

## Celebrating Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> Museum Tour

### Goals

- To consider the place of Israel in the context of the broader story of the Jewish people.
- To introduce the 6 Jewish Peoplehood concepts, emphasizing Israel
- To explore multi-faceted connections of the Jewish People to Israel (eretz-land, moledet-homeland, medina-state)

### Suggested Points for Discussion

- Immigration stories, decisions and personal ties to Israel
- Family visits, events and experiences in Israel. What was it like visiting Israel for the first time?
- Support for Israel and involvement in various causes throughout the years
- Memories from significant events in Israel's history
- Yearning for Zion, prayer towards Jerusalem, expressions in Jewish practice
- Israel's role and meaning today

### **Tour Synopsis:**

*Delve into the meaning of “yearning for Zion” throughout the ages and the significance of Israel in the hearts of diverse Jewish communities around the world. Participants engage in the story of the Jewish people, featuring views of Israel in Jewish life, ritual and experience.*

The following elements of the exhibitions can be used in the "Celebrating Israel's 70<sup>th</sup>" tour, which revolves entirely around the theme of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup>, or on regular tours in which we wish to discuss or highlight 'Israel at 70.'

### **The Wedding Display**

An excellent opening for a complete tour on the theme of 'Israel at 70':

- ⇒ "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem" and the tradition of breaking the glass. We are obligated never to forget the Holy City and it stays with us wherever we are in the world. Here we see Jewish communities from a variety of backgrounds, and yet at each and every wedding these traditions are a key component.

### **Chodorov**

- ⇒ The synagogues face east, towards Jerusalem
- ⇒ The artist, Yisrael Lisnitzky, portrayed Jerusalem as he envisioned it, since had never visited the city.

### **Capturing History: Chim**

Suggested Activity: Find a photograph that defines Israel for you/ that symbolizes your connection to Israel.

- ⇒ The photographs illustrate Chim's wonder at the young state, its landscapes and the people arriving to it.
- ⇒ It is worth emphasizing the formal changes in Chim's photographs upon his arrival to Israel, such as change in subject: Chim takes landscape photographs for the first time in his career.
- ⇒ From these photographs we gain a perspective of the kind of life the pioneers lead in Israel at the time. For example, with the image of Ruth Bonfitto carrying water to the Alma settlement, we can point out the hardships they experienced (water being a main issue).
- ⇒ The photograph of the wedding is especially symbolic of life in Israel at the time. What did they use to hold up the chuppah? Pitchforks from building the land, and rifles from having to defend it. Objects that relay two core values of the young country.
- ⇒ In addition to providing an interesting insight into the Land of Israel in its first few years, we can also use these photographs to draw comparisons to Israel today.
- ⇒ It is also possible to 'flip' the tour and start with Chim's death during the Suez Crisis, and then continue with his visits to the Land of Israel, and so on.

### **Hallelujah! Assemble, Pray, Study**

Two potential tours on the topic of 'Celebrating Israel's 70<sup>th</sup>' are outlined below. It is not obligatory to carry these out in full: it is possible to combine them with, or use them to build, other tours. The goal here is to show how one can take a particular theme and build a narrative for it throughout the entire gallery.

**The Menorah Trail:** This tour follows the menorah as a symbol from ancient times to the present, through its appearance in the various synagogues in the gallery.

- **Dura Europos** (The menorah appears in the center of the wall, next to the Temple and Binding of Isaac depictions)
- **Sardis** (Located to the left of the model is a large mosaic menorah)
- **Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, USA** (Menorahs adorn the two corners of the building to the left and right of the entrance)
- **Tlomackie, Warsaw** (The menorahs facing the street, and of course the menorah that was saved and returned to Israel)

During this tour it can be also mentioned that the menorah is used today on the Emblem of the State of Israel.

**The Geula and Destruction Tour:** A tour that traces the place of the Land of Israel in Jewish history, through the destruction of the Second Temple and the synagogue as the "Mikdash Me'at" - a place that allows for the existence of a Jewish community without the Temple, and at the same time marks the absence of Jerusalem.

**Mikdash Me'at:** (Opening)

**Altneuschul:** ('על תנאי' / 'On the condition of...')

**Aleppo:** (The story of The Aleppo Codex)

**Touro:** (The building is not aligned with the street, since it was built to face Jerusalem)

**Tlomackie:** (The story of the Menorahs)

It is important to remember that there are many objects in the galleries dealing with representations of the Land of Israel/ Jerusalem. Be creative!

### Heroes

- ⇒ In this tour, choose questions/activities that deal more specifically with Israeli identity and history.
- ⇒ Examples:
  - Find an Israeli hero you did not know of beforehand
  - Choose three heroes that tell the story of Israel
  - Which hero do you think symbolizes Israel and why?

Suggested heroes: Simcha Blass, Ada Yonat, Herzl, Ben Gurion, Trumpeldor, Esther Roth Shachamorov, Leah Goldberg, Bracha Fold, Hana Senesh, Ofra Haza, Shoshana Damari, Eliezer Ben Yehdua, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef

**Gil Shwed** (under Economists): received the Israel prize for Israel's 70<sup>th</sup>, under the first time category of high tech

### The Jewish Lens

- ⇒ Use similar methods as in the Heroes Gallery, but focusing on images and symbols.
- ⇒ Examples:
  - Choose a picture that symbolizes your connection to Israel
  - Choose a picture that depicts something that is, in your opinion, very Israeli.
- ⇒ It is also important to give an explanation about the competition and mention that in 2018 it will be marking Israel's 70<sup>th</sup>.

### Operation Moses

- ⇒ This exhibition deals with the State of Israel and questions of immigration and Aliyah, integration and acceptance, racism and identity in Israeli society, and more.
- ⇒ A group focusing on an 'Israel at 70' tour can be directed to a discussion about specific films which facilitate critical discussion of the Israeli State and society, such as the story of Zahava, the woman who was not recognized as a Prisoner of Zion.
- ⇒ A key aspect of this exhibit is that throughout the years, this community it was Israel that they yearned for and wanted to return to. This illustrates their connection to the land and to the Jewish People, retained over the many years in which they lived in Ethiopia.

Potential Questions: In what ways is this reflection of Israeli society similar to or different from your own? Can you draw any parallels?

### **FOREVER YOUNG: Bob Dylan at 75**

In this exhibition, one can focus on Dylan's surprisingly consistent relationship with the State of Israel. In contrast to other issues, Dylan shows a solidarity with Israel, which continues throughout his life. Dylan regularly visits Israel. He once applied to volunteer on a kibbutz (and wasn't accepted!). His son was called up for the blessing of the weekly Torah portion at the Western Wall (עליה לתורה) and he also wrote 'Neighbourhood Bully,' a pro-Israeli song. This song ironically refutes the claims against the State of Israel, and presents Israel in a very positive light (the lyrics are quoted in English and Hebrew on the wall opposite 'Dylan and Judaism').

Good luck!