

GLOBAL REPORT

SUMMER 2024

THE BLESSING OF FOI SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS

Children all over the world look forward to a break from their studies and more time spent outdoors at our summer Bible camps hosted by The Friends of Israel's (FOI) International Ministries teams throughout the world.



Every year, as the days grow warmer with the summer sun, children all over the world look forward to a break from their studies and spending time outdoors. Many kids begin packing their bags with bug spray and sunscreen and get ready for a week of camp. It is an amazing privilege to know that many of these young folks are heading to Bible camps hosted by The Friends of Israel's (FOI's) International Ministries in several locations around the world.

WHY CAMPING?

According to Barna Research, almost half of all Christians decided to follow Jesus prior to the age of 14, a compelling reason for our ministry representatives to invest their time in showing the love of Jesus to Jewish children through camping ministries. For those living under the shadow of war in Eastern Europe, our provision of camps for Jewish families is even more vital.

This summer, our teams in Eastern Europe are providing nine weeks of Bible camps to hundreds of children from Ukraine and other countries affected by Russia's war. As Ukraine is in its third year of war, the opportunity for these children to leave the war-torn landscape of their homeland and travel to Poland is life-giving.

At home, many of these kids don't have electricity available during the day, access to basic needs and services is restricted, and they certainly can't go for a simple hike in the mountains. But at the camps that FOI has hosted for more than 25 years, Jewish families from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and even Russia enjoy delicious meals, energetic games, creative crafts, outdoor music, and an opportunity to connect with God.



Children and mothers from the Jewish community of Cherkasy



Short walk to the mountains

THE BENEFITS OF CAMPING

It may seem counterintuitive that Jewish families would entrust their children to Christians to care for them and teach them the Bible. The fact that they do is an extraordinary testament to the deep relationships our teams have formed with Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Despite generations of persecution from Christians, our Jewish friends have come to trust our teams' true love and genuine desire to bless the Jewish community. And since Jewish communities view the Bible as "their Book," many parents want their children exposed to it as often as possible, even if it's by Christians.



David shows us his art (first time in Wisła)

One camper, Mark, 14, told our staff that he loved coming to FOI's camp in Poland because it offers things no other Jewish camp does, in his experience.

"The food! The food is very tasty here, even tastier than at my mom's home," he said. "And I love the Bible lessons here. No other camp talks to us about the Bible. I really like the stories from the Bible."

This year, our teams led campers through lessons about the prophets of Israel. They learned how God worked through Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, and others, using difficult circumstances for His good purposes.

Leaving camp, each child takes a Bible home to his or her family, since most don't own a copy. But that's not the only gift they take home. Our teams also provide backpacks full of clothes, food, and school supplies that are in high demand back home.

One camper, Nastya, 16, received her gifts with tears in her eyes, saying, "For me, God has always been



Heading out for a day at the pool.

distant and abstract. But here in Poland, I discovered the good and loving God. The love of the people who serve us, fun times, care [of the staff], and gifts are all from God! I believe He really does know me and care about me."

CAMPING FOR MOMS

The war in Ukraine has changed our Eastern European camping ministries in many ways. Children come to camp emotionally and physically scarred. They ask heartbreaking and poignant questions about where evil comes from and how God wants them to look at their enemies. Our staff points them to the Word of God for their answers.

Another change is the growing number of mothers asking to come to camp with their children, a surprising blessing to our ministry. As one of our team members said, "The war created fear. Mothers were afraid to let their children go alone to camp as before because of the war. But this created incredible communication opportunities. Mothers get to hear the Bible alongside their children, and it deepens our relationships even more."

“Congratulations from Wista” (banner)



All day fun at TWINPIGS Western City amusement park



Frequently, parents who send their children to our camps join other ministry efforts by our Eastern European teams. Last year, a girl named Sasha attended one of our camps. When Sasha brought home a copy of the Bible, she read it every day. Her mother, Tamara, grew interested as she watched Sasha read God’s Word throughout the year. Eventually, Tamara joined one of our team’s Bible study conferences because of the remarkable change she had seen in Sasha when she came home from camp. Tamara wanted that type of change too.

PRAYING TOGETHER

It’s easy for many of us to forget how decades of Soviet control over Eastern Europe reshaped its cultures. Long prohibited from worshipping God openly, many Jewish people only now are beginning to learn their own culture and history. As one of our staff members explained, “The most moving part of camp ministries with Jewish kids is hearing the children of God praying

to their God, who they’re just getting to know for the first time.”

Would you pray too? Please pray with us for this vital, ongoing ministry in the lives of Ukrainian and other Eastern European children. And would you also prayerfully consider financially supporting the work of our summer camps for Jewish children and their families? Your generosity means everything to our team and the Jewish families to whom they minister. On their behalf, thank you to all of you who choose to give to this wonderful ministry as the Lord leads you. May God bless you.

In Christ Alone,

DAN PRICE, MDiv
Director of International Ministries



If God has spoken to you about providing much-needed support for this ministry, please send your gift to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc, PO Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099, or visit foi.org/global-report to donate online.