

# MESSAGE TO AMERICA

*Salt of the Earth: Palestinian Christians in the Northern West Bank*  
Study Guide (leader version)  
<http://www.saltfilms.net>

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**Summary:** People from each short film were asked what they want to say to Americans, especially Christians in America. In this session, we will hear their answers and consider how we can respond.

**Supplies:** Everyone should have a Bible. Bring copies of this session's student guide (including, if desired, the class evaluation on the last page of the guide). You should have a board or flipchart.

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## 5 *Prayer and introduction*

*min* Greet everyone. This session is generally a concluding session for the series, but if you are beginning the study series today, spend a moment to go over class objectives and expectations (see <http://www.saltfilms.net/guides/overview.pdf>). If you have already begun the series, and your class is following the Daily Walk, you may invite people to share any reflections they may have from the previous week.

Hand out the student guides and introduce today's study: *Today, we will hear from people from all the short films, sharing what they'd like to say to Americans, especially American Christians. And we will consider how we might respond.*

Invite someone to open the session in prayer or use the sample prayer at right.

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Sample Prayer  
*Merciful Lord, open our hearts and minds to hear the voices of our brothers and sisters in Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## 2 *Scripture*

*min* Invite someone to read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 aloud.

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## 10 *Questions*

*min* As a group, discuss:  
*How do you see this passage applying to different levels of the Church? For example, consider individual members of a congregation, different churches in a community, the Church throughout the world.*  
Write the last verse of the scripture passage on a board (1 Corinthians 12:26) and encourage people to keep this in mind as they watch the film segment.

## **Leader notes** I Corinthians

This is the same passage as is in the Daily Walk for Resurrection. If you have done that session and if members of your class have been following the Daily Walk, then you might especially encourage them to share their thoughts on this passage.

3  
min

**Film**  
Show “Message  
to America.”

**Leader Notes film**

**This segment is not among the other nine segments. To get to it, click on “credits” on the main menu. Then click on “Message to America.”**

This short piece is a combination of film credits and an opportunity for people from each segment to share a message with us. On the right side of the screen you will see a scrolling list of credits. In the background you will hear the Lord’s Prayer sung in Arabic. On the left side of the screen will be still photos of people from each segment with subtitles:

Jeries (subject of “Life” segment with his brother Elia):

I want to say to Americans: we are living in danger and fear. I hope you pray for us so that we can live in security, free from these problems.

Yvonne (subject of “Exile”):

We want the world to have compassion for us, to help us solve our problems so we can live in peace. We want peace.

Sylvia (subject of “The Way”):

I hope people teach their children that there are Christians in Palestine, so that they come here and embrace their faith more strongly. Come and celebrate Christmas in the land of Christmas.

Fr. Firas (subject of “Resurrection”):

Come visit us. See how we live, how we serve Christ. Then you will see that you need us as we need you.

Mughannam (Subject of “Advent”):

We Arab Christians living in the Holy Land, in Palestine, face many problems. Our voice needs to be heard. We need people to help us.

Sa’ed (subject of “The Wall”):

I ask one thing: speak to your decision-makers so they would view the issues here justly.

Fr. Tomie (subject of “A Mantle” and also in “The Way”):

We hope the Church in the West would remember us in their prayers. And we hope that we would always be true brothers in Christ.

Fr. Hosam (in “Life” and “The Cross”):

We are Christians who think about you as Americans and pray for you and love you. We are here for you and we hope to hear that you are there for us.

Sawsan (subject of “The Garden”):

May your faith be strong; may you always rely on God. May you hope for peace, not just in Palestine, because there are problems all over the world.

*Leader notes film continued*

Fr. Aktham (in “Advent” and “The Garden”)

This is the longing of the world, to live in peace; that the wolf live with the lamb, that the leopard lie down with the kid, that we would live in peace.

Afaf (subject of “The Cross”)

Go step by step with Jesus, because everything will vanish and disappear. But the words of God remain.

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**20 Questions**

*min* 1) 10 min: In groups of 2 to 4 discuss:

*Did any of the messages surprise you? Did any of them interest you? How can you imagine responding to these messages—individually and/or as a congregation?*

2) 10 min: Reconvene as one group and invite people to share insights from their small group discussions. Are there ways the group would like to remain involved in these issues? You may encourage interested people to investigate resources listed in “Continuing the Journey” (at the end of this study guide) or elsewhere and reconvene at some point for prayerful discernment of next steps.

