



An introduction to the Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 resources for Special Schools

This year's resources for special settings have been conceived as three interlocking parts. Schools are free to pick and choose from these as they wish. You may want different classes within schools to do different things, or for one class to do it all, or for just a few students to do one thing. It is completely flexible and entirely up to you.

The resources have been designed to be adaptable to suit the needs of your particular students. In places we have made suggestions about how to go about this, but as no one knows your students better than you we leave it in your capable hands.

The three parts to this year's resources are:

The Paralympics

In 2012 there will be a lot of excitement around the Paralympics games. We are expecting that students will already be involved in activities in the run up to the games and know all about them, but did you know that they were founded by a Jew who escaped Nazi Germany? Do your students know this? Our story of Dr Ludwig Guttman will help you to make this link between the work you are already doing and the history of the games.

Taking part in the lesson on the life of Dr Guttman will help your students to think about making positive choices, and teach them that even though dreadful things may happen, we can still choose to make the world a safer, better place.

We have also provided a list of ideas for work to do around the Paralympics to give you extra inspiration.

The Pledge

This year as part of Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 **Speak Up, Speak Out** students can pledge to think about how they use language. The pledge can be understood as a standalone action, but you may want to link it to Dr Guttman's story or any previous work you have done about the Holocaust or subsequent genocides, in order to remind students how important it is to be thoughtful when communicating.

The lesson based around the pledge helps students to understand each sentiment of the pledge and allow them to demonstrate each point with actions (which, as we all know speak louder than words). Those who can understand and use language can repeat and sign the pledge as mainstream pupils will be doing. For those whom this is not appropriate, try to think of a way they can engage with the pledge in a meaningful way.

You may want to make a display or PowerPoint of this work to share with visitors to the school.

The Poem

Martin Niemoller's Poem, [First They Came](#) is a haunting reminder to us all of the need to speak up and speak out. We are providing you with a way to explore this poem through movement and the senses. The resulting sequence of actions and sensory experiences would be ideal as the centre piece for an assembly. It may be that you choose a class, or a set of students, or indeed the whole school to perform this poem as an opening to an assembly where you share the other work you have been doing. This could be both celebratory, as you speak about Paralympians, and a chance for reflection as you talk about the pledge work. You could offer visitors the chance to sign the pledge and so extend your good work out into the wider community.

The Nazis persecuted many groups during their reign and people with special needs were among the first targeted by the Nazis. Today, we have the chance to make sure that the victims of this persecution are not forgotten, and that we use our voices to make sure it is not repeated. What was done then was inflicted upon us, but how we remember it now and what we do as a result of it is in our hands.

We are working towards creating a safer, better future for all. On Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 we are focusing on speaking up and speaking out. Our students are in an ideal position to do this, their voices, voices that the Nazis would have chosen to extinguish, are extremely powerful tools. Through this work we can teach them about the power each one of them possesses, and show them how they can make choices to make their own lives, and the lives of others, safer and better.

We hope you enjoy sharing this work with your students and your community.