

# Teacher's

## *Never Forget: An Introduction to the Holocaust*

# Guide



GRADE  
5

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## *About this Teacher's Guide*

This Teacher's Guide accompanies the Museum of History and Holocaust Education's traveling exhibit *Never Forget: An Introduction to the Holocaust*, which explores the history of the Holocaust for younger audiences. This exhibit offers a glimpse into the realities of Jewish life during the Holocaust. Using historical panels, images, and survivor testimony, *Never Forget* encourages students to never forget the atrocities of the Holocaust.

*Never Forget* is accompanied by a traveling exhibition that brings the content and personal stories to your classroom. To enquire about availability, please email us at **[mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu](mailto:mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu)**.

This curriculum guide for **fifth grade** teachers will help educate students about the atrocities of the Holocaust and the individuals impacted by this event. Although many of the lessons in this guide focus on **Social Studies** standards, the activities are designed to be cross-curricular and can also be used for English Language Arts and Advanced Placement classes.

This guide is organized by individual lessons that are intended to take between one and two class periods to complete. We recognize, however, that not all teachers will be able to dedicate this amount of time to the topic of the Holocaust; the activities, therefore, can be pulled out of the lessons and stand alone as individual parts.

In designing this guide, we also sought to place a heavy emphasis on primary and secondary sources to teach this topic. All primary sources and worksheets that are needed for each lesson are included in the guide. Sources include propaganda posters, an extended biography of Norbert Freidman's life, and links to online oral history clips.

**Teachers should review all resources provided in this guide before sharing them with students to determine the appropriateness for their class.**

***Credits:** The descriptions, activities, and graphics in this guide were developed by Dr. Richard Harker, Zoila Torres, James Newberry, Julia Brock, and Caitlin O'Grady of Kennesaw State University's Museum of History and Holocaust Education. Thank you to the following Cobb County teachers who contributed to this guide: Elizabeth Kennedy (Cobb County School District), Kari Reeve (Lewis Elementary), Stephen Bell (Pitner Elementary), Rebecca Delass (Garrison Mill Elementary), Jennifer Reardon (Mountain View Elementary), Jennifer Hellmen (Big Shanty Elementary), and JoAnn Wood (Cobb County Elementary Social Studies Curriculum Supervisor). Thank you to the following students interns for their contributions to this guide: Haley Fortune, Allison Dupuis, Jodi Sprague, and Rick Dreger.*

**Overview:**

The Holocaust was the systematic and government sanctioned murder of six million Jews and five million others by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. Following the election of Adolf Hitler in January 1933, the Nazi party implemented anti-Jewish laws that lasted until 1945. The Nazis believed in the “racial superiority” of the German people, and viewed the Jewish community as an “inferior race” that posed a threat to German purity.

The Germans began by stripping the Jews of their social and economic rights in the 1930s. Jews became targets for violence, and experienced segregation and prejudice under the Nuremberg laws, which denied citizenship to German born Jews. By the late 1930s, the Nazis created a climate that separated Jews from all aspects of German life. Laws barred the Jews from socializing with German citizens, including the removal of Jewish children from public schools and limiting access to restaurants and public places. In order to administer his discriminatory campaign, Hitler used local law enforcement officials. Those committed to preserving and administering justice.

Some of the Jewish population sought to escape the increasingly dangerous circumstances in Germany between 1933 and 1939. However, immigration was difficult because of the expense, documentation, and strict immigration quotas across the world.

Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, marked the beginning of World War II in Europe. Three million Polish Jews came under Nazi authority. The Nazis began sending Jews to ghettos and concentration camps. In 1942, at a pivotal Nazi meeting, Hitler instituted the “final solution,” which was the plan to annihilate the Jews of Europe. The Nazis began liquidating ghettos and forcibly rounding up Jews for transport to extermination centers.

In the winter of 1944, it became clear that Germany was losing the war. As the Allied Powers advanced on Germany, Nazis began evacuating the outlying concentration camps, sending prisoners on forced death marches. The Jews liberated in the spring of 1945 were near death, and many perished from malnourishment, disease, and exposure to the elements.

By the time of Germany's surrender in May 1945, two thirds of Europe's Jewish population perished. This included nearly one and a half million children. The individuals who experienced the Holocaust demonstrate the complexity and importance of this event.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence correlated with *Never Forget: An Introduction to the Holocaust* activities:**

**FIFTH GRADE**

These lessons meet the criteria for the following 5th Grade Georgia Standards of Excellence:

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**SS5H4: Explain America's involvement in World War II.**

- a. Describe **German aggression in Europe** and Japanese aggression in Asia.
- b. Describe major events in the war in both Europe and the Pacific; include Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, D-Day, VE and VJ Days, and the **Holocaust**.
- c. Identify **Roosevelt**, Stalin, Churchill, Hirohito, Truman, Mussolini, and **Hitler**.
- d. Explain the role of Eleanor Roosevelt and the U.S. in the formation of the **United Nations**.

## Guidelines for teaching the Holocaust

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
[www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/general-teaching-guidelines](http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/general-teaching-guidelines)

### **Define the term “Holocaust”**

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived “racial inferiority”: Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals.

