art wants to see it as a human thing."

Literature

Book	Author / year	Synopsis
Blood Brothers	Elias Chacour / 1984 (rev. 2003)	As a child, Elias Chacour lived in a small Palestinian village in Galilee. The townspeople were proud of their ancient Christian heritage and lived at peace with their Jewish neighbors. But early in 1947, their idyllic lifestyle was swept away as tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed and nearly one million forced into refugee camps. An exile in his native land, Elias began a years-long struggle with his love for the Jewish people and the world's misunderstanding of his own people, the Palestinians. How was he to respond? He found his answer in the simple, haunting words of the Man of Galilee: "Blessed are the peacemakers." In <i>Blood Brothers</i> , Chacour blends his riveting life story with historical research to reveal a little-known side of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the birth of modern Israel.
When Helping Hurts	Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert / 2009	With more than 225,000 copies sold, <i>When Helping Hurts</i> is a paradigm-forming contemporary classic on the subject of poverty alleviation and ministry to those in need. Emphasizing the poverty of both heart and society, this book exposes the need that every person has and how it can be filled. The reader is brought to understand that poverty is much more than simply a lack of financial or material resources and that it takes much more than donations and handouts to solve the problem of poverty.
The Miracle of Peace	David Aikman / 2009	Former TIME Magazine Jerusalem bureau chief David Aikman takes a sober, balanced look at the Middle East, bringing a journalist's mind and a believer's heart to his examination of a region aflame. In a timely and informed exploration of current Mid-East issues that goes beyond headlines and sound bites, Aikman fills in the blanks for thoughtful Christians, accurately tracing recent history and fairly portraying the leaders who have made that history. With a firm grasp on a biblical understanding of Israel's past, present, and future, he turns a critical eye on the political and religious policies of the region's prime players, resorting neither to blind pro-Israeli sentiment nor to reactionary pro-Palestinian bias. Aikman challenges us to a uniquely Christian approach to the Middle East: respect, reason and love, rather than unqualified tolerance on the one hand or religious crusading on the other.
Talking of Conflict	Jane Clements (ed) / 2012	This book began life under the direction of the Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine (FODIP), a faith-based charity facilitating dialogue between Jews, Christians, and Muslims on this divisive issue. The project brought together a working group of five scholars from different theological fields, all with an interest in the criteria Christians may use in talking about conflict in general and the Israeli Palestinian situation in particular. What has emerged is a collection of papers with fresh areas of consideration and stimulating invitations to continue the conversation.

Short Videos

Name	Source	Issue Area	Synopsis
Helping Without Hurting – Part 1	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a339VZRE3CM	Christian Poverty Alleviation	Following the success of Brian Fikkert & Steven Corbett's book When Helping Hurts, LifeChurchTV has helped bring their critical points alive in a short video series.
Noam Chomsky: Israel & Palestine lecture	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUsXt8TmVfU	International Affairs	Noam Chomsky discusses the view on whether Israel's treatment of Palestine is similar to apartheid or not.
Living Under Occupation: Daily Life in Occupied Palestine	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osocIWakOp4	International Affairs	A coalition from the EU documents their visit to Occupied Palestine in 2013.
The Six Day War	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAGsoPgPCK0	History	A documentary looking at the short-lived conflict between Arab states & Israel in 1967.
Palestinian Christians: Faith love & hope	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZjMNFIL-7Y	Photo Montage	A collection of images with backing music depicting the everyday struggles of Christians living in Palestine.
Israeli repression of Palestinian Christians	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0y7k8ikbZ8	International Affairs	A Christian perspective on the Israel-Palestine conflict.