



Al-Aqsa Mosque

MODULE 1 - INTRODUCTION TO PALESTINE AND AL-AQSA MOSQUE

A Journey Through History and Faith
Adv. Mohammed Vahed

UNIT 1



EXPLORE THE RICHNESS



CULTURAL HERITAGE AWAITS

WELCOME TO THE HEART OF PALESTINE

@REALLYGREATSITE



UNIT 1: 1. Introduction: Welcome and Overview

- Today, we begin an exciting journey to learn about a very special and blessed land called Palestine
- We will discover its location, why it is called the Holy Land, the important prophets connected to it, and its rich culture

UNIT 1: 1. Introduction: Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, you will:

- Identify Palestine on a world map and describe its general geographical location and significance as a crossroads
- Explain the meaning of “*Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*” (The Holy Land) in the context of Islamic tradition
- Name at least three prophets associated with Palestine
- Articulate why Palestine is considered a land of historical and spiritual importance for Muslims and other faiths
- Develop an initial appreciation for the diverse cultural heritage of Palestine



Where in the World is Palestine?

- It is in the greater Bilad al-Shaam
- It is in West Asia
- A crossroads between Asia, Africa, and Europe
- A land of historical importance for travel and trade
- “Let us find it together! Why do you think this location is special?”

Where is Palestine

It is in Bilad al-Shaam (“the land of Shaam”; The Levant in English)

Al-Shaam comprises of modern-day Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, most of Syria, and parts of southern Turkey.



Bilad Al Shaam in the 9th Century CE.



LOCATE PALESTINE ON THE MAP

FIGURE 1

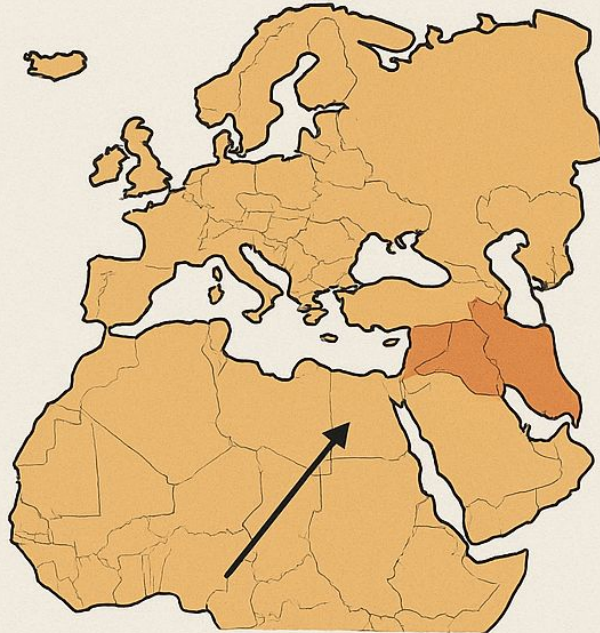
Where is Palestine?



FIGURE 2

IS MIDDLE EAST THE CORRECT DESCRIPTION?

MIDDLE EAST



Middle East

Eurocentric, colonial term

WEST ASIA



West Asia

Correct and fair term

We often hear the term “Middle East,” but it is not the best name to use.

Why?

-
- Because it was created during the time of **colonialism**.
 - The British Empire looked at the world from *their own map*. To them:
 - Europe was “the West.” - India was “the East.”
 - And the land in between — places like Palestine, Syria, and Iraq — they called the “**Middle East**.”
 - So, the name does not describe the land itself — it only shows how the British saw the world. It is a **Eurocentric** (Europe-centered) label, not a fair one.
 - A better name is “**West Asia**.” This tells us where the region really is - in the western part of the Asian continent. It is accurate, respectful, and not based on colonial thinking.

