

ZIONISM: SHARED IDEA, DIVERSE APPLICATIONS



VALUE

UNITY AND MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Achdut v'Areyvut

Zionism is a word that stirs deep emotions. It can mean pride and belonging for some, and for others, it can feel loaded with complexity. Before we talk about Zionism, we need to clarify what we're talking about. This session begins by distinguishing between two essential aspects of Zionism: the **IDEA** and the **APPLICATION**. While we introduced these terms on the trip, this session goes deeper and offers new resources.

This session also connects deeply to the value of **Unity and Mutual Responsibility**, *achdut v'areyvut*. By exploring both the **idea** of Zionism and its diverse **applications**, we engage in learning that strengthens our ability to hold complexity while affirming shared commitments, to each other, to the Jewish people, and to Israel.



TIMELINE: 90 MIN

BEGIN WITH INTENTION | 5 MIN

DEFINE AND EXPLORE TERMS | 10 MIN

ENGAGE WITH ZIONISM AS A CONTINUUM | 25 MIN

WATCH A VIDEO AND DISCUSS IT | 40 MIN

CLOSING REFLECTIONS AND TAKEAWAYS | 5 MIN

END WITH MEANING | 5 MIN



WHO LEADS THE SESSION

This session is co-led by the Community Leader(s) and participants. The Community Leader(s) facilitate the overall structure, guide transitions between parts of the session, and support respectful dialogue. Participants step into leadership by reading aloud, sharing personal reflections during the continuum activity, and helping facilitate small group discussions and note-catchers during the video portion. This shared leadership models open-hearted engagement and affirms that each voice adds value to the learning.



MATERIALS FOR THIS WORKSHOP

- Video playback setup for the OpenDor Media video
- Pens for participant reflections

OPTIONAL

- Large signs labeled “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” for the continuum activity
- Chart paper and markers to visualize takeaways



BRINGING THE LEARNING HOME

This session offers a natural way to bring the learning into your home. **After the session, consider watching the OpenDor video again with your older children or family members. Use the note-catcher table to guide a simple conversation at the dinner table or during a quiet moment together.** Ask them: What surprised you? What do you want to learn more about? Framing the conversation as an exploration, not a debate, models what it means to stay in the conversation, even when it's complicated. By sharing what you learned, you also reinforce that our relationships with Israel and with one another are shaped by curiosity, care, and responsibility.



FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Review the session structure and timing to stay on track throughout the 90 min
- Watch the OpenDor Media video in advance, filling out the note-catcher yourself so you're familiar with key themes and can support participants
- Prepare to briefly explain the difference between the idea and application of Zionism, including the categories explored
- Set up the room with space for the physical continuum activity
- Be ready to emphasize unity, respectful listening, and curiosity over agreement

PART I

DEFINE AND EXPLORE TERMS



10 MIN

The IDEA of Zionism is ancient. It's embedded in Jewish identity itself—our spiritual, emotional, and historical connection to the Land of Israel. This connection stretches back to Abraham and Sarah and has endured across centuries of exile, persecution, and hope. It's what we remember in our prayers, our holidays, and our most cherished dreams. It is a unifying idea that lives at the heart of Jewish life.

Before moving into new material, invite a volunteer to read Zohar Raviv's explanation of the idea of Zionism:

“Zion” appears over 150 times in the Hebrew Bible. The longing for Zion was woven into the very fabric of Jewish faith and lived experiences since the first exile some 2500 years ago. It is the persistent memory, recognition, and longing for Israel as the Jewish Homeland, irrespective of the myriads of lands that have since become home for Jews.

Zionism is the revival of a pledge wherein Jews are proactive and sovereign owners of their own destiny, agents of social change, builders of communities, and creators of a better present as well as a future. Zionism is a proactive vision rooted in the ancient Jewish connection to the Land of Israel, one that seeks to actualize the values of the Jewish people in the form of a modern state among the family of nations.

— Dr. Zohar Raviv

- Consider: what about this idea can be unifying across time?
- Consider: what about this idea can be unifying across perspectives?

The APPLICATION of Zionism, however, has many visions and diverse plans. How that ancient idea should be lived out in the world has looks different to different people in different times. To this day there are different visions, both among Israelis, and among those of us who live elsewhere around the world.

On the trip we spoke about three of the multiple visions: political, religious, and cultural. In this session we'll further explore these and other applications. These visions aren't mutually exclusive, but they don't always sit neatly together either.

We'll begin with getting out of our seats to see where we stand regarding different statements on Zionism.

PART II

ZIONISM AS A CONTINUUM



25 MIN

This activity is designed to spark personal reflection and group dialogue by exploring a range of perspectives in the room.

Step 1: Physical Continuum Exercise

10 MIN

Designate one side of the room as “Strongly Agree” and the other as “Strongly Disagree.” Read each statement aloud, one at a time. Participants should move to the spot along the continuum that best reflects their personal response. After each statement, invite 2–3 volunteers to briefly share why they chose their position.

STATEMENTS:

- Israel is central to my Jewish story and identity.
- Supporting Jewish self-determination in the land of Israel is an important part of being Jewish today.
- I feel confident talking about Zionism with my child(ren).
- Since the war, I have heard more people express that a commitment to Zionism can be at odds with other Jewish values.

Step 2: Full Group Conversation

15 MIN

After completing the physical activity, return to your seats for a group conversation. *Remember: This activity isn’t about reaching consensus. It’s about practicing how we speak to one another with openness and respect, even when we differ.*

- What did you notice as you moved through this exercise?
- Were any statements harder to respond to? Why?
- Did anything surprise you about your own position? How so?

This activity is not about agreement, but about discovering the complexity within us and our community.

PART III

VIDEO & CONVERSATION



40 MIN

Use the note-catcher on pages 9 and 10 to jot down your thoughts as you watch a [20-min video](#) from OpenDor Media, a leading producer of Jewish digital media that brings Jewish history, values, and identity to life. Take special note of new insights, anything challenging or surprising, and what you would want others to know.



Scan the QR code to watch the video

RITUALS THAT POINT TO THE IDEA OF ZIONISM

ABOUT THEODOR HERZL

POLITICAL APPLICATION OF ZIONISM

LABOR APPLICATION OF ZIONISM

CULTURAL APPLICATION OF ZIONISM

REVOLUTIONIST APPLICATION OF ZIONISM

RELIGIOUS APPLICATION OF ZIONISM



RELIGIOUS NON-ZIONISM

A NEW INSIGHT

SOMETHING CHALLENGING OR SURPRISING

PART III
VIDEO &
CONVERSATION

Break into small groups and each share (10 min):

- A new insight
- Something challenging or surprising
- What you would like others to know.

This is your opportunity to process and articulate your thoughts, helping you build confidence in how you speak about Zionism.

After 10 min, invite a representative from each group to briefly share one insight from their conversation with the larger group (5 min).

PART IV
CLOSING
REFLECTION &
TAKEAWAYS



5 MIN

Close by journaling individually or reflecting with a partner.

- What's one new thing you learned today about Zionism?
- What's one way you'll continue this conversation, perhaps with your child, a friend, or your community?

Having courageous, open-hearted conversations about Zionism strengthens your ability to speak with confidence and integrity. Whether you are leading these discussions or simply participating in them, your voice matters.

You can love Israel deeply and still wrestle with the complexity this may hold for you. You can honor different perspectives and still hold fast to your values. **You have the power to create meaningful dialogue within your family and community.**