

Joseph in Captivity: Convene an Interfaith Gathering

Facilitator Guide

How might we overcome our differences and highlight our common values?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What stories do all three Abrahamic faiths share in common that can shed light on the basic human rights to freedom and just treatment? How might our religious narratives help us take action for the hostages, regardless of their faith, and regardless of ours?

FRAMING THE ISSUE

History is bound to repeat itself and we find ourselves reliving biblical stories. Can we learn from our forefathers and foremothers and through them find some hope and inspiration in dark times like this?

The reality of hostages and being captive is, unfortunately, not new to humanity. In our holy texts, we have many examples of people who were taken to captivity: Sarah the wife of Abraham is taken by Pharaoh; Joseph is kept in jail with no way-out; Jeremiah, and many more.

In this session we suggest bringing together people of different Abrahamic faiths to engage with a foundational story that is common to all three religions, as a way of focusing on our common values and narratives. Just as the Hamas kidnappers did not differentiate between hostages of different faiths, so too, our faith should not be a separating factor in our efforts to help them, but rather a joint mission.

Info For Facilitator



Target Audience:

Adults from various Abrahamic faiths-- Christian, Muslim and Jewish--in a faith-based setting.



Length Of Program

45-60 minutes



Materials & Prep:

- Copies of the source sheet for participants
- Copies of the article about Gelienor 'Jimmy' Pacheco (or access to the link on phones).
- Tape
- Printed source sheet

LET'S EXPLORE

Opening

Facilitator asks:

- What stories of captivity do you each have in your holy texts?
- What are the stories that we all share?

In this session, we will focus on the story of Joseph in prison.

Opening

Turn to a partner (preferably of a different faith), learn the text together, and answer the questions at the bottom of the source sheet.

Discussion

On October 7th, Gelienor 'Jimmy' Pacheco, who had been working on a Kibbutz in Israel for five years, was taken hostage. Thankfully, after seven weeks in captivity, he was released as part of the first batch of hostages released by Hamas. Jimmy shares how his Christian faith helped him in captivity.



Photo: Philippines Embassy in Israel

[Please read his interview](#) and discuss the questions below with your partner:

- How did Jimmy keep his faith in captivity?
- What do you think it meant to him to celebrate Christmas at home this year?
- What similarities and differences do you see between Jimmy's story and the story of Joseph?

TAKE ACTION!

Like Joseph, we've all been sometimes accused of things we haven't done and sometimes in great pain and difficulty. The hostages held in Gaza are innocent and are suffering greatly.

Below are a few options of actions you can take on behalf of the hostages, in an interfaith setting:

■ Communal Prayer:

There are many religious prayers and texts which reflect a call to God to help in times of need. Create a joint, interfaith prayer gathering for the speedy release of all the hostages from Gaza.

[Here is a resource](#) with some verses from the Old and New Testament.

■ Adopt a Joseph

Joseph was afraid to be forgotten. Let us make sure that doesn't happen. Identify one hostage in captivity in Gaza and encourage your community to share their name in prayers and show their picture in your place of worship.

■ Interfaith Text Study

Encourage your community to create additional opportunities for joint text study with members of other faith communities, such as the one above. Encourage a representative of each faith to bring a text from their tradition that is meaningful to them.

■ Religious Leadership

Send your pastor/ Rabbi/ Kadi a letter asking them what inspiration they find from their faith for the issue of the hostages and request they take action as leaders of their community.

CLOSING INTENTION

In this session we explored a joint biblical narrative focused on captivity. We also learned about one specific hostage of Christian faith and how his faith supported him while being held. Now it is time for us to take action. Inspired by the options above, how will you mobilize your faith community to take action?