

Special People and A Special Day; An Art Based Assembly (Primary) created in partnership with The Ben Uri Gallery London Jewish Museum of Art

Preparation

- **Provide** each class with a post box which should be placed in the hall (this can simply be a box covered with brightly coloured wrapping paper with the class name marked clearly on the front).
- Each class will need 2 post box monitors who will collect the boxes and bring them back to their class after the assembly.

Aim and Format: The assembly helps younger students to join in **The Legacy of Hope** by raising awareness of the Holocaust without explicit details. The focus on 'Special People' encourages everyone to think about those who are important in their own lives, how and why these people are special and about the need to value everyone as a unique individual. Valuing individuals lives challenges the actions and beliefs of the Nazis and sends a message of hope for the future.

Students will hear that during the Holocaust millions of people were separated from those who were special in their lives. The accompanying power point presentation, of pictures from the Ben Uri collection, will encourage students to focus on creative responses both to individual loss and to the survival of love.

Special People; the assembly

Welcome everyone into the hall and **explain** how you hope everyone present, including teachers and visitors, will help you create a special feeling of hope which people can think about with their teachers, later in the day, after the assembly.

Play a relevant piece of music or a song, this should be linked with thinking about someone special, a good piece is *These Foolish Things*. This song was written in the 1930s but has been recorded more recently by other artists. Play the music as you **give** students a blank white postcard and a pencil, piece of charcoal or a crayon. When the piece ends **explain** that you are going to let everyone listen to it again whilst they draw something special on their card. Then **encourage** everyone to draw something to remind them of a person who is special in their lives. They could draw something linked with the person e.g. a place or an object or they could create a quick picture of the actual person. **Explain** that the drawing

does not have to contain lots of detail and that by the time the music stops it should be finished. Then **play** the music again, whilst everyone draws their picture.

At the end of the piece **ask** students and teachers to write a message of hope or good wishes around the picture. The message should be connected with that person or be a message for that person. For example, someone might choose to draw their Granddad or their Mum and write 'I hope that other children have someone special like you to help them with their homework', or 'I hope that one day I will be just like you...'. Or the message might simply be a message of hope for the future..."I hope that 2010 is a happy year for you."

When the music has finished, tell everyone to stop drawing. **Ask** them to put their cards down and look at four pictures of special people, who were loved and valued by the person who created the image. **Show** the power-point of pictures from the Ben Uri collection. *You will find this presentation provided.* You do not have to use all the pictures but as you **show** each picture **ask** a few questions about it e.g. How old do you think the person/people in the picture is/are? What is happening in the picture? **Explain** that all the people in the picture were special to someone, that they were loved, but that a long time ago they were caught up in a series of events we now call the Holocaust.

During the Holocaust the Nazis controlled many countries in Europe. They made terrible plans to destroy millions of people, just like those we see in these pictures. Nazis did not like people whom they saw as different and they tried to destroy them. The people in these pictures are Jewish and Jewish people became targets for Nazi hatred. They were deliberately sought across most of Europe, not only in Germany but also in many surrounding countries for example Holland, Poland, Greece, France, Hungary, Lithuania. They were separated from their non-Jewish neighbours and their rights of citizenship were taken away. They were used as slave labour, imprisoned in ghettos and concentration camps and millions were murdered. Other people who were thought to be different from the rest of society were also rounded up by the Nazis. These people, who were also loved by their friends and families, included the Disabled, Roma and Sinti, Black Germans, Gay men, those with strong religious beliefs like Jehovah's Witnesses and people who had different political ideas and opposed the Nazis. These people were also imprisoned and many of them perished alongside the Jews of Europe.

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day, when people all over the world remember the Holocaust and how it shocked and changed the world. Today many people are making a promise to work hard to make sure that nothing like the Holocaust will ever happen again.

All of the people in these pictures were special people. Like us they belonged to a community, like us they would have had families and friends who cared for them and whom they loved. On Holocaust Memorial Day we are asked to remember them. The artists who created the pictures wanted to make sure that they would not be forgotten. Looking at the pictures today helps to make sure they are not forgotten.

But today is also a special day for survivors of the Holocaust, those who were treated cruelly by the Nazis but lived to share their stories. Many survivors are now very old; some are grandparents or even Great-grandparents. Today they will be thinking about the special people in their lives, those they loved who did not survive and their own children and

grandchildren who are part of the future of the world. The survivors want everyone to join them in their **Legacy of Hope**. They want us to think about and value the people who are special to us today, like the people on your postcards, but they want us to think about and value other people too; most importantly they want us to work hard together to make sure that we challenge unfairness, speak out when we think someone is being treated unkindly or being targeted because they are different.

Everyone is special because every human being is a unique individual, a person who deserves the chance to live a full and happy life. We can join **The Legacy of Hope** by remembering this and working hard to live together in friendship.

Give everyone the following instructions. On the back of the postcard of your special person please write a short message of friendship and hope for other students in our school or for all the people of the world. We will play the music again whilst you write. On my card I am going to write I hope that 2010 will bring you friendship and happiness. I wonder what you will write in yours.

Play the music again then **bring** the assembly to a close. **Tell** everyone that on leaving the assembly space they will see brightly coloured 'post-boxes'. Everyone should put their post card messages of hope into the boxes. **Ask** other teachers to stand at the door and direct their own students past the boxes. Each class should post their cards into a box other than their own. (*You could arrange this with colleagues prior to the assembly so everyone knows which box their class should fill.*) The post box belonging to the class will then be collected by post monitors who will bring their post box back to their class room. The teacher or students can then read out the messages and reflect on the importance of special people such as friends and family in the lives of all human beings.

After the assembly teachers could **share** some of their own photographs of special people with their own class or show the short HMD film and talk about messages it contains for **The Legacy of Hope**.

<http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/hmd-2010-short-film-educational-materials>