

Isram Israel

Sample Pilgrimage Trip to Israel



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Pilgrimage Trip to Israel
Sample Itinerary
11 days

A trip to the Holy Land of Israel is one of the most enriching spiritual enrichment opportunities a person of faith can take. For many it is a “bucket-list” experience that people dream about doing at some point in their lives. The opportunity to walk where Jesus walked, see the land, and take in the sites where much of biblical history took place is one that can’t be duplicated.

For people who have never been to Israel a first visit is typically centered around the life of Christ, visiting the key sites connected to His time on earth. The following itinerary is built with that in mind, with visits to Jesus’s birth place, childhood home, adult home-town, and the place of His death. In addition it takes groups to many of the most notable places from the Bible including Armageddon, The City of David, The Western Wall, The Temple Mount, Mt. Carmel, and others.

While this is a common itinerary please note that it can be modified. Isram Israel is committed to helping you experience Israel the way you want to. As you think about your trip you should also think about the themes that are important to your congregation or organization and talk with us about how to bring those to life on this trip. We are here to help you tailor this experience to fit your needs and bring context to scripture like never before!

Day 1 – Departure

The group will depart from a major US airport - TBD based on best airfare. The group will be responsible for transportation to the major airport in order to secure the best pricing on domestic flights.

Day 2 - Arrival

After an overnight flight the group will land at Ben Gurion Airport (TLV), meet their tour guide and transfer to a hotel in Tel Aviv. The group will quickly gather to review the next days itinerary, and discuss expectations. You’ll enjoy a wonderful dinner at the hotel. The hotel is adjacent to the Mediterranean boardwalk with spectacular views of the sunset and an opportunity to walk along the beach (if you’re not too tired from the trip).

Overnight: Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv

Provided Meals: D

Day 3 – Heading North

- After a delicious buffet breakfast you will check out of the hotel and board the bus.
- Go on a walking tour of the ancient seaport of **Jaffa**, visit the house of Simon the Tanner, where Peter had his vision on the rooftop ([Acts 10:32](#)).
 - Jaffa is also the town where Peter raised Tabitha from the dead ([Acts 9:36](#))
 - Finally, Jaffa, or Joppa, is where the story of Jonah took place ([Jonah 1](#)).
- You will then drive North to **Caesarea** National Park, the site of magnificent ruins of Herod's showcase port city spanning over 2000 years including an impressive Roman theater and beautifully preserved aqueduct; tour park.
 - This continues the story of Peter, with the conversion of Cornelius' household ([Acts 10:24](#)).
 - Caesarea is also the scene of Paul's imprisonment ([Acts 23:35](#))
 - Paul's appearance before King Agrippa and his departure for Rome ([Acts 25:13-26:32](#)) take place in Caesarea
 - Caesarea figures centrally in the history of early Christianity as home to the Church father Eusebius.
- Continue North to **The Muhraka**, on Mt. Carmel (just SE of Haifa), where Elijah defeated the prophets of Ba'al ([1 Kings 18:1-40](#)).
- Enjoy a traditional Druze-style lunch in a restaurant on Mt. Carmel.
- Visit **Megiddo National Park**, the site of "Armageddon" where the great battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness is to take place according to the Book of Revelation.
 - Megiddo was the regional capital of King Solomon ([1 Kings 9:15](#))
 - Tel Megiddo is an overlook in the middle of the valley of Armageddon, or the Jezreel Valley ([Revelation 16:16](#)). The Jezreel valley extends from Haifa on the coast of the Mediterranean across northern Israel and connects with the Jordan Valley at Beit Shean in the East, approximately 60 miles in length.
 - The Jezreel Valley may be the location referenced in [Revelation 14:20](#) regarding a battle resulting in blood flowing for 180 miles and up to 6 feet in depth.
- Drive to **Sea of Galilee**; check in to hotel followed by dinner.

