

Many parents & guardians with Palestinian connections have written asking for suggestions on how to introduce Palestinian culture to children in younger elementary grades. Here are suggestions for teaching an active **introductory class to elementary** students that involves visuals, food, dance, language, and a story:

### Interactive Presentation to a 2nd Grade Class

(40 minutes -- Adapted from a lesson taught by Selma Staight -- each of the four parts of this lesson should take about 10 minutes)

--Briefly **introduce** Palestine and your connection to it. Show a map of the Middle East. Have students find Palestine and other Arabic-speaking countries. Say that Palestine is a place where your family or friends are from, and Palestinians want their own country but they don't have it yet.

--Teach some **Arabic** words (here are some favorites, using either common spellings or spellings that help you pronounce them). You can teach the first two pairs as call and response to you; then partners can say them to each other:

1. a. salaam alaikum (hello; literally: peace to you)  
b. alaikum salaam (hello back; literally: to you, peace)
2. a. shukran (thank you)  
b. afwan (you're welcome)

Tell the students they'll want to know these other words to understand a story and appreciate the food you've brought them:

3. a. sittee (grandmother) b. jiddo (grandfather)
4. a. hummus (garbanzo bean spread) b. hubbez (Arabic bread)

-- **Serve students hummus and hubbez while you read them *Sittee's Secrets* by Naomi Shihab Nye (a Palestinian American girl visits her grandmother) or *Sitti and the Cats: A Tale of Friendship* by Sally Bahous Allen (a Palestinian folktale).**

--Introduce the dabke, a popular Palestinian **dance** (with many alternative spellings), and show this short [youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8-WkrTa3U) clip of Palestinian youth from Dheisheh Refugee Camp dancing the dabke (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8-WkrTa3U>). Teach them two dabke steps and dance through one song together. Wave good-bye or teach them ma'a salama (good-bye; literally: peace be with you).

**Note:** for other ideas on how to share with elementary students, look around your home. If you have embroidery or ceramics or other artifacts, bring these in and tell the children about them-- especially if the children can touch these. If you have photographs or keys, bring these in, along with your stories. If you know how to cook delicious dishes/cookies or have a favorite poem or writer, the students will be glad to share. In our experience, students will appreciate anything you bring in if you are genuinely eager to share with them (be sure not to go on too long about any one item, though.)