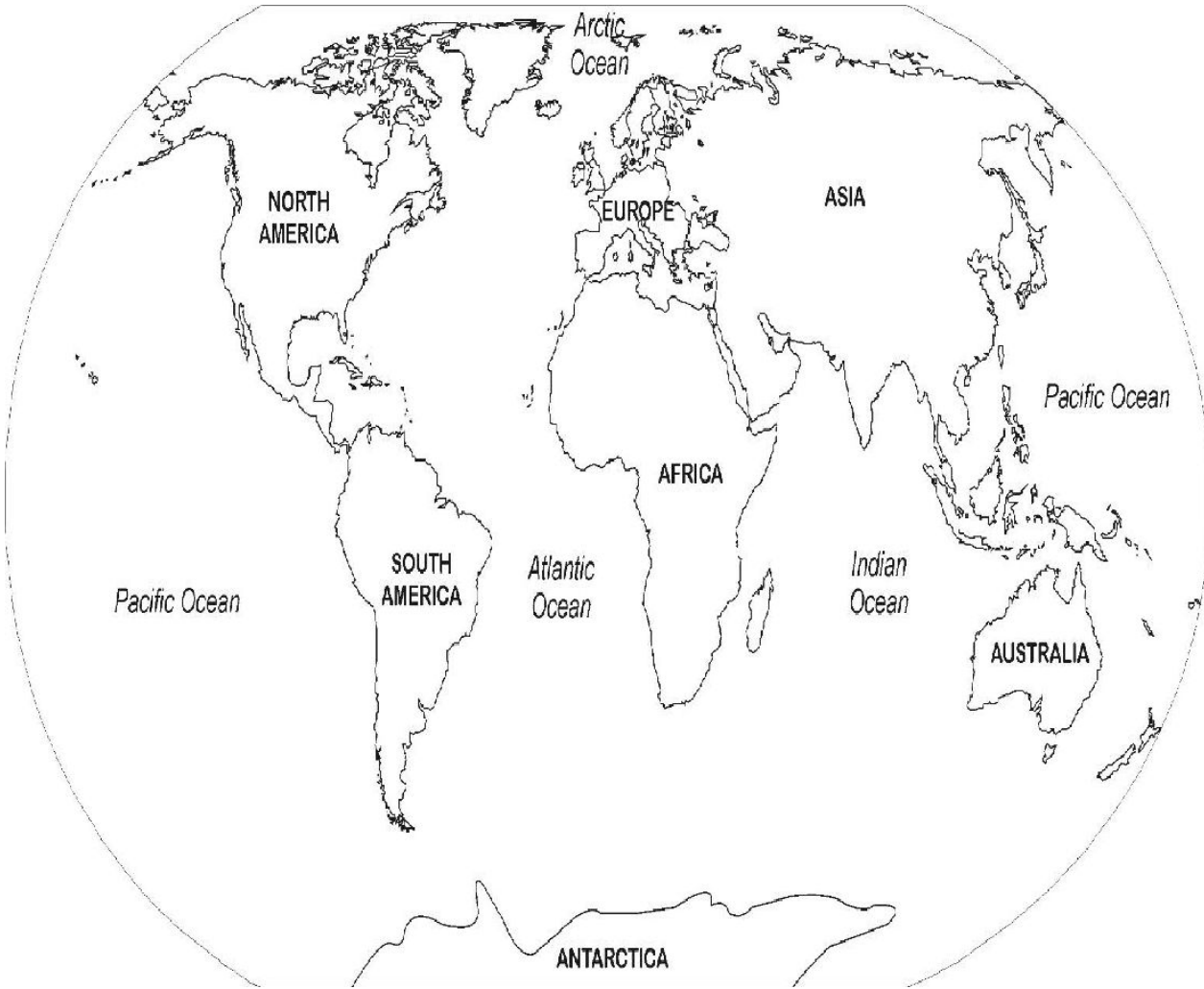


FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

QUIZ 1

1. Where is Palestine situated?

- (a) Asia
- (b) West Asia
- (c) Europe

2. Palestine is at the crossroads of which three continents?

3. Which sea can be found next to Palestine

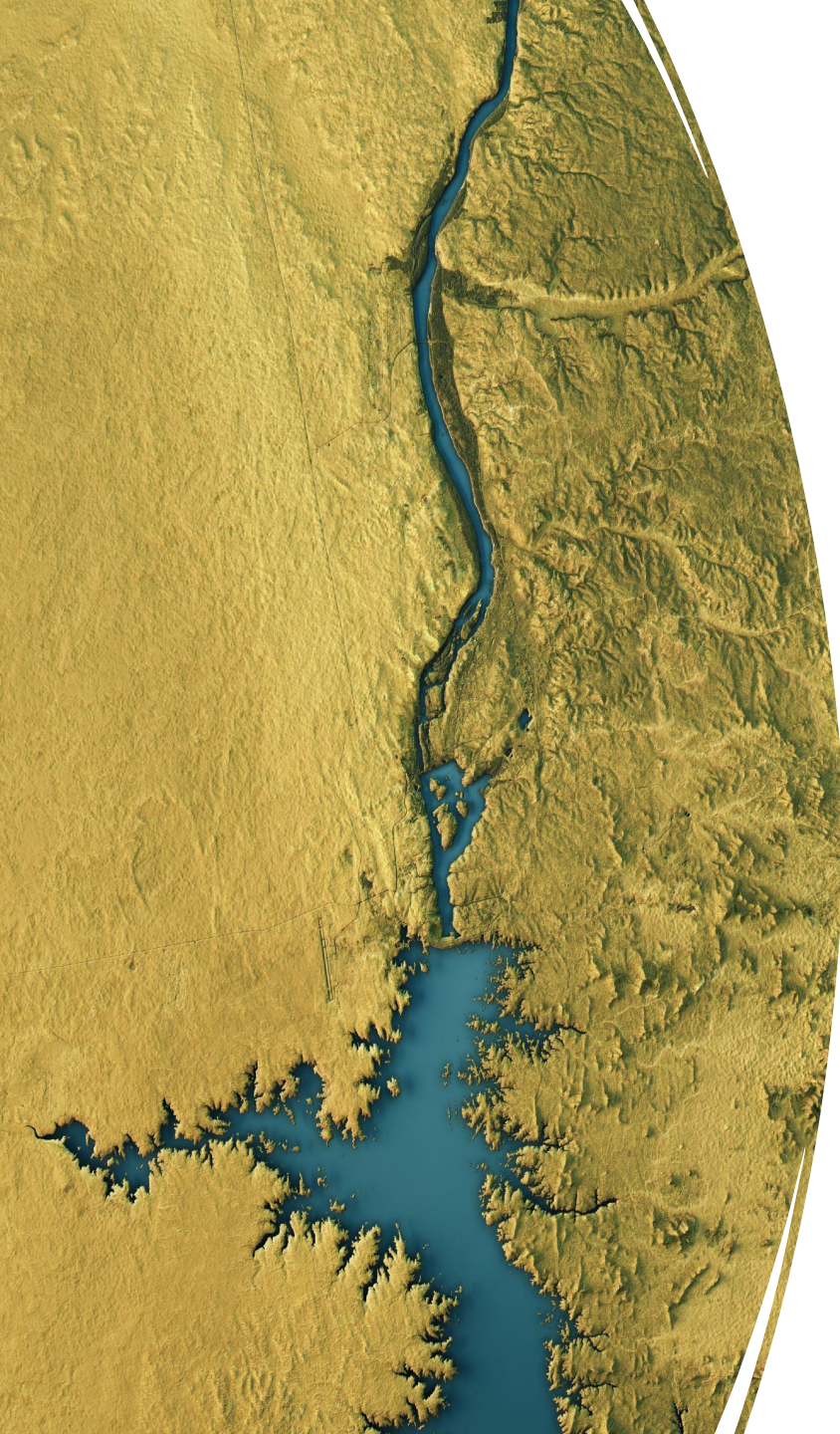
4. Which countries surround Palestine?

5. Which river is on the border of Palestine?

6. What are the two main areas in Palestine where the Palestinians live?

7. The Palestinians say, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Shall be Free.” Which river and which sea are they referring to?

8. Why do they refer to the area as the West Bank?



Answers to the Quiz

1. Where is Palestine situated? **(b) West Asia**
2. Palestine is at the crossroads of which three continents? **Asia, Europe, and Africa**
3. Which sea can be found next to Palestine? **Mediterranean Sea**
4. Which countries surround Palestine? **Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon**
5. Which river is on the border of Palestine? **Jordan River**
6. What are the two main areas in Palestine where the Palestinians live? **Gaza and the West Bank**
7. “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Shall be Free.” **Refers to the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea**
8. Why do they refer to the area as the West Bank? **Because it is situated on the west bank of the Jordan River**

UNIT 2



Unit 2: 1. What Does “*Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*” Mean?

