

## The students of Amal Hadera in the Kielce “Nazareth”



The sixth youth meeting took place between the students of the Kielce St. Jadwiga *Liceum* and the Amal Hadera School from Israel on 31 March 2017.

The meetings have been taking place since mutual cooperation between the schools was established in 2012, and they are always opportunities for having fun together, as well as reflecting on the history of both nations. We want them to be occasions that emphasise the importance of remembering the common past of Christians and Jews and their coexistence, as well as the significance of understanding the complex history of both groups, the acceptance of otherness and respect for other cultures and religions.

We realise that our meetings create new history and help transcend barriers, stereotypes and prejudices. Many graduates of our school actively participate in similar programmes at university, and some have started Hebrew classes and come specially to take part in our meetings.

This time our guests came in a very big group of around 200 students, and all students of our liceum, around 130, participated. In total around 370 people were involved in the meeting, including teachers from both groups. The students were divided into 19 groups, and the group work gave them a chance to get to know each other. The leaders, who had been selected beforehand and had time to prepare, conducted the group work in a way that actively involved all the participants, trying to show what all the students shared, rather than how they differed. The groups' ingenuity and inventiveness were enormous: they played games, drew together, learnt songs and created Polish-English-Hebrew phrasebooks.



The students talked about their interests, ways of spending their leisure time, school, and national and religious traditions. Then a little snack followed, after which all the students had fun learning Polish and Israeli dances. The meeting in our school culminated in a football match, won by the Kielce team 2:0 for the first time in the history of our relations.

The final element of the meeting was a visit to the Jewish cemetery, where the sad fate of Kielce Jews was remembered by the monument of the victims of Nazi crimes and the grave of the victims of the Kielce pogrom, and a ceremony prepared by the Kielce group was held. The visit to the Jewish cemetery is an important component of our meetings, as we can pray for peace in the world together at a place marked with hatred and violence.



We parted in sorrow that our meeting was so short. We will miss our friends. See you next time!

