

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2005

Primary assemblies – Rebuilding lives

Introduction for teachers

The following is a structure using 4 of the case studies for the week of Holocaust Memorial Day, however each day can be easily adapted to a stand alone unit if you prefer that approach.

Throughout the structure are suggestions for using music and readings, where the poems or passages are included we suggest that you use them, when only reference to using music etc is given it is up to the teacher if they choose to so or to choose something suitable.

Also at the end of all the assemblies are a series of extracts and poems that you may wish to incorporate into the assemblies or follow up work.

PRIMARY ASSEMBLIES

A series of five assemblies (15 minutes each) based on the education case studies on the site:

ASSEMBLY 1 – MONDAY

Theme: – The Kindertransport – needing to find a home.

Introducing the Holocaust

Instructions for the Teacher :

Use the Case Study of the Kindertransport and Harry Bibring

(preparation: You may want to divide the speaking sections up so that the children can each read a section themselves.)

Script

How far back can you remember?

I can remember being your age and younger but it does get difficult to remember things as we get older. Sometimes we don't seem to be able to remember things that we were told five minutes ago – that is why instructions have to be repeated so often.

In today's assembly and for this week we will be remembering something that happened in the past, before you or I were even born, but something that must be remembered and known about for the future. Today's assembly is about the Holocaust. Every year January 27th is Holocaust Memorial Day in Great Britain.

Does anyone know what the Holocaust was?

The Holocaust took place in Europe between the years of 1939 to 1945, and resulted in the deaths of millions of innocent people. The build up began in 1933 as laws were introduced that allowed some groups of people to be treated badly compared to others. The Holocaust is a type of war but not like the ones we usually think of when we learn about history. This is not a war that two or more countries fight each other but a war by a government directed at groups of people because of their religion, physical abilities and ethnic background. This war killed people of all ages, all over Europe, because the Nazi government thought of them as different. Today we call this kind of separation, racism or prejudice.

This year's Holocaust Memorial Day is about those people who survived the Holocaust and how they were able to rebuild their lives. Some of those people were children when terrible things happened to them and we will learn about some of their experiences. By learning about them we will be learning about all the victims of the Holocaust. We will be remembering the Jewish children, Romani and Sinti (Gypsy) children, Jehovah's Witness children, black children, disabled children, Slav children and other children who didn't fit the Nazi ideal, and their families.

In the years before the Holocaust, when unfair laws were introduced and people began to be treated badly some people started to try and help by organizing trains to bring Jewish children and the children of other persecuted groups to Britain. These trains became known as the 'Kindertransport'.

Now use the case study 'The Kindertransport' and Harry Bibring's story.

Reflection or Prayer

'Let us pray this morning for an end to all wars and fighting. Let us not forget these people, who have been hurt or made homeless by wars somewhere in the world. Let us think of children who have lost their families, and let us hope that in future the world will be a more peaceful place.

Suitable poem:

Refugee Blues

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in hole:
Yet there's no place for you , my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,
'If you've got no passport you're officially dead':
But we are sill alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went t a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread':
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying 'They must die':
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:

Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand doors:
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro;
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

- W H Auden, March 1939
- (Holocaust poetry - compiled by Hilda Schiff)

Song or Hymn

ASSEMBLY 2 - TUESDAY

Theme – The Rescuers

Instructions for the teacher

In today's assembly we are exploring the study of one man who helped to organize the 'Kindertransport'.

This assembly should raise issues of 'moral courage', or 'citizenship'. You may want to add your own examples of these issues and devise follow up work on refugees today.

Use the case study 'Rescuer – pre September 1939'.

Script

Yesterday we heard about the Kindertransport. There are lots of times when people need to leave their homes because of danger. Children are still threatened around the world today and many still become refugees. It is usually very difficult for children to leave their families and to find help to rescue them.

The Kindertransport involved moving thousands of children to safety but it did not happen easily. It took some very brave and dedicated people to stand out and work hard to rescue the children.

Read the story of Nicholas Winton from the 'Rescuers' Case study.

Reflection or Prayer Or read the following poem

How can I see you, love

How can I see you, love
Standing alone
Amid storms of grief
Without feeling my heart shake?

A deep night,
Blacker than the blackness of your eyes,
Has fallen silently
On the world

And is touching your curls.

Come,
My hand will clasp your dreaming
Hand,
And I shall lead you between the nights,

Through the pale mists of childhood,
As my father once guided me
To the house of prayer.

