

Understanding the Current War with Iran

▶ Age: **9–11**

▶ Length: **45 minutes**

▶ **Learning Goals:**

- Help children understand what is happening in simple terms
- Recognize that different people may see wars differently
- Reduce anxiety and instill pride by explaining the protection systems and community support in Israel

Lesson Structure:

1. Opening – "What Do You Know?"

What have you heard about the war with Iran?

What questions do you have?

- Students share or write responses on sticky notes or in notebooks.
- Teacher collects ideas and keywords on the board or in a slide presentation.

2. Who-What-Where-Why-When

WHO:



WHERE:

Israel and Iran are both in a region called the Middle East.

The USA is geographically very far away from this region. (show map)

WHAT:

Israel and the US worked together to launch a major attack on Iran. Iran has been attacking Israel and US bases in response.

WHEN:

This war started last week but it has been building up for many years (since 1979's Islamic revolution).

WHY:

Israel and the United States and Israel are democracies and strong allies, while Iran's government is a theocratic regime whose leaders oppose Israel and the U.S. Israel and the U.S. are concerned about Iran's nuclear program and they want to prevent Iran from developing and using these powerful weapons (nuclear and ballistic missiles) against them and their allies. Israel and the US also hope that there will ultimately be a major change in Iranian's government.

3. Seeing the War from Different Perspectives

If you were to interview people in Iran and in the US and in Israel, you would get very different opinions about what is safe, fair, and right - even from people within each of these countries.

Reasons given by people who support the US/Israel attack on Iran:

- Want to stop Iran from hurting Israel through its proxies like Hamas and Hizbala.
- Prevent Iran from directly attacking Israel in the future (self-defense)
- Pressure Iran into a change in the way it governs its own people.
- Prevent Iran from developing and using its weapons against other countries in the region, including US allies and bases.
- Iran has been behind deadly attacks against Jews, including the 1994 bombing in Argentina.

Reasons given by people who oppose the US/Israel attack against Iran:

- Don't believe you can change a government through attacks and might even make things worse.
- Fear that it will lead to a bigger war and more casualties.
- Fear of economic consequences of war.
- Don't believe the US should get involved with the affairs of foreign governments and their regional conflicts even involving their allies.

4. The ways in which Israel protects its people

All of this may be very overwhelming and scary, especially when many of us have friends and families in Israel. While it is true that this is a very difficult time for Israelis, it is also inspiring and comforting to know about the amazing ways that Israel works to protect and celebrate life.

Israel has a special unit called the Home Front Command (Pikud Haoref). Their job is to protect people in Israel from danger during emergencies, like rocket attacks, floods, or earthquakes. They make sure families know where to go, what to do, and how to stay safe. They make safety rules that the public must follow. For example (see slide), in the first week of the war, large gatherings were prohibited (weddings cancelled!) and educational activities were forbidden (no school, no gan!). Of course these rules are for the public safety but they are also emotionally and financially very difficult.

What things do you know about keeping Israelis safe during war?



Warning Sirens



Safe Rooms/Shelters



Iron Dome

When a rocket is fired toward a city, Iron Dome detects it in the air. It shoots a special missile to stop the rocket before it can hit anyone. It helps keep people safe and gives families time to stay calm and stay in shelters if needed.

5. Closing: Purim during war - “Choosing Life”

In addition to protecting life, Jews in Israel try to continue to celebrate life. The third day of the war was Purim, which is supposed to be a day of festivity. But, school and synagogue and parties were all cancelled. Israelis had to stay in or close to their shelters. How could they possibly celebrate Purim?

End by telling the following story:

This year, the holiday of Purim was very different in Israel because of the war. Usually people have big parades and parties in the streets, but this time, many of those celebrations had to be moved underground into bomb shelters and safe places because there was a real threat of missiles.

In the city of Tel Aviv, hundreds of families walked into a large underground parking garage that also worked as a shelter. People of all ages were wearing fun costumes—some were dressed like pirates, some like animals, and some like characters from stories. They listened as the Megillah, the story of Purim from the Book of Esther, was read to them just like every year, but instead of being in a synagogue or on the street, they were all sitting together in the shelter.

One family even brought a little tent and a play area for their baby right there in the shelter, and they tried to make it feel special. They said that even though it wasn't the usual way to celebrate, they still wanted to be joyful and together.

People danced to music under the bright lights of the parking garage, and children laughed in their costumes. Even though the war made things serious, everyone still tried to keep the spirit of Purim alive by celebrating together and remembering the ancient story of bravery and survival.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS:

Human Timeline:

Step 1: Create and distribute 10 cards with names of events and 10 cards with corresponding year.

Step 2: Kids with event cards have to find the kids with the corresponding year card.

Step 3: Kids need to arrange themselves in chronological order across the room.

CARDS:

1948 State of Israel established

1950 Iran recognized the State of Israel

1979 Iranian Revolution

1989 Ayatollah Ali Khamenei becomes supreme leader of Iran.

2015 Iran nuclear deal

2018 U.S. leaves nuclear deal

Oct 7, 2023 Hamas attacks Israel

June 2025 Operation Am Kelavi

December 2025 Mass protests in Iran

February 2026 Operation Roaring Lion

Map Investigation:

Give small groups a map of the Middle East with the following tasks:

1. Circle Iran and Israel
2. What do you notice about their: Size, Distance, Location
3. Which countries are in between them and around them?
4. What water sources are near to each?



Newsroom Simulation:

After the lesson, divide students into groups explaining that they will each be a different “news team.” Assign each group the character they will be interviewing and explain that they must write a list of 3 questions relevant to that character. Each group must choose who will play the interviewer and who will be the interviewee. The script should include questions and answers about how the character feels and what they have experienced. Each group will present a 3-minute interview segment to the rest of the class.

1. An interview with an Israeli child who spent Purim with friends and neighbors in their local bomb shelter.
2. An interview with an Israeli officer from Pikud Haoref (Homefront Command).
3. An interview with an Iranian citizen who protested the Iranian government.
4. An interview with President Donald Trump.
5. An interview with an American teenager.