Overnight: *Kibbutz* Hotel on Sea of Galilee

Provided Meals: B/L/D

Day 4 - Nazareth & Around the Sea of Galilee

- Buffet Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive to **Nazareth**, the childhood home of Jesus. We will walk through part of the city and visit the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, built over the spring that supplied water to Nazareth 2,000 years ago. This is also the traditional location where Mary received word that she would give birth to Jesus ([Luke 1:26-38](#))
- Return to The Sea of Galilee for lunch.
- After lunch you will visit the **Mount of Beatitudes**, the site of the Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5-7](#), [Luke 6](#)). This is a great time for an extended group lesson and if time permits a walk down the side of the hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee.
- Continue to **Tabgha**, traditional site of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. This is very likely NOT the actual location of the feeding of 5,000 ([Matthew 14:13-21](#), [Mark 6:30-44](#), [Luke 9:10-17](#), [John 6:1-12](#)). That site is described by Luke as being near Bethsaida, and by John as being on the “far side” of the sea, both indicating that this miracle occurred on the North-eastern shore whereas Tabgha is on the North-western shore.
- The group will then move just up the road to **Capernaum**, Jesus' hometown during his ministry in the north ([Matthew 4:13](#)). There is a 2nd century synagogue here along with the ruins of the ancient village including the home of Peter's mother ([Matthew 8:14-17](#)).
- Return to the hotel for a buffet dinner followed by time together to discuss the day.

Overnight: *Kibbutz* Hotel on Sea of Galilee

Provided Meals: B/L/D

Day 5 - The Golan Heights

- Breakfast at hotel.
- The first stop of the day will be at the **Magdala Project**, site of excavations of 1st Century Jewish fishing village where a synagogue from the time of Jesus has been discovered. It is almost certain that Jesus would have taught in this synagogue ([Matthew 4:23](#)). This is also the hometown of Mary Magdalene, a key figure mentioned 16 times in the gospels.
- Enjoy a traditional St. Peter's fish lunch at a restaurant on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Drive north to the **Banias**, whose powerful waters serve as one of the sources of the Jordan River and is the site of **Caesarea Philippi**, where Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah ([Matthew 16:13-17](#), [Mark 8:27-30](#)) .
- Visit **Mt Bental**, overlooking site of decisive tank battle during 1973 Yom Kippur War; view into the Syrian city of *Kuneitra*, from a decommissioned army bunker.
- You will have lunch on your own at a local restaurant in the area before returning to the Sea of Galilee.
- After lunch the group will board and ride a boat on the **Sea of Galilee**, enjoying time on the water reflecting on what it would have been like for Jesus and his disciples to use this body of water for transportation and serenity ([Matthew 8:23-27](#), [Matthew 9:1](#), [Matthew 13:1-2](#), [Matthew 14:13](#), [Matthew 14:22-34](#), [Matthew 15:39](#), [Mark 3:9](#), [Mark 4:1-2](#), [Mark 4:35-41](#), [Mark 5:1-21](#), [Mark 6:32-34](#), [Mark 6:45-56](#), [John 6:1](#), [John 6:16-24](#)). Ask your guide to point out the area of Genesarenes, where Jesus cast the legion of demons into pigs and they jumped into the water ([Luke 8:26-39](#)).
- The day will end with a visit to the “**Jesus Boat**” Museum at the Kibbutz Ginosar where the remains of a first century boat were found in 1986. The remains are on display inside the museum.
- Dinner at hotel.
- This will be your last night on the Sea of Galilee, if time permits be sure to spend some time enjoying this historic body of water and reflect on your time in the region where Jesus spent the majority of his public ministry.

Overnight: *Kibbutz* Hotel on Sea of Galilee

Provided Meals: B/D

Kibbutz Hotel

You might wonder - [what is a Kibbutz](#)? The kibbutz is usually a small community of several hundred residents; its income is based mainly on Agriculture and Industry. Many communities have also developed tourist services, including hotels, resorts, and museums. In most “old” kibbutz concepts, the name of the game was “joint production and joint consumption”. Kibbutz members worked according to a central work schedule, taking part in all aspects of agriculture, industry and logistics.

Usually, in a kibbutz, members eat in a common dining room. The children used to grow up in centralized homes, in order to assist the parents to leave for work early. Nowadays, things have evolved.

The various Kibbutzim played a significant role in the definition of the boundaries of the Jewish state which was established.