### **Do not teach or imply that the Holocaust was inevitable**

Just because a historical event took place, and it is documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. This seemingly obvious concept is often overlooked by students and teachers alike. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. Focusing on those decisions provides insight into history and human nature and can help your students to become better critical thinkers.

### **Avoid simple answers to complex questions**

The history of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior and the context within which individual decisions are made. Be wary of simplification. Seek instead to convey the nuances of this history. Allow students to think about the many factors and events that contributed to the Holocaust and that often made decision making difficult and uncertain.

### **Make responsible methodological choices**

One of the primary concerns of educators teaching the history of the Holocaust is how to present horrific, historical images in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the lesson objective. Try to select images and texts that do not exploit the students’ emotional vulnerability or that might be construed as disrespectful to the victims themselves. Do not skip any of the suggested topics because the visual images are too graphic; instead, use other approaches to address the material.

In studying complex human behavior, many teachers rely upon simulation exercises meant to help students “experience” unfamiliar situations. Even when great care is taken to prepare a class for such an activity, simulating experiences from the Holocaust is pedagogically unsound. The activity may engage students, but they often forget the purpose of the lesson and, even worse, they are left with the impression that they now know what it was like to suffer or even to participate during the Holocaust. It is best to draw upon numerous primary sources, provide survivor testimony, and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

Furthermore, word scrambles, crossword puzzles, counting objects, model building, and other gimmicky exercises tend not to encourage critical analysis but lead instead to low-level types of thinking and, in the case of Holocaust curricula, trivialization of the history. If the effects of a particular activity, even when popular with you and your students, run counter to the rationale for studying the history, then that activity should not be used.

### **Strive for Precision of Language**

Any study of the Holocaust touches upon nuances of human behavior. Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to generalize and, thus, to distort the facts (e.g., “all concentration camps were killing centers” or “all Germans were collaborators”). Avoid this by helping your students clarify the information presented and encourage them to distinguish, for example, the differences between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centers, and guilt and responsibility.

Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions. Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, the experiences of all Jews were not the same. Remind your students that, although members of a group may share common experiences and beliefs, generalizations about them without benefit of modifying or qualifying terms (e.g., “sometimes,” “usually,” “in many cases but not all”) tend to stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality.

### **Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust**

Most students express empathy for victims of mass murder. However, it is not uncommon for students to assume that the victims may have done something to justify the actions against them and for students to thus place inappropriate blame on the victims themselves. One helpful technique for engaging students in a discussion of the Holocaust is to think of the participants as belonging to one of four categories: victims, perpetrators, rescuers, or bystanders. Examine the actions, motives, and decisions of each group. Portray all individuals, including victims and perpetrators, as human beings who are capable of moral judgment and independent decision making.

### **Avoid Comparisons of Pain**

A study of the Holocaust should always highlight the different policies carried out by the Nazi regime toward various groups of people; however, these distinctions should not be presented as a basis for comparison of the level of suffering between those groups during the Holocaust. One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family, or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides. Avoid generalizations that suggest exclusivity such as, “The victims of the Holocaust suffered the most cruelty ever faced by a people in the history of humanity.”

### **Do not romanticize history**

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful, important, and compelling role models for students. But given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation helped rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic actions in a unit on the Holocaust can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history. Similarly, in exposing students to the worst aspects of human nature as revealed in the history of the

Holocaust, you run the risk of fostering cynicism in your students. Accuracy of fact, together with a balanced perspective on the history, must be a priority.

**Contextualize the history**

Events of the Holocaust, and particularly how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history as a whole to give students a perspective on the precedents and circumstances that may have contributed to it.

**Translate statistics into people**

In any study of the Holocaust, the sheer number of victims challenges easy comprehension. Show that individual people—grandparents, parents, and children—are behind the statistics and emphasize the diversity of personal experiences within the larger historical narrative. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics.

# One

## Exhibit Scavenger Hunt

*This activity is an introduction to the Holocaust as it is presented in the Never Forget exhibit. It encourages students to analyze photos and stories featured in the exhibit.*

**Materials needed:** Paper, clipboards, pens/pencils

1. Ask the students to walk through the exhibit and complete the following tasks:
  - Record five major events from the Holocaust. Ask the students to explain the selections and describe their importance in Holocaust history.
  - Read about Norbert Friedman's life. Write a one- to two-paragraph biographical summary of Friedman's life from his childhood to his liberation by the American army.
  - Choose an image from the exhibit. Answer the following questions about the photograph:
    - What do you think is happening in this image?
    - Who do you think took it? Why?
    - Who do you think was the audience for this image? How do you think that influenced its content and composition?
    - When do you think it was created? What evidence do you see to support your claim?
    - What do you think is not shown in this image? Why?
    - Based on what you observe, what can you infer from this photo?
    - What questions does this photo raise in your mind?

## Two

### Norbert Friedman's Experience in the Holocaust

*Norbert Friedman recorded his oral history interview at the Museum of History and Holocaust Education in 2013. This activity asks the students to watch and analyze selected clips from his interview.*

**Materials needed:** Pens/pencils, paper, computer with Internet access, projector, screen

1. Play the selected clips from Norbert Friedman's oral history interview for your students ([http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_holocaust.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_holocaust.php)). Transcripts of these clips are included on pages 29-32.
2. While watching these clips the students should complete the following tasks on paper:
  - Describe what you learned about Norbert's life by watching the clips.
  - Record any unfamiliar words you heard in the clips.
  - Describe how you feel after watching the clips.
  - Describe new information you learned about the Holocaust by watching the clips.
  - Identify images in the exhibit that reflect Norbert's experiences in the Holocaust.
3. Discuss the video clips as a class. Conclude the activity by explaining the context in which the video was recorded. Friedman shared his experiences in 2013 at age 91 so that young people will know what happened to victims of the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s.

