



THE INTERFAITH PEACE-BUILDERS DIFFERENCE

Our Commitment to Fostering a Transformative Experience

Interfaith Peace-Builders works hard to make each delegation we organize a unique experience that meets the goals of participants. Here are some of the features that make IFPB delegations unique:

- 1. Empowering Individuals to Make a Difference:** IFPB devotes more time and resources to participant support and mentoring than any other comparable program. We set the expectation of post-delegation education and advocacy work and support delegate efforts to share the experience. We provide concrete resources on a variety of levels, including direct media advocacy training; resources for congressional engagement; support for grassroots activism; emotional support after an intense two-weeks; and consultation, brainstorming and editing of writings, presentations and other 'report-backs' to engage and inform local communities.
- 2. Preparation:** We know that thorough pre-trip preparation helps ensure an efficient and successful delegation. We provide a comprehensive Welcome Packet with cultural information, logistics, packing info, and what to expect on the delegation. Additionally, a detailed reading packet, an email listserv that introduces leaders and fellow delegates before embarking, and our commitment to extensive communication between staff and participants are integral parts of pre-trip preparation.
- 3. Orientation:** IFPB is one of the only delegation programs with an in-person orientation in the US. This orientation is a chance for delegates to meet, learn and discuss background on the region and its culture, and identify their personal and group goals for the delegation. Planning media and other work after the delegation is also a part of orientation. Participant evaluations consistently highlight the orientation as one of the most important parts of the experience.
- 4. Commitment to Safety:** Safety of the participants on an Interfaith Peace-Builders delegation is something that we take seriously. Interfaith Peace-Builders staff carefully monitor the situation and are in regular conversation with our Israeli and Palestinian colleagues to ensure that delegations can be safely sent.
- 5. A Unique Itinerary for Each Delegation:** IFPB staff plan a unique itinerary for each delegation. We prioritize meetings with Israelis and Palestinians who are working for reconciliation, human rights, justice, and a better future. We feature meetings with representatives of Israeli and Palestinian societies and international organizations working in the area. Our individual attention to each itinerary assures that IFPB delegations address timely topics and meet emerging new voices.
- 6. More Time in Israel:** IFPB delegations spend more time in Israel than many other similar tours. We feel that a true understanding of the conflict necessitates meeting and hearing from both Israeli Jews and Israeli Palestinians in addition to (of course) spending much time in the West Bank. On average we spend 30-40% of our time on the delegation in Israel. We also choose to spend most nights in Jerusalem so that participants have access to both the Western and Eastern parts of the city.
- 7. Supporting and Learning from Local Guides:** Since IFPB began, delegations have been led by a local Palestinian tour guide registered with both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government. An expert on the religion, geography, history, and politics of Israel/Palestine our guide adds much to the

experience for delegation participants. Additionally, our delegations always further support the local economy by staying in local hotels and introducing participants to souvenirs produced by womens' collectives, refugee associations, etc. In 2008 the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism introduced a *Code of Conduct for Tourism in the Holy Land*. IFPB is proud to say that our delegations always have, and will continue to, adhere to the guidelines of this code.

8. **Skilled Leaders:** In addition to a local guide, each delegation is led by a team of two skilled leaders from North America. Delegation leaders are selected by IFPB for their knowledge of the region, understanding of the international movement for Israeli-Palestinian peace, leadership and facilitation skills. Leaders provide context, facilitate group sessions and lead workshops in skill-building. Leaders act as a bridge for focusing the on-the-ground experience and transforming the two-week delegation into a prolonged period of activism and advocacy for a just peace in Israel/Palestine.
9. **Group Processing Time Facilitated by the Delegation Leaders:** During the delegation we set aside time almost every day for a participant group meeting. We feel that this time is an essential part of the delegation: it affords emotional support during an intense experience, allows people from different backgrounds to interact with each other and the experience, and provides an opportunity to discuss and process the information they are receiving. Even delegates who are at first skeptical of 'group sharing' often cite these sessions as an integral part of the experience. We continue this group support with listserv and conference call communications after the delegation.
10. **Homestays:** Each delegation features 2-3 nights staying in the homes, villages, refugee camps, and farms of local Palestinians. When possible, similar overnights are arranged with Israeli families. Providing delegation participants the opportunity to interact and learn directly from 'everyday' Palestinians and Israelis allows for a more holistic and powerful experience and promotes long-term relationships of friendship and support.
11. **Evaluating our Work:** We are always looking for feedback from program participants and stakeholders. We conduct written participant evaluations of our orientation sessions, delegation programs, and North American trainings. We also thoroughly debrief each delegation with delegation leaders. Many program ideas and innovations have come from these evaluations – and we remain committed to evaluating our performance and ensuring that participant goals continue to be met.
12. **The Ultimate Goal: Movement-Building:** In addition to immediate support for delegate efforts, we focus on a long-term vision of contributing to an international movement for peace with justice in Israel/Palestine. We connect delegates to each other, allied organizations, and important new initiatives for education, advocacy, and activism on this issue. We also prioritize partnership and coalition work. Since 2000, IFPB has worked with eleven different organizations on 23 of our 35 delegations. Our other efforts, such as the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day, have also afforded opportunities for coalition work and partnership.

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