



Paperclips 2004/Uncertified

Synopsis of the film

Paperclips is a documentary charting an educational project by Whitwell Middle School in Tennessee. The school is in a small town whose residents are not diverse. The project began when Headteacher Linda Hooper tried to teach her students about the dangers of prejudice and used the Holocaust as an example of where hatred can lead. She found that the students struggled to grasp the concept of the scale of the Holocaust was and so she found a way to demonstrate this. The students started to collect paperclips, asking people all over the world to send these in to the school, eventually they collected together 6 million paperclips to symbolise the number of Jews murdered during the Holocaust. Today, a cattle truck from Auschwitz stands in the grounds of the school as a reminder of the lessons the students learnt and enables the school to teach their community about the dangers of hatred. Holocaust survivors visit Whitwell Middle School each year to continue the legacy that Linda created.

When it was made and where

The original project took place in 2001 and the documentary was filmed on location in the school in Tennessee.

HMDT Review

We recommend using *Paperclips* as a resource to consider some of the issues around Holocaust Memorial Day because it illustrates the real impact about learning the lessons of the past for our mutual benefit. Because the community and school featured in this project do not share a diverse environment it is difficult for students to grasp how others can be singled out for being 'different'. The film demonstrates how the past was made relevant for young people of today.

The main themes within *Paperclips* are the discovery of how the past can be used to benefit lives today, the support that was given to the students during this project and the motivation of students by school teachers.

The documentary is quite long, running at around 84 minutes but this could always be viewed in segments. It's important also to establish that the paperclips collected only symbolise the number of people who were murdered in the Holocaust and it's crucial that you remind your audience that each life lost deserves to be remembered with dignity and respect.

If you are a teacher looking for ways to inspire your students to become engaged with HMD, you will find lots of ideas on our education website <http://education.hmd.org.uk>