# Three

## Propaganda and Dr. Seuss

*This activity accompanies panel 3, “Who Were the Nazis?” and explores the use of propaganda in the Nazi rise to power. Dr. Seuss’ political cartoons highlight the subtlety of some forms of propaganda and its use by all nations engaged in the war effort.*

**Materials needed:** Computer with Internet access, white board

1. Beloved children’s story writer and illustrator, Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel) created around 400 political cartoons during World War II. He tackled such topics as racism, discrimination, the dangers of isolationism, fascism, and other political issues. Explore the University of California San Diego online catalog of Dr. Seuss cartoons (<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/>) with your students.
2. After deciding upon the images to analyze as a class, ask the students to discuss the following questions in small groups:
  - What is the central message of the cartoon?
  - What event, issue, or person does the cartoon refer to or target?
  - From whose point of view is the cartoon drawn? How do you know?
  - Is the cartoon trying to persuade or inform? If so, what and how?
  - How are people/animals drawn? Are they distorted or exaggerated? Why?
  - List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.
  - Is the cartoon effective? Why or why not?
  - What groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon’s message? Why?
  - What would make this cartoon more effective?
  - Do you think cartoons are a good way of communicating a social or political issue? Why or why not?
3. As students begin to analyze the political cartoon, describe to them what makes a political cartoon effective. According to Charles Press, author of *The Political Cartoon*, in order for a political cartoon to be persuasive it must have the following four qualities:
  - Artistic quality—but the artistry must not get in the way of the message
  - Genuine sentiment—but it should not feel phony
  - Fresh, uncomplicated imagery—should be striking, forceful, and amusing
  - Lasting importance—the subject of the cartoon should be important so the cartoon can be understood by future readers
4. After students answer the questions, discuss their findings. Answer any questions they have about the meaning of the cartoons.

5. If some students finish early, they can create their own political cartoons using a current event in your school or your community (in class or as homework). Cartoons may be shared with the class if time allows.

For additional information on the political cartoons of Dr. Seuss, see Mandeville Special Collections Library's online catalog:

**<https://library.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dsads/>**

# Four

## Writing about Norbert Friedman's Life

*This activity accompanies the entire exhibit and can be used to help students digest and process the exhibit and Norbert Friedman's story.*

**Materials needed:** Pens/pencils, paper

1. After watching selected clips from Norbert Friedman's oral history interview ([http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_holocaust.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_holocaust.php)), students should write a constructed response to one of the following questions. Transcripts of these clips are included on pages 29-32.
  - How would you describe Norbert Friedman's experiences during the Holocaust?
  - Do you think Norbert's young age helped him to survive during the Holocaust? Why or why not?
  - How do you think Norbert was able to survive so much adversity?
  - What examples of human kindness did Norbert experience during the Holocaust?
  - How does Norbert's story inspire you to fight against hatred and bullying in your school?
2. For additional material about Norbert's life, consult "Norbert's Story: Supplementary Materials" (pages 22-24) and his oral history interview ([http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_holocaust.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_holocaust.php)).

# Five

## Spiritual Resistance and the Butterfly Project

*This activity accompanies panel 7, “How Did People Fight Back?” One form of resistance was spiritual resistance. The Butterfly Project was designed by the Holocaust Museum Houston to explore spiritual resistance by creating 1.5 million butterflies to commemorate the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust.*

Materials needed: Art supplies such as markers and colored pencils, copies of the butterfly template (page 12), computer with projector and screen

1. Print or project the poem, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, written by Pavel Friedman in 1942, and read it aloud as a class. You may ask students to read sentences of it or have one student read the entire poem.