- In Arabic, Palestine is often called *Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*
- This means ‘The Holy Land’ or ‘The Blessed Land’
- Why? Because Allah (swt) has blessed this land in many ways, the Qur’an tells us about its blessed nature

الأرض المقدسة



يَقُومُوا أَدْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ
الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَى
أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا
خَاسِرِينَ ٢١

O my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah has destined for you 'to enter'. And do not turn back or else you will become losers.

(Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:21)

BAYT AL-MAQDIS REFERS TO BOTH...

BAYT AL-MAQDIS

بيت المقدس

THE SACRED HOUSE



**= AL-AQSA
MOSQUE**

**AND ITS SURROU-
NDING BLESSED LAND**

• Bayt al-Maqdis (بيت المقدسة)

- Bayt al-Maqdis is an Arabic term that literally translates to "The Holy House" or "The Noble Sanctuary."
- It is primarily used to refer to Jerusalem and, more specifically, to the al-Aqsa Mosque within the Old City of Jerusalem and its surrounding blessed land.
- The term is synonymous with **Al-Quds** (Arabic: الْقُدْس), which also means "The Holy One" and is the Arabic name for Jerusalem.

Unit 2:

2. A Land Chosen for Prophets

- Many great prophets of Allah (swt) walked this land, lived here, or delivered their message here, which makes Palestine very special
- Can you name some of them?

YOUR PROPHETS ﷺ AND MASJID AL-AQSA

Adam ﷺ built
al-Aqsa.

Ibrahim ﷺ
migrated to
al-Aqsa.

Ishaq ﷺ helped
to rebuild
al-Aqsa.

Musa ﷺ
asked Allah to
be buried
close to al-Aqsa.

Dawood ﷺ
fought for
and liberated
al-Aqsa.

Sulayman ﷺ
passed away
in al-Aqsa.

Zakariyyah ﷺ
was an Imam
of al-Aqsa.

Eesa ﷺ grew
up in
al-Aqsa.

Muhammad ﷺ
entered the Heavens
from al-Aqsa and led
all the Prophets in
Salaah in al-Aqsa.

Important Note:

- All the prophets were sent with the same message of *Tawhid* (belief in One Allah)
- As Muslims, we believe in and honour every prophet that Allah (swt) sent
- Sometimes we hear names like “David” or “Solomon” and think they belong only to other religions. But in Islam, they are **Prophet Dawud (as) and Prophet Sulaiman (as)**, chosen by Allah (swt) and part of our history
- Palestine is not just “a land of prophets” — it is the land of *our prophets*, and this makes it even more special for us as Muslims

QUIZ 2

1. The Arabic term "*Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*" translates to:

- (a) The Green Land
- (b) The Desert Land
- (c) The Holy Land
- (d) The Cold Land

2. Which of the following Qur'anic verse(s) explicitly references the blessed surroundings of al-Aqsa Mosque?

- (a) Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:144
- (b) Surah Al-Isra, 17:1
- (c) Surah Al-Kahf, 18:9
- (d) Surah Al-Fatiha, 1:1

3. Prophet Musa (Moses) instructed his people to enter the Holy Land, as mentioned in which Surah?

- (a) Surah Al-Anbiya
- (b) Surah Al-Isra
- (c) Surah Al-Ma'idah
- (d) Surah Al Baqarah

4. Which prophet is known for building a great place of worship in Jerusalem and for his wisdom?

- (a) Prophet Dawud (as) (David)
- (b) Prophet Isa (as) (Jesus)
- (c) Prophet Sulaiman (as) (Solomon)
- (d) Prophet Yahya (as) (John the Baptist)

5. Which prophet is NOT mentioned as having a connection to Palestine in the notes?

- (a) Prophet Ibrahim (as) (Abraham)
- (b) Prophet Musa (as) (Moses)
- (c) Prophet Nuh (as) (Noah)
- (d) Prophet Isa (as) (Jesus)

