



# ASK HERZL

Program Title: Water Irrigation

Program Tagline: Have your students learn the importance of water desalination and where water resources should be allocated.

Target Audience: Middle School

Grade: 5, 6, 7, 8

Length of Program: 30 minutes

Goal: Created by Congregation Beth El in Bethesda, Maryland, this program gives students the opportunity to think of how important water is to everyday life in Israel, provides a small game to understand how water desalination works, and a discussion on where the water resources should go.

Implementation:

Materials: Buckets, colored beads

Begin with this video from YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=DYDw5a52afI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=DYDw5a52afI)

## Then Read:

Access to water has been one of the most important issues in the Middle East for thousands of years. Israel has consistently had droughts affecting the water it can access, and the only freshwater source, the Sea of Galilee, has been shrinking for years. Israel has put much of its resources towards water solutions, and Jewish National Fund has been a huge supporter of these efforts. Between drilling for water, building reservoirs, and desalination plants that turn salt water from the sea into drinkable fresh water, Israel is coming up with innovative solutions to this historical problem.

These water solutions can lead to new questions.

- When dealing with a water shortage, what are the priorities that Israel should use to determine who gets water, and how much water they get? For example, what if one farmer changed the route of a river to serve his or her own crops and in doing so prevented his neighbors from receiving any river water?
- Should water be routed to a profitable manufacturing facility, even though providing enough water to the factory would mean diverting water away from small local farms? On one hand, the factory might provide a lot of jobs to people who need them, but diverting the water would also harm the livelihood of the farmers in the region who also have families to take care of.



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- What about environmental concerns? Transporting water to or from one area to another can sometimes seriously affect or damage the natural environments, plants, and animal life.

Our activity is a fun simulation to help us think about the fact that water desalination, turning salt water into drinkable water or water that can be used for other purposes, is a high-energy and expensive process. This activity will also help us think about the challenges of deciding who gets water in a part of the world where it is a limited resource.

## **Water Irrigation Activity Instructions**

Split the group into two or three teams (depending on numbers), which will race to “desalinate” their water supply fastest.

Each team has a container filled with multi-colored beads. Identify one color bead as the “salt” that needs to be removed to make the water safe to drink.

When you say go, each team has to race to “desalinate” their supply of salt water to make it usable water. The goal is to separate out the “salt” beads from the rest of the “water” as quickly as possible.

Once both teams have sorted their beads, ask the students to then take their water beads and transfer them to their team’s designated allocation containers labeled: drinking water/population centers, agriculture/food production, industry/factories.

After the students allocate their water (or as they do if you are running short on time), ask them to reflect on why they allocated water as they did.

Reflect on:

- How did you decide how much to allocate where?
- With limited water resources, where should the priority be?



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