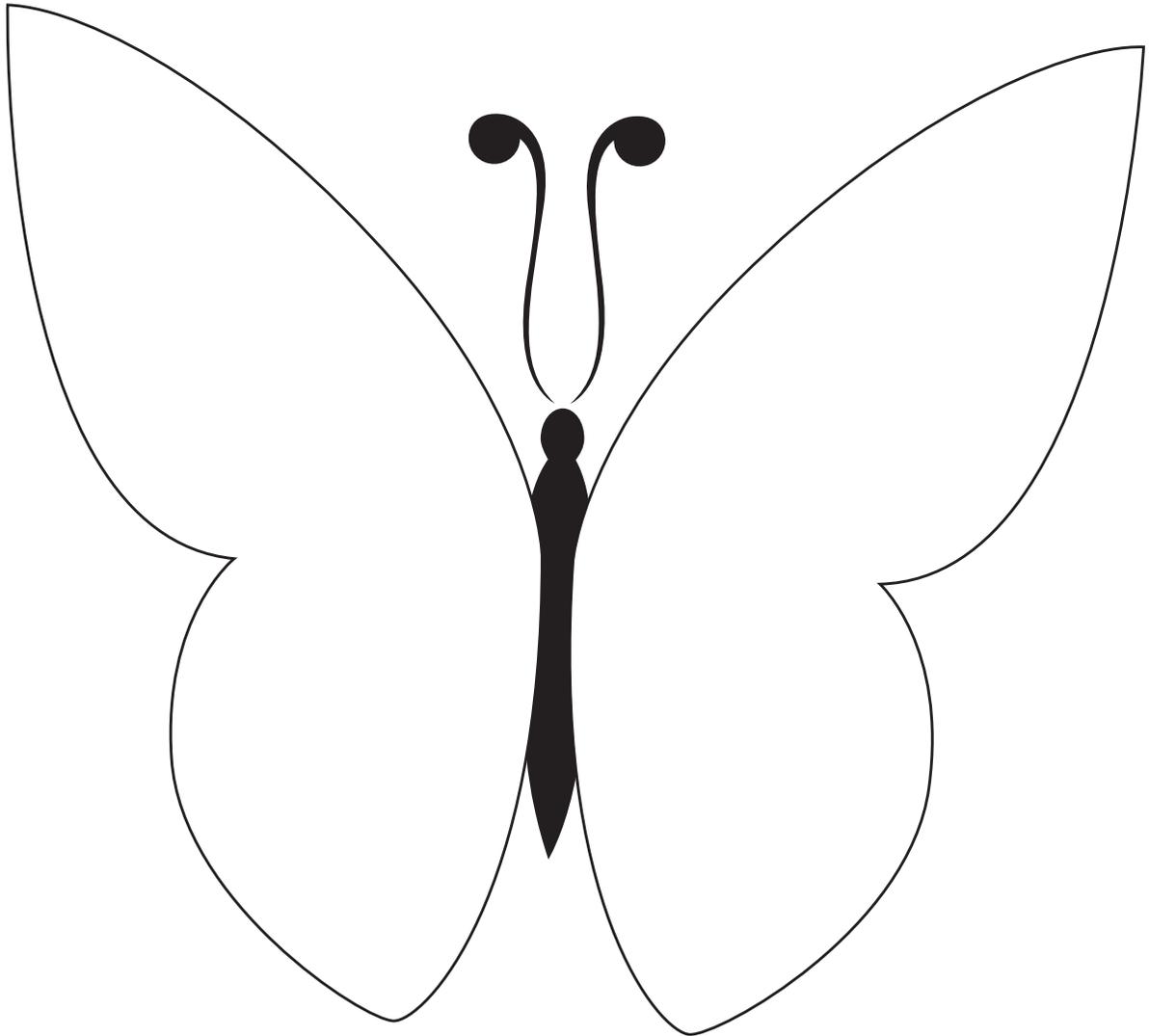
### **The Butterfly**

*The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun’s tears would sing  
against a white stone. . . .  
Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly ‘way up high.  
It went away I’m sure because it wished to  
kiss the world good-bye.  
For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,  
Pinned up inside this ghetto.  
But I have found what I love here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut branches in the court.  
Only I never saw another butterfly.  
That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don’t live in here,  
in the ghetto.*

2. Discuss the following questions with the class:
  - Who do you think wrote this poem?
  - Why do you think it was written?
  - What does the butterfly represent in this poem?
  - How does this poem make you feel?
  - Are there conflicts in the poem? If so, what are they?
  - What is the mood of this poem? Explain your answer.

Complete the discussion with an explanation of the life of Pavel Friedmann and his poem. Friedmann wrote this poem on April 6, 1942, while he was imprisoned in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. Without enough food, water, or sanitation, many Jews died in Theresienstadt. Those who survived were likely sent to extermination camps in Poland. Pavel Friedmann eventually died in the Auschwitz extermination camp in 1944. He was twenty-three years old.

3. Distribute the butterfly template and colored markers to the students. Ask them to contemplate Pavel Friedmann's poem before they begin. Encourage them to be thoughtful and creative.
4. The students should share their butterflies in front of the class and explain why they used certain colors and designs. Display the butterflies in your classroom or hallway.



## Six

### Responding to the St. Louis

*This activity accompanies panel 6, “What Did Other Countries Do to Help?” The story of the St. Louis sheds light on anti-Semitism as a global issue and the world’s response to refugees from Nazi Germany.*

**Materials needed:** Whiteboard, board markers, paper, pencils/pens

1. Discuss the voyage of the *St. Louis* as a class. For more information on the ship’s voyage, refer to the “Exhibit Guide: Supplementary Materials” section, pages 25-28.
2. Divide the students into groups of two or three. The groups should develop convincing arguments for the *St. Louis* to land at an American harbor. Remind the students that their arguments are meant to convince both the American people and politicians.
3. The groups should present their arguments to the class. Write the arguments on the whiteboard.
4. Instruct the students to write a letter to President Franklin Roosevelt arguing in favor of allowing the *St. Louis* to land at an American harbor. The students should support their claims with points from the previous discussion and supplementary material from the “Exhibit Guide” section.