Answers to the Quiz

1. The Arabic term "*Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*" translates to: **(c) The Holy Land**
2. Which of the following Qur'anic verses explicitly references the blessed surroundings of al-Aqsa Mosque? **(b) Surah Al-Isra, 17:1**
3. Prophet Musa (as) (Moses) instructed his people to enter the Holy Land, as mentioned in which Surah? **(c) Surah Al-Ma'idah**
4. Which prophet is known for building a great place of worship in Jerusalem and for his wisdom? **(a) Prophet Dawud (as) (David)**
5. Which prophet is NOT mentioned as having a connection to Palestine in the notes? **(c) Prophet Nuh (as) (Noah)**

UNIT 3



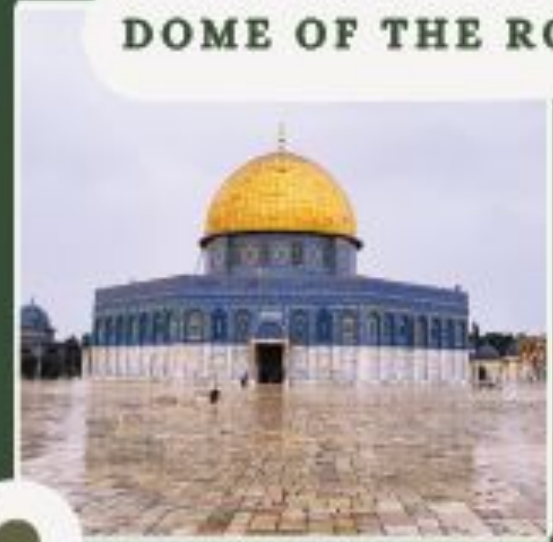
Unit 3: 1. The Noble Sanctuary - Masjid al-Aqsa

- The most important place in Palestine is al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem
- It was the first Qibla (direction of prayer) for Muslims
- It was the second mosque built on earth for the worship of Allah (swt)
- It is one of the three holiest sites in Islam

(**Note:** This is just an introduction; al-Aqsa will be covered in detail in a later module)



JAMI MUSALLAH



DOMES OF THE ROCK



MASJID AL-AQSA

Key Teaching Point: The statement "al-Aqsa was the first Qiblah" is contextually correct when speaking about the Muslim Ummah after Prophet Muhammad's (saw) prophethood, but the Kaaba was in fact the first Qibla.

Historical Timeline Summary:

1. **Pre-Adam:** Angels build Ka'bah
2. **Adam to Nuh:** Ka'bah is the Qiblah
3. **After the Flood:** Ka'bah destroyed
4. **Ibrahim (as) & Ismail (as):** Rebuild Ka'bah
5. **Prophets of Banu Israeel:** Jerusalem becomes Qiblah (while some prophets faced towards both al-Aqsa & indirectly towards the Ka'bah)
6. **Prophet Muhammad (saw) first 16-17 months:** Jerusalem Qibla
7. **Prophet Muhammad (saw) after Hijra:** Ka'bah restored as eternal Qiblah

2. A Land Revered by Many – Holy to Muslims, Christians, and Jews

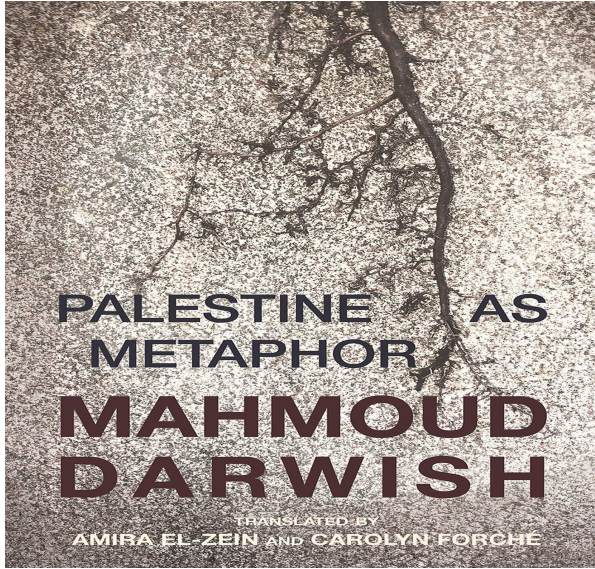
- **Sacred to Muslims:** Palestine is home to Al-Aqsa Mosque, first Qibla for Muslims, & place of Isra and Mi'raj
- **Sacred to Christians:** Birthplace of Isa (as) (Jesus), Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Isa's (as) prophetic mission was in Palestine
- **Sacred to Jews:** Many Jewish prophets and sacred events are tied to this land and is the focal point of Jewish prayers and religious observance

