

Epiphany Devotion

Megan Mong, YAGM

¹Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

²Worship the Lord with gladness;

Come into the Lord's presence with singing.

(Psalm 100:1-2)

The best advice I have heard since arriving in Palestine this year has been, “Sing, even if you don’t know the words. Just try!” which was said by one of my teachers, Melvy, to our students. I work at Al-Mahaba Kindergarten and Nursery at Augusta Victoria Hospital’s campus on the Mount of Olives. My students are aged 1.5 years old to 3.5 years old and mainly speak Arabic, German, and English.

We start our mornings in kindergarten with an hour of singing. We sing in English and Arabic. Some of the songs I know really well, like *the hokey pokey* and *the wheels on the bus*. Other songs, usually in Arabic, I have no idea what the song is or what the words are actually supposed to be. I still try to sing to help encourage the kids, but also to learn more Arabic. I can now sing half of the *Itsy Bitsy Spider* in Arabic!! The other two teachers try to translate the songs, so I know what the song is about

I have found myself singing many times this year without having any idea what the words are. Within a couple weeks of arriving I was invited on a work retreat with my second placement, the ELCJHL staff. My Arabic was still terrible and pretty much non-existent. We visited many places in Haifa, including the Stella Maris Church which is the site of Elijah’s sacrifice. Bishop Azar asked his daughter to start singing a hymn, which quickly turned into most of the staff joining in. I caught myself singing attempting to sing along too. The hymn was beautiful and familiar, although I’m not sure I had heard it before. I felt a peace for the first time during that moment that I hadn’t felt since arriving. I didn’t know the words, but I was trying to sing.



Devotion Questions:

- Where can you sing without knowing the words?
- How can you find peace outside of your comfort zones?

Prayer:

*Dear God, give us the courage to enter the song without knowing the words as we engage with the communities around us. Give our communities grace to help us learn the words, however slowly that may go. Let us feel the grace to encourage us to stay in the song, our voice growing louder and more accustomed to the words. **Amen.***



Staff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land trip to Haifa.



*The birthday breakfast my coworkers put together for me!
Standing: Ranan Issa, Antoinette Karam, Tamara Zahran,
Doris Awad Atik
Sitting: Megan Mong and Meghan Aelabouni*