Day 6 – The Dead Sea

- After breakfast, check out of the hotel. Be sure to keep your swimsuits handy as you will be getting baptized and floating in the Dead Sea today!
- Drive south via Jordan Valley past Jericho to **Qasr el Yahud**, the traditional site on the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized ([Matthew 3:13-16](#), [Mark 1:9-11](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#), [John 1:28-34](#)). If the group would like to, this is a fantastic location for baptisms, a decision about this can be made during the trip.
- The trip will continue through the **Judean desert**, the area where David ran from Saul for nearly 10 years ([1 Sam 21-26](#))
- Arriving at Masada, the group will have lunch on their own at cafeteria-style restaurant.
- After lunch you will ascend **Masada** via cable car and tour Herod's fortress and site of the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the Romans in 73 A.D.; descend via cable car. Masada was a remote fortress constructed by Herod in approximately 60 B.C. with two palaces, food storehouses, water cisterns, a synagogue, and housing for hundreds of people.
- After Masada we will drive to a beach at the North end of the **Dead Sea** for the opportunity to float and swim. The Dead Sea is the lowest place on earth at 1,410 feet BELOW sea level! ([Genesis 14:3](#), [Deut 3:17](#), [Deut 4:49](#), [Numbers 34:12](#), [Joshua 3:16](#), [Joel 2:20](#), [Zechariah 14:8](#), [Ezekiel 47:7-10](#))
- The trip will now take you back to the North along the Dead Sea before turning West into the mountains and travelling up to Jerusalem. You'll be following the same route that Jesus likely would have taken several times on his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem ([Matthew 20:17-19](#), [Mark 10:32-34](#), [John 2:13](#), [John 5:1](#)) .
- Check in to hotel followed by dinner.

Overnight: Jerusalem

Provided Meals: B/D

Day 7 – Old Jerusalem, Jesus’ last days

- Enjoy your first breakfast in Jerusalem at the hotel.
- Today the group will focus on the last week of Jesus life, beginning with Palm Sunday and the triumphal entry and ending with the Last Supper.
- The day will begin at the **Mount of Olives** for a panoramic view of Old & New Jerusalem ([Matthew 21:1](#), [Matthew 24:3](#), [Matthew 26:30](#), John 8:1) This spot is one where Jesus frequently went for reflection. In the time of Jesus this region would have been unpopulated and covered with trees with a view, across the Kidron Valley, to the walled city of Jerusalem the Eastern, or Golden, Gate and the Temple. Also located on the Mt. of Olives was the Garden of Gethsemane. David fled Jerusalem to get away from Absalom and went to the Mt. of Olives ([2 Samuel 15:13-31](#)).
- From the scenic overlook you will then walk down the mount to the **Garden of Gethsemane** where Jesus prayed for God’s mercy and was ultimately betrayed by Judas ([Matthew 26:36-56](#), [Mark 14:32-50](#), [John 18:1-11](#)). There are two sections to the Garden, one public, containing the Church of All Nations, and one private. After walking through the public garden you will enter the private garden for a time of worship and learning. Here you will be able to walk amongst the olive trees, pray, and reflect.
- The group will now take the same journey Christ did on Palm Sunday, and again after being arrested in the Garden, crossing the **Kidron Valley** ([John 18:1](#)) on foot and entering the Old City via Lions’ Gate.
- From there continue on to and walk the **Via Dolorosa**, to Christian Quarter. This path commemorates the walk of Jesus with his cross to His crucifixion ([Matthew 27:31-33](#), [Mark 15:20-22](#), [Luke 23:26-33](#), [John 19:16-17](#))
- The Via Dolorosa ultimately leads to the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, one of the possible locations for Christ’s crucifixion, preparation and burial ([Matthew 27:34-61](#) , [Mark 15:23-47](#), [Luke 23:34-56](#), [John 19:18-42](#)). The tomb of Jesus is housed inside a grotto, called the Edicule, within the church rotunda. The Church was originally built in 335 AD but destroyed in 1009 and rebuilt starting in 1010. The Edicule nearly always has an extremely long line to wait for viewing, so it may not be possible to see inside.
- The Old City has dozens of quaint restaurants to enjoy during lunch, enjoy!
- After lunch the group will come back together and make a visit to **The Kotel, or Western Wall**. This wall is the closest location for Jews to the Temple Mount, which is under Palestinian authority. Because there is no temple, and because Jews can’t visit the Temple Mount, they go to the Western Wall, which supports the Temple Mount, to pray. The Holy of Holies in the temple was on the Western End of the Temple, so therefore essentially above the area of the Kotel.
- As you head out of the old city you will stop at the **Room of the Last Supper** on Mt Zion ([Matthew 26:17-29](#), [Mark 14:12-26](#), [Luke 22:7-23](#)). This beautiful room with an arched ceiling and amazing acoustics is a wonderful place to pause and sing a hymn like Jesus and the apostles did at the end of the last supper - and don’t be surprised if other groups join in!
- To finish the evening you will return to the hotel for a buffet dinner and then spend time with a guest speaker presenting an overview of current affairs in Israeli society.