3. Rich Cultural Heritage - A Tapestry of Cultures



- **Deep Historical Roots:** Palestine is a cradle of civilizations and prophets, home to sacred places like Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque
- **Cuisine:** Famous dishes include musakhan (chicken with onions, sumac, and bread), maqluba (upside-down rice dish), and kanafeh (sweet cheese pastry)
- **Art and Handicrafts:** Tatreez (traditional embroidery) is a UNESCO-recognized heritage, with different regions having unique patterns

3. Rich Cultural Heritage - A Tapestry of Cultures



- **Oral Tradition, Poetry, and Literature:** Palestinians have a strong storytelling and poetry tradition. Poets like Mahmoud Darwish gave voice to identity, longing, and resistance



- **Connection to the Land:** The olive tree is a powerful cultural and spiritual symbol of steadfastness (Sumud)

QUIZ 3

1. What was al-Aqsa Mosque to Muslims before the Kaaba?

- (a) The second Qibla
- (b) The first Qibla
- (c) One of the three holiest sites
- (d) A place for trade

2. What is Tatreez?

- (a) A traditional Palestinian dance
- (b) A type of olive tree
- (c) Traditional Palestinian embroidery
- (d) A historical building

3. Besides Muslims, which other religions consider Palestine a holy place?

- (a) Hinduism and Buddhism
- (b) Sikhism and Jainism
- (c) Christianity and Judaism
- (d) Zoroastrianism and Baha'i Faith

Answers to the Quiz 3

1. What was al-Aqsa Mosque to Muslims before the Kaaba?

(b) The first Qibla

2. What is Tatreez?

(c) Traditional Palestinian embroidery

3. Besides Muslims, which other religions consider Palestine a holy place?

(c) Christianity and Judaism



Conclusion: Why Do We Learn About Palestine?

- Our Connection to the Blessed Land
- Learning about Palestine helps us understand our Islamic history
- It connects us to the land of Prophets and al-Aqsa Mosque
- It teaches us about resilience, faith, and the importance of justice





MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Middle School Activity 1: Prophet's Timeline

Objective: Students will identify and sequence the prophets associated with Palestine.

Materials: Long strip of paper or string, index cards, markers.

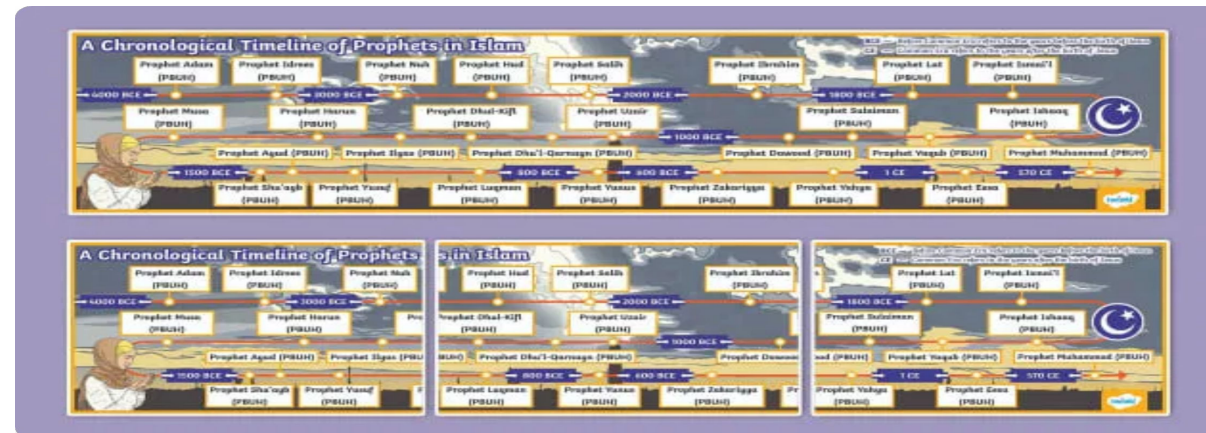
Instructions:

1. Create a timeline on the floor or wall using the paper/string.
2. Provide students with index cards. On each card, they should write the name of a prophet mentioned in the notes and a brief note about their connection to Palestine.