David Vogel
(Translated by A.C. Jacobs)

From selected Poems by David Vogel, The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature. 1976.

Song or Hymn

ASSEMBLY – WEDNESDAY

Theme : The Ghetto and then survival

Script.

For the last two days we have heard about those children who escaped the Holocaust and those that helped them. They were the lucky ones. Once war started nearly all the children were trapped in Europe.

Read the Case study 'Ghetto and then Survival'

Reflection or Prayer

Or read the following poem

The Butterfly

The last., Truly the last.
Such yellowness ws bitter and blinding
Like the sun's tear shattered on stone.
That was his true colour.
And how easily he climbed, and how high,
Certainly, climbing, he wanted
To kiss the last of my world.

I have been here for seven weeks,
'Ghettoized'.
Who loved me have found me,
Daises call to me,
And the branches also of the white chestnut in the yard.
But I haven't seen a butterfly here.
That last one was the last one.
There are no butterflies, here, in the ghetto.

- Pavel Friedman, aged 14,
- Theresienstadt camp 4 June 1942
- (Died Auschwitz 29 September 1944)
- Holocaust Poetry, Schiff, H. Quill Press 2001

Song or Hymn

ASSEMBLY 3 – THURSDAY (January 27th)

Theme: A Hidden Child

Script

Today is January 27th and every year January 27th is Holocaust Memorial Day.

On this day we remember all the innocent people persecuted and killed by the Nazis in the years before and during the Second World War.

January 27th is chosen for Holocaust Memorial Day because it was on that date in 1945 when the people who were still alive were set free from the Nazi death camp in Poland called Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In today's assembly we are going to try and understand some of the fear that existed during the Holocaust and of some of the things people did to try and survive.

Read case study 'A Hidden Child'

Script continues:

Mala rebuilt her life after the Holocaust. It wasn't easy for her but she was determined to get on with things. But as she got on with things she didn't forget about experiences. Like other survivors she talks about what happened so that the horror that people inflict on one another is not forgotten.

On January 27th we remember all of the victims of the Holocaust and the Nazis, Jews, Romani and Sinti (Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, black people, disabled people, Slavic people, homosexuals, political opponents and ideological opponents.

We also remember those that survived the Holocaust and are able to help us understand that terrible time today.

By knowing their stories we can begin to learn how dangerous it is to let hatred exist, and how important it is to speak up for others in our society and around the world.

First They Came...

**First they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the Socialists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists**

**and I did not speak out
because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.**

**Paster Martin Niemoller
Song or Hymn**

Optional Activities to go with the assemblies or to use as follow on.

A : Prepare a small bag or suitcase of specified size with a minimum number of items that you would take with you if you had to leave your own home and you didn't know for how long.

If you are not able to do this in advance then draw a bag or show a bag you have at school.

Discuss with the rest of the children, what you have chosen, or what the ten things they would take would be, and why? What would they regret leaving behind?

Refugee Blues

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Some are living in mansions, some are living in hole:
Yet there's no place for you , my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
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Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread':
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying 'They must die':
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand doors:
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro;
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

- W H Auden, March 1939
- (Holocaust poetry - compiled by Hilda Schiff)

or Race

When I returned to my home town
Believing that no one would care
Who I was and what I thought
It was if the people caught
an echo of me everywhere
they knew my story by my face
and I who am always alone
became a symbol of my race

Like every living Jew I have
in imagination seen
the gas chamber the mass grave
the unknown body which was mine
and found in every German face
behind the mask of Cain
I will not make their thoughts my own
By hating people for their race

Karen Gershon, Selected Poems , Victor Gollancz, 1966.

Prayer:
Lead me from Death to Life; from Falsehood to Truth.
Lead me from Despair to Hope; from Fear to Trust.
Lead me from Hate to Love; from War to Peace.
Let Peace fill our Heart, our World, our Universe.

Peace, Peace, Peace. (The Prayer for Peace)

Song or Hymn

Suggestions for music:

[Prayers for Peace](#)

... **Prayers** and Blessings. **Peace Prayers**. Here are various **prayers** for **peace** from a broad spectrum of religions and cultures. ...

www.angelfire.com/md/elanmichaels/peace.html - 24k - [Cached](#) -

[Similar pages](#)

Other ideas for music:

Music from Schindler's list and The Pianist

Imagine – John Lennon

Sound of Silence - Simon and Garfunkel.