# Seven

## Timeline Activity

*This activity can be used with the entire exhibit to provide students with a chronology of the events of the Holocaust from World War I to the signing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

**Materials needed:** Pencils/Pens, Paper, colored pencils/pens, computers with Internet access

1. Using the timeline in the exhibit and the Internet and/or Media Center, the students should create a Holocaust timeline. The timeline should include events, dates, and two to three sentences detailing the events.
2. For additional information, the students should consult the following websites:
  - The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Website: [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)
  - Yad Vashem: [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)
3. After the students have completed the timeline, they should insert details from Norbert Friedman's life next to the historical events. Information on Friedman's life can be found in the exhibit, the attached video clips, or in the "Norbert's Story: Supplementary Materials" section (pages 22-24.) The students should draw arrows in a different color connecting the major historical events and the events of Norbert's life to emphasize the historical connections.

# Eight

## Mapping the Holocaust

*This activity accompanies Panel 9, “What was Life Like After the Holocaust?” and encourages the students to consider the geographical scope of the Holocaust.*

**Materials needed:** Copies of attached map (page 18), computers with Internet access, pens/pencils

1. Print and distribute copies of the attached map (page 18) of Europe showing the concentration camps in which Norbert Friedman was imprisoned during the Holocaust.
2. The students should conduct research about World War II and the Holocaust and plot major events on the map. In addition to the timeline in the exhibit and the timeline activity above (activity 7), the students should research and plot the following major events:
  - The formation of the Nazi Party in Munich, Germany, 1919
  - The location of Auschwitz in Poland
  - The home of Anne Frank in Amsterdam, Netherlands
3. In addition to learning about Norbert’s story, you may discuss the lives of other young people who experienced the Holocaust with the class. Biographies of children and teenagers featured in the Museum of History and Holocaust Education’s signature exhibit, *Parallel Journeys: World War II and the Holocaust through the Eyes of Teens*, can be found at: [historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/exhibitions/parallel\\_journeys.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/exhibitions/parallel_journeys.php)
4. This activity can also be conducted as a class discussion by projecting the attached map onto the whiteboard and plotting additional dates and details directly on the white board.

# Nine

## The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was inspired in part by the events of the Holocaust. This activity accompanies Panel 9, “What was Life Like After the Holocaust?”*

**Materials needed:** Projector, paper, pens/pencils, art supplies, computer with Internet access

1. Project the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the white board and discuss it with the class. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be viewed at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>.
2. Discuss the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the meaning of human rights. Ask the students what they think the most important rights are in their neighborhoods.
3. On a template, the students should record the human right most important to their neighborhood and how it relates to their daily lives. Underneath, the students should draw a picture of how the human right is relevant in their daily lives.
4. Scan the images into Moviemaker or Photostory. The students should narrate the short movie discussing why they chose a certain human right over another and how they illustrated it. If the movie-making technology is unavailable, bind the students' images into book form or display them on the classroom walls.
5. An extension of this activity is to have students write a persuasive piece arguing which human right is most important to them. They should use historical evidence to support their argument.

# Ten

## No Place for Hate

*The lessons of the Holocaust can be used to make a positive impact in schools and communities today. This activity accompanies Panel 10, “What Should I do Now?”*

**Materials Needed:** Computer with Internet connection, projector, art supplies

1. Discuss the importance of an individual standing up against hate and intolerance rather than acting as a bystander. Encourage your students to research and discuss heroic and courageous upstanders. An excellent resource is *The Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting, available to buy online.
2. Visit the “For Students” page of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education’s website at [historymuseum.kennesaw.edu](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu), and download the instructions for the annual writing and creative arts contest.
3. The students should reflect on the contest’s theme and brainstorm ideas with their fellow students. Encourage the students to be creative and thoughtful. You may assign the project as classwork or homework.
4. Mail the students’ submissions to the Museum of History and Holocaust Education (3333 Busbee Drive, Kennesaw, GA, 30144) for entry into the annual contest.

SOURCE SHEET A



**Camps where Norbert Friedman was imprisoned**

- |                |             |                |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Mielec      | 5. Dachau   | 9. Kaufering   |
| 2. Wieliczka   | 6. Augsburg | 10. Natzweiler |
| 3. Flossenburg | 7. Horgau   | 11. Ganacker   |
| 4. Leitmeritz  | 8. Leonberg |                |

## Norbert's Story: Supplementary Materials

“IT IS TRUE THAT THE WORLD OF A HOLOCAUST VICTIM WAS ONE CONTINUOUS DEHUMANIZING EXPERIENCE...BUT I CANNOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO ONLY SAW DARKNESS.”

NORBERT FRIEDMAN<sup>1</sup>



### *Norbert's Early Life*

**N**orbert Friedman was born on December 20, 1922, in Krakow, Poland, to Josef and Gusta Friedman. The family practiced Orthodox Judaism, and from the age of six Norbert attended Hebrew day school. Norbert's family was close to his maternal grandparents. His grandfather was a wholesale fish dealer and Norbert's

father worked with him. After the death of his maternal grandmother, Norbert's family moved to Bielsko-Biala about seventy miles outside of Krakow. His father took up kosher butchering, the practice of performing ritual slaughter according to Jewish custom.

Norbert attended school in Bielsko-Biala until his father's business began to fail during the Great Depression. In addition to working in his father's butcher shop before and after school, Norbert earned a scholarship in order to continue his education and prepare for his Bar Mitzvah in 1935.

