

Venture into Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel Independence Day



The Yom Ha'atzmaut Story*

For 3-5 year olds:

A very, very long time ago, a man named Theodor Herzl had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land that they could call home. Jewish people from around the world moved to old cities like Jerusalem, where many different types of people, including other Jewish people just like themselves, had lived for many years. They also built new cities like Tel Aviv.

After about 50 years, there was a big meeting of many different countries and they voted that the Jewish people were allowed to have their own state. The Jewish leaders decided to call that land the State of Israel and signed their own Declaration of Independence. They wanted to make sure everyone in the land was protected and treated fairly.

Now, Israel is a mix of lots of Jewish customs from around the world and we are all working to make it a place where everyone can be safe, happy, and free.

For 6-9 year olds:

Almost 150 years ago, a man named Theodor Herzl had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land where, no matter where they were from and what they believed, they could enjoy safety, freedom, and happiness together. Jewish people from around the world moved to places like the ancient city of Jerusalem where Jewish people had been living and practicing Judaism for thousands of years, and built new cities like Tel Aviv next to old cities like Jaffa that had been home to many different people since ancient times.

Some of these Jewish people spoke languages and had traditions that were similar to some of the non-Jewish people who also lived in those cities for a long time.

In 1947, about 50 years later, the United Nations, a group of countries that wanted peace and friendship around the world, voted to establish the State of Israel. The next year, Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed, making sure there was protection for the holy sites of all religions in the land and equality for all.

Today, Israel is a mix of Jewish customs from around the world. As we celebrate, we continue to work on building a society where everyone can be safe, happy, and free.

For ages 10+

Almost 150 years ago, a European man named Theodor Herzl, a writer and lawyer, had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land where, no matter where they were from and what they believed, they could enjoy safety, freedom, and happiness together. This was an important idea because for thousands of years, many Jews had been forced out of the places they had lived and had been treated unfairly. They wanted to return to a place that the Jewish people had called "home" for thousands of years--the land where the Jewish people originated.

Excited by Herzl's ideas, Jewish people from around the world moved to places like the ancient cities of Jerusalem and Tzfat where Jewish people had been living and practicing Judaism for thousands of years. They also began to build new cities like Tel Aviv next to old cities like Jaffa that had been home to many different people, cultures and religions since ancient times.

Some of these Jewish people spoke languages and had traditions that were similar to some of the non-Jewish people who also lived in those cities for centuries.

In 1947, about 50 years after Herzl wrote about his ideas, the United Nations, a group of countries originally formed to promote peace, friendly relations among nations, social progress, and human rights, voted to establish the State of Israel. In 1948, Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed, reflecting Herzl's idea that Israel would be based on freedom, justice, and peace, ensuring equality for all citizens without regard to race, religion, or gender. It also guaranteed freedom of thought, worship, education, and culture, and protected the holy sites of all religions.

Today, Israeli society is a diverse mix of Jewish customs and cultures from around the world, melded together with modern achievements. As we celebrate Israel's independence, we still take part in building a society where all people can be safe, happy, and free.

*We have distilled the story of Israel's independence to be appropriate for children and families. That said, history is multi-layered. Should questions arise and/or you would like resources to discuss both the history of Israel and the historical and current conflict surrounding the region, please see our [resource page](#) for guidance and information.