

Jerusalem שלום peace سلام Peacebuilders



EXCEL INSTITUTE

*EXPLORING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION,
EDUCATION, AND LEADERSHIP*

Program Overview: Jerusalem Peacebuilders (JPB) announces a special intensive training program this summer for Houston area teachers. EXCEL combines dialogue, cross-cultural communication, storytelling, critical reflection, networking, and curriculum design to empower participants with an array of professional skills, relationships, and recognition.

EXCEL aims to help participants:

- Increase capacities to integrate the practices and theories of experiential education, intergroup relations, and conflict transformation in their classrooms and curricula
- Understand intergroup dialogue and communication skills
- Advance intergroup relations
- Foster empathy through story exchange
- Participate in cultural activities that widen perspectives
- Meet educators from diverse backgrounds in Jerusalem
- Develop professional relationships and educational models for inter-school engagement

Dates & Location: June 8-13, Camp Allen, Navasota, TX

Cost: \$250 per person (scholarships available)

The cost of the program includes:

- Room in Camp Allen Lakeside Cabins
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily
- Extra-curricular activities
- Professional Certificate upon completion
- CPE Hours (pending approval)

The cost of the program does not include:

- Transportation to and from the program
- Transportation during the program

How to Apply: Are you ready to EXCEL? Submit an [application](#) for consideration. The deadline for applications is April 1st, 2026

Our Team:



The Rev. Canon Nicholas Porter, is the Co-Founder of EXCEL as well as the Founding Director of JPBLD. All JPBLD's programs are developed and informed by his experience and education. Canon Porter holds a BA in History, Yale University; MA in Middle East Studies, American University in Cairo; MA in War Studies, University of London; and a MDiv. in Theology, Yale University. He is also an alumnus of the Conflict Transformation program of the School for International Training. Central to his global ministry has been the promotion of learning, healthcare, and shared society essential to human progress and interfaith understanding.



Sarah Perle Benazera the Senior Educator and Curriculum Advisor of JPBLD. She is a humanist, peace-activist, storyteller and educator, with years of hands-on experience in international and inter-cultural dialogue working at the people-to-people level for a better Middle East. She has studied Environmental Studies and Cross-Border Cooperation at Sde Boker and the Arava Institute in Israel, as well as Political Philosophy at the Université Panthéon Sorbonne in Paris.



Blake Burns is the Houston Site-Coordinator and Lead Educator of JPB. He has been in education since 2010, and worked with students in the US and internationally. Working primarily in the Experiential Learning Cycle, he is an expert at guiding his students to knowledge in ways which last a lifetime. He has built a variety programs in Texas, Louisiana, and Massachusetts, and recipient of a Lily Grant for his work.



Dr. Elias Farah brings more than 25 years of experience in education. In recognition of his contributions to the educational community, Dr. Farah received the Rothschild Prize for Education, and in 2022, Oranim Academic College of Education in Israel honored him as a distinguished graduate. Dr. Farah holds a Ph.D. in English Literature, as well as LL.B. and LL.M. degrees. Today, he is the Executive Director of Jerusalem Peacebuilders and teaches in the B.A. and M.Ed. programs at Oranim College.

Contact: For more information about EXCEL-US, please visit our website and contact Houston Site-Coordinator, Blake Burns at: blake@jerusalempeacebuilders.org