

Tribe 'Learn2Lead' Jerusalem - An Unforgettable Experience



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After many weeks of anticipation, the Tribe 'Learn2Lead' Jerusalem Trip was beginning. The early start was daunting, but soon enough we found ourselves getting to know one another.

Every day was special and made me appreciate Israel and its community. Some of my most memorable experiences were finding ways of communicating with people with special needs, specifically at Chimes, a special needs school; Holon's Children's Museum, a place to understand what blind people experience; and Beit Issie Shapiro, a place that uses technology to help change lives for people with disabilities.

We also learnt that no matter your situation, nothing should stop you from achieving your goals. At Spivak, a sports centre for disabled people, we were taught how sports can be

adapted to be inclusive for everyone.

It is always important to give back to the community, and this idea was exemplified across several activities, including Pantry Packers and making pizza for Israeli soldiers. This idea also came up at United Hatzalah, where volunteers give up part of their own busy lives to save others.

The thriving community in Israel was continuously evident. At King Solomon International school, we witnessed the special communal atmosphere between the students and teachers and admired the innovative campus. Later in the trip, we were all excited to have a bonfire in the forest, where we felt the group coming together as we sang songs and listened to stories. Our spirits were again lifted when we visited Yad Vashem. For many of us, it was our first visit. Personally, after going through the Hall of Names and other parts of the museum, I felt a deeper connection with those individuals who tragically lost their lives during the Holocaust. It was moving to hear people in our group sharing their family's experiences and singing

together whilst we stood by one of the original train carts used to take Jews to concentration camps. Whilst emotional, it was also uplifting to realise that this shared traumatic event in our history had not prevented us from growing as a nation.

Whilst there were many serious aspects to the trip, there was undisputedly lots of fun. Go-karting and paintball gave us the opportunity to reflect on our experiences in a light-hearted environment.

Ending the trip with Shabbat at the Kotel was particularly meaningful. We connected with God and sang songs and chants by ourselves and with others. I had the privilege of *leining* in Jerusalem - a fantastic opportunity that I won't forget.

By the end of the trip, though I was sad to leave, I knew that I felt closer to Israel and the group I had been with and would carry many messages from the trip with me in the future. I'd like to thank all the amazing madrichim, Rabbi Eli Levin and the coordinators behind the scenes, who provided us with a truly amazing, unforgettable experience.