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**3 to Closing and prayer**

*10 min* 3 min: Solicit prayer concerns from the group and then close in prayer, using your own or the sample prayer at right.

Optional Evaluation (7 min)

Distribute and ask people to complete class evaluations (you may use the prepared one at the end of the teacher guide or your own). In the interests of continually improving the study series, the creators of the film and curriculum would very much like to get this feedback. As an incentive, if you have your class complete evaluations and send them to us (Salt Films, 1891 Sandlewood Lane, Atlanta GA 30341), **we will send you an additional copy of the film at no cost to you.** Thank you!

**Sample Prayer**

*Blessed Lord and Savior, we thank you for this time together, to study your Word and hear from other parts of the Church, your Body. Let us suffer when our brothers and sisters suffer, and rejoice when they rejoice. Let us go step by step with you, because everything will vanish and disappear, but your word remains. In your holy name we pray. Amen.*

## Continuing the Journey

References and resources for faithful next steps in response to these stories.

Available online: <http://www.saltfilms.net/guides/message-teacher.pdf>

*Go step by step with Jesus, because everything will vanish and disappear. But the words of God remain.* –Afaf from “The Cross”

*This is the longing of the world, to live in peace; that the wolf live with the lamb, that the leopard lie down with the kid, that we would live in peace.* –Fr. Aktham from “The Garden” and “Advent”

### Pray

*We hope the Church in the West would remember us in their prayers. And we hope that we would always be true brothers in Christ.* –Fr. Tomie from “A Mantle”

*May your faith be strong; may you always rely on God. May you hope for peace, not just in Palestine, because there are problems all over the world.* –Sawsan from “The Garden”

*I want to say to Americans: we are living in danger and fear. I hope you pray for us so that we can live in security, free from these problems.* –Jerjes from “Life”

Consider intentional prayer for the region:

<http://www.saltfilms.net/now.html#pray>

### Visit

*I hope people teach their children that there are Christians in Palestine, so that they come here and embrace their faith more strongly. Come and celebrate Christmas in the land of Christmas.* –Sylvia from “The Way”

*Come visit us. See how we live, how we serve Christ. Then you will see that you need us as we need you.* –Fr. Firas from “Resurrection”

Consider taking a pilgrimage with your congregation or committing to a longer period of service in the region:

<http://www.saltfilms.net/now.html#visit>

### Listen and Learn

*We Arab Christians living in the Holy Land, in Palestine, face many problems. Our voice needs to be heard. We need people to help us.* –Mughannam from “Advent”

Consider ways to keep listening and learning about the region:

<http://www.saltfilms.net/now.html#learn>

### Advocate

*I ask one thing: speak to your decision-makers so they would view the issues here justly.* –Sa’ed from “The Wall”

Consider sharing your concerns with your elected officials:

<http://www.saltfilms.net/now.html#advocate>

### Act

*We want the world to have compassion for us, to help us solve our problems so we can live in peace. We want peace.* –Yvonne from “Exile”

*We are Christians who think about you as Americans and pray for you and love you. We are here for you and we hope to hear that you are there for us.* –Fr. Hosam from “Life” and “The Cross”

There are a number of other creative ways to respond:

<http://www.saltfilms.net/now.html#support>

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Course Evaluation

Our class watched the following segments: (Please check)

- Advent (about religion teacher and youth group leader Mughannam)
- The Way (about college student Sylvia who lives in Tubas and studies in Nablus)
- The Wall (about Sa'ed the electrician who has lost land to the Separation Barrier)
- A Mantle (about Orthodox priest Fr. Tomie who serves congregations in 3 towns)
- Life (about two brothers who are schoolboys in Nablus)
- Exile (about Yvonne who recalls her childhood in Haifa and fleeing during 1948 war)
- Recurrence (about Fr. Firas and the reopening of the Melkite church in his town)
- The Garden (about Sawsan who is a school secretary and lives in Jenin)
- The Cross (about Afaf who lives in Nablus and volunteers with Mother Theresa sisters)
- Message to America (people from each segment share a message as credits roll)

I followed the "Daily Walk" part of the study guide

- never
- occasionally
- just about every week

I most enjoyed the following aspects of this course:

I least enjoyed the following aspects of this course:

The course could be improved this way:

Please circle the appropriate number (5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree)

I learned important things about Holy Land Christians	5	4	3	2	1
I learned important things about my own faith life	5	4	3	2	1
I would recommend the course to others	5	4	3	2	1
I want to get more involved in these issues	5	4	3	2	1

*Please put additional comments on the back of this sheet. Thank you!*