

GET INVOLVED GUIDE

for faith / interfaith groups



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is held on 27 January each year and thousands of events and activities take place around the country on or around this date. What will your faith or interfaith group do?

Your faith / interfaith group and Holocaust Memorial Day

Faith and interfaith organisations play a crucial role in fostering understanding and good relationships between different faith groups in the UK. Marking HMD is an opportunity for people of different faiths and of no faith to come together to celebrate the diversity of their communities, challenge prejudice and intolerance, and create a safer, better future.

HMD has especial significance for faith and interfaith groups. During the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution and in the subsequent genocides, individuals and groups were targeted simply because of their differing identities and beliefs. The Holocaust was a campaign to murder European Jewry in its entirety. In addition, Nazis persecuted Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as Roma and Sinti people. Many Christians who resisted the Nazis in the name of their faith also died. There are examples of convent communities and individual Christians hiding and rescuing Jews. During the 1990s war in Bosnia, extremist Bosnian Serbs promoted hatred of Muslims and murdered around 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

By reflecting on the impact of these atrocities on different communities and standing as a witness for courageous resistance to hatred and discrimination, faith and interfaith organisations make a vital contribution towards HMD and the values it stands for.



EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Catford and Bromley Synagogue



Catford and Bromley Synagogue held a multi-faith event which included contributions from Jewish, Christian, Islamic and Sikh faiths. The Deputy Young Mayor of Lewisham, Titanya Murdock, participated and afterwards commented that **'it was really great being invited to and doing the reading at the multi-faith Holocaust Memorial Event in Lewisham this year. It was a privilege to be part of a genuine community and multi-faith gathering representing the range of faiths in our community from Buddhists to Sikhs as well as Muslims and Christians. Really inspiring.'**

'HMD is a really important reminder for all people, regardless of their faith or belief. To say that the Holocaust was a tragedy is a gross understatement. It was a moment when humanity lost its humanity. And yet genocides and mass killings continue in our world and hatred and prejudice are all too common. We must – all of us – resolve to learn the lessons of the past in order to build a better, more peaceful, future.'

Dilwar Hussain, New Horizons in British Islam and HMDT Trustee

IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Invite representatives from local faith groups to your HMD ceremony – they could light candles or read a prayer.
- Organise a **joint reading of literature** reflecting different faith traditions.
- Invite different faith groups to contribute to a collective, commemorative piece of art that could then be exhibited at the different places of worship. For example, different faith groups could each reproduce one section of a larger image which are then displayed together, or each faith group could produce an image of how memories are passed from generation to generation which are all displayed together.
- Your event could feature the life story of **Joan Salter**, the daughter of Polish-Jewish parents who survived the Holocaust, or **Ceija Stojka**, a Romany Gypsy who was persecuted by the Nazis, or **Safet Vukalić**, a Bosnian Muslim who survived ethnic cleansing in Prijedor. **Ali Sheqer Pashkaj's** life story highlights that many Albanian Muslims helped rescue and protect Jews during the Holocaust. You could share the life story of **Vali Racz**, a Catholic Hungarian film star who rescued Jews. See: hmd.org.uk/lifestories
- **Toby Howarth**, the Bishop of Bradford, has recorded a podcast about the importance of speaking out when we see discrimination happening in our communities. You could play this as part of an HMD activity: hmd.org.uk/podcasts
- For more faith and interfaith resources, including prayers, see: hmd.org.uk/faith
- Display posters from our free Activity Pack: hmd.org.uk/activitypack
- Order some free 'About HMD' booklets to hand out at your event.
- Each year the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) jointly create a resource pack for churches to use in their service for HMD: hmd.org.uk/faith

Please note...




If you include refreshments after your gathering, preparations should include consulting someone from each faith group invited to advise on food requirements. Similarly, consider your audience and ensure that your event does not take place on a holy day, for example if a Jewish community is attending do not schedule your event on Shabbat (Friday afternoon and Saturday), avoid Friday for Muslim communities, and do not host an event on Sunday morning if you would like Christians to attend.

Get in touch

To get your free activity pack: hmd.org.uk/activitypack
To get your free handout materials: hmd.org.uk/handouts
To let us know about your event: hmd.org.uk/letusknow

For advice and support with your event contact us:

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Learning lessons from the past to create a safer, better future