



Speak Up, Speak Out – Student Interaction

Secondary Assembly – Pupil Interaction – Suitable for Key Stage 3 and 4

Resources:

- [speak up poster](#) with HMD 2012 Symbol
also available in the free [Campaign Pack](#) or call **0845 838 1883**. [Brian Steidle case study](#) or the [film link](#)
- [copy of the poem by Pastor Martin Niemoller, 'First they came...'](#)
- laptop / projector (with sound) and internet connection for access to website for an HMD film – [Learning From the Past](#).

Script:

Do any of you know what this symbol is for? **(Show HMD flame logo)**

Do you know what day today is?

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day – you may have heard of it before.

Today we have a chance to learn about and remember the victims of terrible events called genocides.

Everyone stand up. We are going to watch an HMD film – Learning from the Past

Start the film and then every minute or two ask a 'group' of people to turn away and face the back. These people lose the right to see all of the film.

Anyone with blonde hair, please turn around and face the back.

A few moments later - Redheads – now please turn away also.

Later - Girls, can you turn away now too.

Then - Anyone with glasses – please turn away.

At end of film – Ok, everyone can turn around to face the front and sit down now. How did it feel to have your basic right of watching a film in school taken away from you just because



of who you are? Why didn't anyone question what was happening? How about the people who got to watch all of the film – how did you feel? Did you feel that as long as you were ok you didn't need to say anything as it wasn't affecting you directly?

Pastor Martin Niemoller wrote a poem that illustrates this:

You could ask 5 students to read this out - a stanza each. The poem can be projected onto a large screen or displayed on the HMD poster.

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

What do you think this poem means?

It was written by a man called Pastor Martin Niemoller, a German religious leader. He lived in Germany when the Nazis first came to power in the 1930s.

Have you heard of the Nazis?

The Nazis were the National Socialists in Germany who were elected to power in 1933, and their leader was Adolf Hitler. Under his leadership strict laws about the way people were allowed to live were introduced.

Germany had suffered very badly in the economic crisis that had affected many countries in the 1920s and many people were out of work. When the Nazis first came to power they promised reforms to improve the economy.

The Nazis chose to blame particular groups for the problems in society and then began to restrict their rights. The Nazis picked on political groups, removing their right to exist and arresting and imprisoning people belonging to these groups (even if they hadn't done anything wrong). They also blamed minority groups - German Jews, those categorised as

'unGerman' (even if they and their families had always lived in Germany), disabled citizens and those with hereditary illnesses were all singled out and their rights restricted.

Like many others, Pastor Niemoller first thought that the arrival of the Nazis and Adolf Hitler would benefit Germany, but by 1936 with all the restrictions they had introduced, he began to oppose them. He disagreed with Nazi aims to Nazify the Protestant Church (making it obedient to the Nazi Party rather than be an independent voice) and wrote a letter, publically saying so.

In 1938 Niemoller was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. He lived there in terrible conditions with innocent men and women who had done nothing wrong, but who had different views, lifestyles and religions to the Nazis. These people were all held captive together and many were beaten, tortured, executed or worked to death. He remained in the concentration camp until it was liberated in 1945 by the American army.

When Pastor Niemoller was released, he spoke publically about how he had been wrong to support the Nazis when they first came to power. He spoke out about how he was wrong to have allowed groups to have their rights taken away and be persecuted in their own country, whilst he did nothing to stop this. The Holocaust and the Nazi persecution of others led to millions being killed across Europe between 1933 and 1945.

Do you think Martin Niemoller was brave to have spoken out later and admit he was wrong? He knew he should have done more earlier which is why he wrote the poem as a warning to others.

Let's hear it again.

Repeat the poem

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. Today we remember all those whose lives were ruined, scarred or ended as part of the Holocaust or as Victims of Nazi persecution. The Nazi attempt to kill all the Jews of Europe during what we now call the Holocaust gave us the word genocide. Today is an opportunity to reflect on the other genocides that have happened since 1945 in Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia and Darfur.

This year on Holocaust Memorial Day we are being asked to do more than just remember and reflect. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 is **Speak Up, Speak Out**. By this theme, we are asked to think about what we can do to stop such terrible things as the Holocaust happening again. We are encouraged to speak out if we know about something that is wrong, whether it is bullying in school or something bigger in our community or around the world.

Martin Niemoller's poem reminds us that if we don't speak up for others, we can't rely on others speaking up for us when we might need it.

Moment of reflection:

When we look at events around the world or hear about things that happen to people we know, we must remember that we have a voice. In many parts of the world, laws and violence stop people from speaking up. In the United Kingdom we can speak up against things that are wrong and by speaking out we have a chance to change things. History tells us that if we do not speak up and speak out, terrible events like the Holocaust, Nazi cruelty, persecution, genocide and the deaths of innocent people can happen. And they can happen anywhere, at anytime.

To close the assembly, read one or several quotes from below to help your students consider the importance of speaking up.

‘I swore never to be silent whenever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.’ Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor

‘In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.’ Martin Luther King Jr., Civil Rights Leader

‘Nothing that I can do will change the structure of the universe. But maybe, by raising my voice I can help the greatest of all causes – goodwill among men and peace on earth.’ Albert Einstein, Scientist