- Ibrahim (as) (Abraham)
- Sulaiman (as) (Solomon)
- Isa (as) (Jesus)
- Lut (as) (Lot)
- Zakariya (as) (Zechariah)
- Muhammad (saw)
- Dawud (as) (David)
- Yahya (as) (John)

3. Students then place their prophet cards on the timeline in chronological order (to the best of their knowledge, emphasizing that exact dates are not the primary focus, but rather the sequence and connection).

4. Discuss the significance of so many prophets being connected to this land.



Middle School Activity 2: Cultural Connections - Food

Objective: *Students will explore and appreciate aspects of Palestinian culture*

Activity: Students research Palestinian food and prepare a short presentation or creative representation.

Knafeh: A traditional Palestinian dessert made with thin noodle-like pastry, soaked in sweet syrup, and layered with cheese. It's often garnished with crushed pistachios and served warm.

Maqluba: A traditional Palestinian dish that literally means "upside-down" in Arabic. It consists of meat (lamb or chicken), rice, and fried vegetables placed in a pot which is then flipped upside down when served, hence the name.

Discussion Points: How do traditional foods reflect cultural identity?

What ingredients are common in Palestinian cuisine and why?



Knafeh - Traditional
Palestinian Dessert



Maqluba - "Upside-down"
Rice Dish



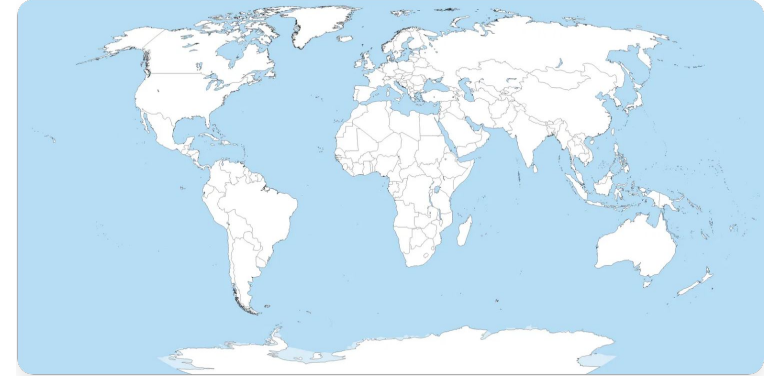
HIGH SCHOOL INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

High School Activity 1: Geopolitical Significance of Palestine

Objective: Students will analyse the geopolitical importance of Palestine due to its geographical location.

Materials: World political maps

- Access to current events news (online or print)
- Research materials on historical trade routes



Instructions:

- Students will research historical trade routes and their connection to the West Asia
- Research the Silk Road and its passage through the West Asia
- Investigate spice routes connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe
- Explore how Palestine's location influenced these trade networks
- Research current geopolitical events in the region
- Consider how historical trade patterns continue to influence modern geopolitics

High School Activity 2: Cultural Preservation and Identity

Objective: Students will explore the rich cultural heritage of Palestine and understand the importance of cultural preservation in maintaining identity amidst historical challenges.

Materials:

- Resources on Palestinian traditional arts (e.g., tatreez, cuisine)
- Historical accounts of cultural resilience
- Examples of contemporary Palestinian cultural initiatives

Instructions:

Students will choose one aspect of Palestinian culture (e.g., tatreez, cuisine, literature) and conduct an in-depth study.

- Research the historical origins and evolution of the chosen cultural element
- Analyze its significance in Palestinian identity and resistance
- Explore how it is practiced or expressed today
- Present findings through a multimedia presentation, research paper, or creative project





**ARE THERE ANY
QUESTIONS?**