

# Primary School Lesson Plan for Holocaust Memorial Day



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

*Learning from genocide -  
for a better future*

## Learning Objectives:

This resource is designed to encourage your students to think about memory and memories, and what, why and how we remember. These discussions can be tied in with Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in a manner that is age-appropriate for students.

This resource is intended for teachers to use with students aged 7-9 which corresponds with early Key Stage 2 in England. Due to the breadth of development in primary aged students, we have provided a range of activities for teachers to select from and amend to the needs of their students.

As the Holocaust is normally studied in later years, we are focusing on HMD as a time for reflecting on remembering. The lesson plan concludes with a mention of the Holocaust, and teachers are encouraged to consider the suitability of this material for their students.

The Holocaust was the attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to destroy all Jewish people in Europe that built on centuries of antisemitism (anti-Jewish hatred). 6 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered in 22 different countries.

## Activity one: Memory game

This activity will help your students to start identifying what they remember and why.

Lay out lots of different items that your students will be familiar with and that you can access easily. This could include, for example:

- |                      |                   |              |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ● Writing implements | ● A rubber duck   | ● Some money |
| ● Teddy bear         | ● A fork          | ● A backpack |
| ● Sandwiches         | ● A watch         | ● An apple   |
| ● A telephone        | ● A pair of shoes | ● A book     |

Give your students some time to walk around the table and let them know that they need to try to remember as many items as they can. Once they have had a good look, cover up the items with a cloth and ask them to write down as many as they can remember.

Ask the students to name the items they wrote down. It will be interesting to see which items were remembered by everyone and which by no-one. Discuss with the students why they remembered certain items and why other items were not remembered.

If you have the time, you could repeat this activity but this time work with your students to create a story involving all the items on the table. For example, the teddy went on holiday, and he had to pack his backpack. He was going on a long journey so packed sandwiches and an apple to eat on the way... This method is likely to help the children remember more items, so once you have all created your story, ask the students to write a new list and see how many they remember this time. If they do remember more items, ask them why they think they were able to remember more.

## Activity two: Forgotten keys

This activity will help students consider why it is important to remember.

Hold up a set of keys. Ask the students if they know what they are and what they are used for. Prompt them if necessary. Hopefully they will say car keys, house keys, maybe even school keys, and they will know that they are used to open and unlock doors.

Ask your students what will happen if you forget your keys, ensuring that they explore all the options, some of which are pictured below. For younger children, you could just choose one set of keys and follow this through. For an extra challenge, examine all three sets of keys.

### Car Key:

You won't be able to drive your car

You have to take the bus home

A garage has to come and collect your car and replace the key

You have to pay the garage

### House Key:

You won't be able to get into your home

You have to wait outside (maybe in the cold/rain)

You have to call an emergency locksmith to get new keys

You have to pay the locksmith

### School Key:

No one will be able to get into the school

Everyone will have to wait outside (maybe in the cold/rain)

An emergency locksmith would need to come and make new keys

You have to pay the locksmith

Aside from highlighting that forgetting your keys can be expensive, this exercise is designed to demonstrate to your students why it is important to remember items and to identify that forgetting items can have consequences. You can do the same exercise with a forgotten purse or wallet as well or instead.

## Activity three: Remembering

This activity will focus on things that we want to remember, both happy occasions and sad ones. You may wish to just focus on the happy occasions if your students are younger.

Ask your students if they ever countdown to an event and if so, what event? They may say a birthday, or a wedding, or a religious event such as Christmas. Try to get as many different events as possible. You could record students' responses visually, creating a picture on a white board or a piece of flipchart paper.

## For an extra challenge

You could encourage your students to think about other ways of remembering significant events or dates by asking them how they remember.

Do they have a calendar or a diary, for example? Do they set a reminder in their phone? Do they rely on other people to remind them?

Does it matter which means we use to remember things?

## Creative activity

Your students should each pick an important date and create a reminder for that date.

The reminder could be as a calendar or a countdown.

For an extra challenge, your students could create an advent-type calendar with the countdown information behind a window.

Encourage your students to think about what the point of the countdown is. It is a way of remembering, and you can ask students why they remember and what they are looking forward to with a countdown. Depending on the events students are thinking about, their responses could include positive sentiments, such as looking forward to celebrating, to spending time with family, eating different foods or sharing good times with friends.

You could now introduce remembering sad things or build on those mentioned by students earlier. This part of the activity may be best suited to older students, and please only do this if you know your students well. The purpose is not to upset but instead to think about why we are remembering and who we are remembering. Ask your class what sad things they remember. If students mention family members who have died, you can explore what nice things these students remember about them and how they are remembered. For example, do students have photos of them in their house?

This part of the activity can demonstrate to students that remembering sad things can be important and meaningful. It can bring us together and allow us to share our feelings.

## Plenary

We are lucky to live in a community with people from all over the world. If this is particularly relevant to your community, you could highlight to students that you share your community with people from different places. Each and every one of us is completely unique, and we should celebrate the differences. However, years ago people who were different found themselves in trouble. Other people attacked them and some people who were different were murdered. This is what happened to Jewish people during the Holocaust. We do not want to forget these people, and we want to keep their memory alive. Each year, on Holocaust Memorial Day, we remember them. We can remember them, for example, by learning about them, being quiet for a minute, making a memorial display, or lighting a candle. When we do these things together, we share memory of these people.

Find out more...

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