After the death of Polish leader Marshal Josef Pilsudski in 1935, the climate of anti-Semitism intensified. A new law prohibiting ritual slaughter made family life increasingly difficult as Norbert's father resorted to the black market. When the family moved to a non-Jewish neighborhood Norbert made friends easily even attending church on occasion. In this unfamiliar atmosphere, he experienced direct anti-Semitism for the first time. While waiting for his friends near the church's entrance, Norbert was confronted by an adult hurling anti-Jewish epithets. The attacks quickly turned physical. His friends came to his rescue but teased him by saying that his life would be easier if he was one of them.

Norbert's education took many turns. When he was denied entry to a polytechnic middle school in Bielsko-Biala, he transferred to a Jewish vocational school in Krakow and boarded with members of his extended family. When his father finally gave up kosher butchering, Norbert returned home to help provide for the family. Unable to finish his education, Norbert apprenticed in a machine shop owned by an ethnic German who, despite hiring the Jewish teenager, held strong anti-Semitic views. One of Norbert's tasks was enduring frequent tirades against his own people.

<sup>1</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight* (Xlibris, 2006), 10.

Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 started World War II and ignited a new round of attacks on Jews. At the urging of their elders, many young Jewish men including Norbert walked miles to the east in the ensuing weeks. The areas under German control were too dangerous. When the Soviet Union invaded, however, the young Poles no longer had a country. They returned to their families and an uncertain future.

The German occupiers eventually established a ghetto for Jews in Krakow and ordered all Jewish men of a certain age to report for work in labor camps. Norbert's family fled to the countryside where his father found work in a fruit preserves factory. At eighteen, Norbert got a job with the German defense industry, when friends in the resistance produced false papers for him.

### ***Life in the Camp System***

By 1941, life for Polish Jews was drastically worse with many imprisoned or forced into labor. Norbert and his father again resorted to selling butchered meats on the black market. When the Germans discovered the secret business, they put a price on his father's head, forcing the family to flee. A few months later German forces surrounded Wielpole, the town where Norbert's family was hiding. Over loudspeakers the Germans announced that women, children, and the elderly would be spared "resettlement" if the men volunteered to serve in slave labor camps. Norbert and his father volunteered and were transported to the Mielic labor camp. A few weeks later the Germans deported the remaining Jewish population of Wielpole, including Norbert's mother and younger brother, to Belzec to be exterminated.

Norbert was imprisoned as a slave laborer at Mielic for two years. He built airplane engines, cleaned the kitchen, and shoveled garbage. Food and medical supplies were scarce, but Norbert befriended a Mr. Pusch who managed the materials testing lab. Whenever Norbert became ill, he joined the work detail in the lab and remained there until he recovered. In the winter of 1943, a Typhus outbreak killed thousands of Norbert's fellow prisoners. He watched helplessly as many of his friends succumbed to illness, cold, and exhaustion.

As the Allied forces gained the upper hand against Germany, the Nazi hierarchy enforced the Final Solution with more urgency. Many of the camps were liquidated outright. Norbert was transported much more frequently as the German front receded. In the last year of the war alone, Norbert survived eleven camps. His skills as a mechanic made him more valuable to the German war machine.

Whenever he arrived at a new camp, Norbert asked questions. "Who is in charge of the camp?" "How much food is available?" "What sort of work is required?" "Are there any compassionate guards?" Knowing about a camp gave Norbert a better sense of

<sup>2</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight*, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight*, 224.

how to survive it. When Norbert arrived at the Dachau concentration camp he lost his toothbrush and a picture of his mother, the only personal items left in his possession. “I had lost the means of contact and connection to my past and to being human,” he later recalled.<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Death March and Liberation***

The death march was a perverse ending to a long and brutal captivity. In April of 1945, camp guards roused Norbert and his fellow prisoners in the middle of the night as Allied planes flew overhead. A two-day march followed. Two-thirds of the prisoners perished. Norbert had no choice but to leave his friend, Oskar, who was suffering from pneumonia, under a makeshift blanket of leaves and branches.

With defeat in sight, the Nazi guards decided to separate. Norbert and his father were assigned to a Hungarian SS officer who showed remarkable kindness to prisoners. They hid in a barn until the first day of May when American tanks rolled into the nearby town of Hebertsfelden, Germany. Norbert knew he was free, but “the worn shell of my body housed a numb spiritless wretch,” he said, “who was unable to comprehend the significance of the moment.”<sup>5</sup>

### ***Life After the Holocaust***

After liberation Norbert reunited with his friend Oskar who, having recovered from his illness, obtained a job working with the American army. Norbert followed suit, first working in a kitchen at an American military outpost and later as an interpreter. The kindness of the liberators convinced Norbert that his future lay in the United States.

Until his visa was approved, Norbert was a displaced person living on a continent ravaged by war. Many of his family members had died. He had no home to return to in Poland. He worked on a degree at a university in Frankfurt, Germany where anti-Semitism persisted among the German soldiers returning from war. Once more Norbert returned to the black market for food and supplies. He often ate at a local Jewish community center. When he was called to immigrate to the United States in 1950, Norbert's only regret in leaving Europe was his unfinished degree. Norbert worked as an engineer for many years, married, and had two sons. He has lived in the Northeast and the American South, regions where he shares his memories of the Holocaust with diverse groups of people. He attempts “to draw positive lessons from the most tragic epoch in man's history.”<sup>6</sup>

Norbert recalled his story in his memoir, *Sun Rays at Midnight*, available to buy online.