Overnight: Jerusalem

Provided Meals: B/D

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Day 8 – Temple Mount, City of David and Bethlehem

- Rise and shine for an early breakfast so you can get to the Temple Mount ahead of the crowds! Be sure to bring your passport today, you'll need it for Bethlehem.
- After breakfast you'll drive to the Old City, wait through security, and go up on **Temple Mount** for a tour. This area is under Palestinian control and is home to the al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock - the third holiest site in Islam because it's considered to be the location where Muhammad ascended to heaven. Neither Muslim site is open to tourists, but you can tour outside. The Dome of the Rock was constructed in the 7th century and inside you can see the tip of Mt. Moriah, also believed to be the location where Abram was prepared to offer up Isaac ([Genesis 22:1-14](#)).
- From the Temple Mount you will move outside the old city to the site where David built his city when he conquered Jerusalem. This site is now known as the **City of David** ([2 Samuel 5:6-10](#)), where Jerusalem began 3,000 years ago. The location is an active archaeological site with new discoveries being made every year.
- Housed beneath the City of David is **Hezekiah's Tunnel**. This 1,750 foot tunnel was built by Hezekiah to carry water from one side of the city to the other, starting at a natural spring ([2 Kings 20:20](#), [2 Chron 32:30](#)). Weather permitting you will have an opportunity to go on water hike in Hezekiah's Tunnel, carved out of the rock over 2600 years ago.
- Once out of the tunnel, grab your passports for the drive to **Bethlehem**, the birthplace of David and Jesus ([1 Sam 16:1-18](#), [Michah 5:2](#)). Upon arrival you'll pick up a Palestinian tour guide.
- Once in Bethlehem you'll visit the **Church of the Nativity**, commemorating the birthplace of Jesus ([Matthew 2:1](#), [Luke 2:1-7](#)). This is the oldest complete Christian Church in the world, having been built in the 6th Century.
- The other site in Bethlehem is the **Shepherds' Field**, where the angels appeared to Shepherds watching their flocks and announced the birth of Jesus ([Luke 2:8-15](#)). Take some time to soak in this location and join the angels in singing "Hark the Herald!" While here you'll also see, in the distance, the land owned by Boaz and Ruth the Moabitess ([Ruth 4:1-13](#)).
- Before departing the city, you'll have lunch in Bethlehem and stop at a local wood shop with an opportunity to purchase olive wood products. This patronage is critical to tourist relations with Bethlehem and provides valuable income to those living here.
- In the afternoon you will return to Jerusalem and visit the **Israel Museum**, which includes the **Shrine of the Book**, housing some of the Dead Sea scrolls found in *Qumran*. This is a great example of God's preservation of the Bible ([Matthew 5:18](#)). Here you will also see the famous [Second Temple model of the city of Jerusalem](#).
- To cap off the day you will have an opportunity to enjoy dinner on your own at a restaurant of your choosing in downtown Jerusalem!

Overnight: Jerusalem

Provided Meals: B/L

Day 9 – Yad Vashem

- Enjoy a buffet breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit the **Yad Vashem** Holocaust Museum and Memorial, including the Path of the Righteous, historical museum and Children’s Memorial. This is a moving experience and a chance to be reminded of the nearly constant struggle of the nation of Israel.
- Friday’s in Jerusalem see the locals preparing for Shabbat. To soak in that experience you will be taken to **Machane Yehuda**, Jerusalem’s open-air market. The market covers several city blocks and will be bustling with activity as people shop for food before the sun sets and Shabbat begins. Find a local restaurant or cafe in the market and enjoy some local food for lunch!
- Return to the hotel.
- It’s been a long and busy week, and it’s Shabbat, so take some time to relax and enjoy some **free time**. Take a walk, read a book, journal, spend time in prayer, enjoy a nap, whatever you want, this is your time!
- At dusk you’ll head back to the **Western Wall** to watch as Jews welcome the Sabbath.
- Return to the hotel for a buffet dinner.

Overnight: Jerusalem

Provided Meals: B/D

Day 10 – Jerusalem

- Enjoy your last day in Israel, starting with a delicious buffet breakfast at the hotel.
- After breakfast the bus will take you to the **Old City** where you’ll spend the morning exploring the streets, buying souvenirs, and eating lunch.
- After lunch the group will get back together and continue to the **Garden Tomb**. This is the other possible site of Jesus’ burial. The group will have a private location for a communion service and discussion to wrap up the trip.
- The day will end with a festive final dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight: Jerusalem

Provided Meals: B/D

Day 11 – Back to US

Early morning transfer to airport. Fly back to US.