

Ohr HaTorah Israel Trip Connected with the Land

"Each day of this trip to Israel was the best ever" was the general consensus of all 20 people on the 2011 Ohr HaTorah trip to Israel. It seems that the Israel experience keeps on getting better with each visit. There is magnificence to the Land of Milk and Honey as it offers history, renewal, and plenty of exciting activities for all ages.



Ohr HaTorah group at Kfar Kedem in ancient Talmudic village in Northern Israel dressed in ancient garb.

On June 26, a group of 20 people from Charlotte made a pilgrimage which lasted ten days and it felt like a lifetime. Going back in time to Biblical days or Talmudic days and entering the future with Israel's amazing advance in technology can leave any visitor dizzy with amazement.

That is the beauty of Israel, a fusion of the past, present and future.

We found the mood in the country uplifting and optimistic. The food was plentiful and delicious, and the energy was electrifying. Most of all we found a connection between us and the people clinging to a belief in one God, one Torah, and one people.

Judaism is anchored in the past which allows Israel to transform the future. So our journey started in the City of David which is located in East Jerusalem and continued through the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The focus of the Ohr HaTorah

trip to Israel is to explore Jewish heritage in its origin and see its development to modern day Jewish life displayed in multiple ways throughout Israel. The village of Kfar Kedem which takes its visitors back to Talmudic times, and the advanced PALMACH museum in Tel Aviv which tells the story of the War of Independence, have one shared theme: the love of the land and the sacrifices Jewish people are ready to make to keep the land.

Of course the Chabad soup kitchen in Hadera was an important place to visit. The kitchen and consignment shop, which is supported by the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, offers free meals and clothes to the poor in the Hadera region. Many in the Ohr HaTorah group brought gifts, clothes and children's toys to be distributed by the Chabad soup kitchen. Rabbi Yochanan Butman, director of the project greeted the

group and expressed his thanks for the goodwill and excellent support that he gets from Charlotte.

The trip this year was extra special as it celebrated two Bar Mitzvahs. One was that of Gavri Eshet on top of the Mount Masada. Over 60 people attended in the outdoor Beit Midrash. The ceremony was followed by a delicious kosher lunch at Kibbutz Ein Gedi.

The second Bar Mitzvah was that of Josh Gerrard in the ancient city of Tzfat in the beautiful Abuhav synagogue which is right next to the famed artist colony. The celebration continued in the evening with a cruise on the Sea of Galilee and finished with a fantastic dinner at Deck's restaurant in Tiberias. The group was joined by several other families from Charlotte who were visiting Israel at the same time.

Visiting Israel is uplifting and inspiring. This year the group was amazed by the optimistic outlook of most Israelis that we encountered and the feeling that its cause is just and worth defending. ✪



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Temple Beth El's Wildacres Congregational Retreat "Me, Myself and God," September 2-5

For decades, Temple Beth El congregants made the most of Labor Day weekend by heading off to the spectacular Blue Ridge Mountains for a congregational retreat filled with warmth, food, friendship, spirituality, Jewish learning and tons of fun. This year's Wildacres Retreat will be no different as we explore our personal and communal relationships with God and reflect on our personal theologies and liturgies.



A highlight this year will be getting to know our newest clergy, Rabbi Jonathan Freirich and Cantor Mary Thomas, and their delightful families. In addition, Rabbi David Powers and Rabbi Judy Schindler will be there to add to the spiritual conversations

and the creation of community. If you are new to the Jewish community or if you are a long-time member and feel you do not know everyone who has moved here over the past decade, this retreat offers the ideal opportunity to make new friendships and

reconnect. Join us to relax in the mountains so that you can enter the new Jewish year with a sense of renewal.

We welcome congregants of every age, from our preschoolers to our senior sages. Nonmembers can register after August 22. To register or for more information, go to www.beth-el.com or contact Sue Hummel at shummel@beth-el.com or 704-749-3054. ✪



Lake Norman Jewish Congregation High Holy Day Schedule Set

Lake Norman Jewish Congregation invites you to join us for the High Holiday celebrations. Rosh Hashanah services will be Wednesday, September 28 beginning at 6:30 PM and Thursday, September 29 beginning at 9:15 AM. Yom Kippur services will be on Friday,

October 7 at 7 PM and Saturday, October 8 at 10 AM. These services will be at Fairview United Methodist Church in Mooresville. In addition there will be services for Sukkot on Friday, October 14 and Saturday, October 15 as well as a Simchat Torah celebration on Friday, October 21. Babysitting is

available for all services. For additional information please visit www.lakenormanjc.org. ✪