<sup>4</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight*, 203.

<sup>5</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight*, 224.

<sup>6</sup> Norbert Friedman, *Sunrays at Midnight*, 264.

## Exhibit Guide: Supplementary Materials

### DEFINING THE HOLOCAUST

#### Supporting panel 1 – Never Forget: An Introduction Holocaust

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

*The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.*

*During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.*

Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143>

### WHY DID THE NAZIS PERSECUTE THE JEWS?

#### Supporting panel 2 – What was Jewish life like before the Holocaust?

Over the last one thousand years Jews have been the victims of significant prejudice. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

*Within the context of the economic depression of the 1930s and using not only racist but also older social, economic, and religious imagery, the Nazi party gained popularity and, after seizing power, legitimacy, in part by presenting "Jews" as the source for a variety of political, social, economic, and ethical problems facing the German people.*

*Inspired by Adolf Hitler's theories of racial struggle and the "intent" of the Jews to survive and expand at the expense of Germans, the Nazis, as a governing party from 1933-1938, ordered anti-Jewish boycotts, staged book burnings, and enacted anti-Jewish legislation. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws defined Jews by race and mandated the total separation of "Aryans" and "non-Aryans." On November 9, 1938, the Nazis destroyed synagogues and the shop windows of Jewish-owned stores throughout Germany and Austria (Kristallnacht). These measures aimed at both legal and social segregation of Jews from Germans and Austrians.*

*Kristallnacht, the initiation of World War II in 1939, and the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 marked the transition to the era of destruction, in which genocide would become the key focus of Nazi antisemitism. To justify the murder of the Jews both to the perpetrators*

*and to bystanders in Germany and Europe, the Nazis used not only racist arguments but also arguments derived from older negative stereotypes, including Jews as communist subversives, as war profiteers and hoarders, and as a danger to internal security because of their inherent disloyalty and opposition to Germany.*

Credit: "Anti-Semitism in History: Nazi Anti-Semitism" <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007167>

## **WHY DID PEOPLE VOTE FOR THE NAZIS?**

### **Supporting panel 3 – Who were the Nazis?**

The Treaty of Versailles formally ended World War I, but it was a crushing blow for Germany. As the defeated nation, Germany was forced to accept full responsibility under the War Guilt Clause, to pay reparations to the Allies, to give up land and colonies around the world, and to greatly decrease the size and strength of the German Army and Navy. Despite the Weimar Republic's attempts to restore order in Germany, the stock market crash of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression fueled widespread economic instability and social unrest. Germans looked to more radical politicians to fix the country's problems. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party exploited the public's fears and desires by campaigning on a platform of renewed economic prosperity, a rejection of foreigners, and national pride. In 1932, the Nazi Party won 37.8 percent of the vote in the parliamentary election. The next year they won 44.5 percent. Votes for the Nazis were significantly higher than votes for their opponents in the early 1930s.

## **THE BERLIN OLYMPICS 1936**

### **Supporting panel 4 – What groups did the Nazis target?**

In 1936, Berlin hosted the Summer Olympics in an effort to demonstrate the success of the new Nazi Regime in Germany. For two weeks, the Nazis downplayed anti-Semitism and created a celebratory atmosphere for visiting athletes, dignitaries, and members of the press. The Olympic torch relay, now an essential part of the games, began in Berlin. New infrastructure across Germany conveyed wealth and power at home and abroad during the 1936 Olympics.

The insidious Nazi agenda could not be completely hidden from view. Many countries including the United States debated boycotting the Berlin Olympics in the months leading up to the opening ceremony. The Nazis prevented Jewish athletes such as Gretel Bergman, the German high jumping champion, from competing. Jessie Owens, the African American sprinter competing for the United States, won four gold medals provoking anger in Nazi officials who sought to use the Olympics as a showcase for the supremacy of the "Aryan Race."

## THE NAZIS' VICTIMS

### Supporting panel 5 – What happened to the victims?

In addition to targeting Jews, the Nazis and their collaborators also targeted any groups they perceived as racially inferior. These groups included the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), mentally and physically disabled people, Germans of African descent, Poles, and Russians. Other groups such as Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals were targeted by the Nazis for political and religious reasons.

## THE NAZIS' CAMP SYSTEM

### Supporting panel 5 – What happened to the victims?

Victims of the Nazis were imprisoned in many different types of camps: transit camps used to imprison people en route from one camp to another, labor camps used to exact forced labor for the Germans, concentration camps used as brutal detention facilities beginning in 1933, and extermination camps used to carry out the Final Solution. Over 20,000 camps created a vast web across Europe. Some camps were connected to others for strategic reasons while others were purposefully hidden deep in the Polish forests. Many Holocaust victims perished in the camps because of malnutrition, beatings, exposure, and over work.

## THE RESCUE OF DENMARK'S JEWS

### Supporting panel 6 – How did people fight back?

In April of 1940, Germany invaded and occupied Denmark. With the occupation came harsh anti-Jewish laws. A German diplomat warned Danish resistance fighters of Nazi plans to deport Jews to camps in the east. Resistance fighters mobilized quickly, preparing a rescue operation that would carry nearly 8,000 Danish Jews by boat to neutral Sweden. Although 500 Jews were later deported by the Nazis, the efforts of the Danish resistance symbolized the strength and fortitude of a country determined to fight against Nazi occupation and anti-Jewish policies.

