

Encountering the Middle East with MECO

A short-term **Encounter Team** is placed in one country, such as Jordan, Lebanon or Egypt, and is involved in a project co-ordinated by a local church. In school situations, English classes are taught, which run alongside a Bible holiday club.

This summer, people representing several different countries will be joining MECO on a 'Middle East Encounter Team'.

They will get a first-hand view of the real Middle East - serving the people who live in this fascinating and vibrant part of the world. By teaching English classes alongside Bible lessons, this summer school creates a unique opportunity for introducing children to Jesus. But taking part in an Encounter Team isn't just about changing the lives of Middle Easterners. Those who come to serve often say they leave changed too - with a deeper faith and a fresh understanding of God's love.

Introduced to Jesus

The impact of offering lessons to Middle Eastern children is immense. One young boy from a Muslim family was invited to come to an English class after a 'chance' meeting in the street. He came, despite being quite shy.

Because the Bible is used as a teaching tool in the school, he heard about Jesus and wanted to find out more. At the end of the school day, he plucked up the courage

to ask about "the gift of the love of Jesus". Without the Encounter Team, this boy may have never heard about Jesus or been able to ask his question.

The school influences parents too. One Muslim father said: "The children come back so happy, we wish they were like that every school day of the year not just for these three weeks of the summer school." The graduation service is always well-attended, and many parents respond positively when offered more information about Jesus.

Working with young local believers

Arabic-speaking local young people from various indigenous churches often participate in the classroom, and grow in their faith as they take part in the activities and relate to Christians from overseas.


The team members are challenged in their faith, and see what it means to be a Christian in a sometimes-antagonistic culture. Both groups learn from each other.

Team members receive guidance

Many people who take part in the Encounter Teams are seeking guidance in their own lives.

Doug*, a British teacher, was unsure about his future and responded to an advert for the Encounter Teams. He admits: "I didn't even realise that a church existed in the Middle East. I feel overwhelmed by what I've seen in the local believers." (Doug has subsequently returned to work in the area on two more short-term trips.)

Sandy* was a trainee teacher who had just failed the practical component of her teaching degree. The Encounter Team was her opportunity to take some time out as she sought guidance for the future. She says: "I arrived at the school with very low confidence. But while teaching, I saw how I was helping the children. It inspired me to return to my studies. I've since passed my teaching practice! I hope one day to go back!"

Pray that many - both team members and local people - will be changed this summer for His glory. Do you know someone who would benefit from an Encounter Team? 

"I hope one day to go back!"

"Without the Encounter Team, this boy may have never heard about Jesus."

* Name changed for security.



Children hearing about Jesus, perhaps for the first time



Encounter Team 2008

Are you ready to 'Encounter' the Middle East?

Come to the Middle East and discover what God can do. Change the lives of people you meet - and be changed too.

Find out more at www.aboutmeco.org/encounter



Upcoming Encounter Teams

Lebanon

28 November - 23 December 2009
or 7 - 24 January 2010

Join various schools and work with young people, helping with school work and sharing the love of Christ.

Egypt

19 January - 15 February 2010

Travel to Cairo, Egypt to help share the love of Jesus to disabled children and their families in poor areas of Cairo.

Find out more at www.aboutmeco.org/encounter