## THE VOYAGE OF THE *ST. LOUIS*

### Supporting panel 7 – What did other countries do to help?

After Kristallnacht in November of 1938, many Jews who could afford to apply for visas emigrated from Nazi Germany. In May of 1939, the transatlantic liner *St. Louis* left Hamburg, Germany, for Havana, Cuba, carrying nearly 1,000 Jewish passengers. The *St. Louis'* passengers thought Havana would be a safe refuge until their American visas were granted. When they arrived at port, however, the Cuban government refused to allow the passengers to disembark. The political situation had deteriorated in the midst of economic troubles and social unrest. Immigrants were viewed with suspicion. Only twenty-two passengers with valid United States visas, two Cuban nationals, and four Spanish citizens were allowed entry. After leaving Cuba, the *St. Louis* made several attempts to land at ports along the eastern seaboard of the United States but was turned away each time. Indifference

towards European refugees and anti-Semitism contributed to the passengers' plight. When the ship returned to Europe, Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands agreed to take some of the passengers. Two hundred and fifty-four passengers of the St. Louis would eventually perish in the Holocaust.

## **LIFE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**

### **Supporting panel 8 – What happened after liberation?**

Even after Allied troops liberated the camps and forced Germany's surrender in 1945, Holocaust survivors faced hardship and discrimination. Temporarily relocated to Displaced Persons (DP) camps, most survivors had no financial resources, no place to call home, and few surviving relatives or friends. Hundreds of thousands of Jews left Europe in search of a new life. Over 80,000 arrived in the United States in the years after the war. Although many survivors had families and jobs in the decades to come, memories of the Holocaust stayed with them forever.

## **UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Supporting panel 9 – What was life like after the Holocaust?**

When nations around the world grasped the full extent of Nazi atrocities against European Jews and other victims, there was widespread incomprehension and outrage. With the Allies' Four Freedoms in mind, members of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, outlining the rights entitled to all people such as life, liberty, and security. According to the declaration, "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms," and "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment." Although many factors influenced the declaration, the Holocaust loomed large in its creation.

To read the full declaration visit: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

## **FIGHTING HATE IN OUR COMMUNITIES**

### **Supporting panel 10 – What should I do now?**

Many organizations work to combat prejudice through educational programs such as workshops, lesson plans, and online content. The Museum of History and Holocaust Education and the Anti-Defamation League host an annual creative contest encouraging students to imagine a world without hate through art, music, or writing. The contest is a powerful way to emphasize the importance of Holocaust memory today. Visit [historymuseum.kennesaw.edu](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu) to learn more about the annual contest.

**The following transcripts accompany the video clips on the DVD attached to this Teacher's Guide:**

THE INVASION OF POLAND (57 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes the first days of the war when Germany invaded Poland and his life began to change.*

NF: When the war broke out I was living in-- I was working in Krakow, living with my aunt. And on September 1st, the German Stuka planes—the fighter planes—bombed Polish barracks, army barracks across the street from where I was staying with my aunt. It was the first time I saw dead and wounded being carried out. And we realized that this was the end of a certain part of, chapter of our lives, and a new chapter was beginning.

HIS MOTHER'S PARTING GIFT (47 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes his last meeting with his mother.*

NF: When we were leaving and saying goodbye, she reached in the bottom and took out her handkerchief and took the five dollar gold coins that was sent to us by a relative in the United States. And she gave it to me saying, "Keep it. It may someday be your freedom or life." And very prophetically she said, "We will never see each other again."

LOSS OF IDENTITY (1 MINUTE 58 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes the tattoo he received upon entering the first camp and the cruelty waged by camp commanders.*

Question: And you have a tattoo on your...?

NF: Yeah, I have a tattoo on my forehead. There are only two camps where they tattooed. One is very well known, the camp of Auschwitz, where they put a serial number on the left forearm. And the other one was the camp where we were. We were a satellite of the larger camp, Płaszów, the camp that was made infamous in the Schindler's List film. So that camp and the satellite of that camp had a tattoo on the forehead. Originally when the order came in, the German commandant of the camp—Hauptstadt Fuhrer Schwamberger—announced that the tattoo was going to be done on our foreheads unless we turned in every available valuables that we had. So the internal camp police collected whatever people had: money, values, treasures, chains, gold chains, watches, rings, whatever we had. We collected them and gave them to him so as not to have the tattoo done on our forehead. When we brought it to him he looked at it and said, "Is that all? Where's the gold from the teeth? Unless you give me the gold from the teeth I'll take it out from their dead bodies." So the dentist started pulling out. It was very common in Europe to have the fillings and bridges done with gold. So he pulled out all the gold from peoples' teeth and we gave it to him.

#### THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS ( 1 MINUTE 14 SECONDS )

*Friedman, a survivor of eleven camps, describes the process of moving from one camp to another.*

NF: Over the course of three years we always--. One of the things that baffled us was the first camp. We were there for two years in one camp. In the consequent year, we went to ten different camps. And we wondered why were we moved from one camp to another, so we did some research and it turned out of the ten camps that we were in, they were either transit camps where we were just a short amount of time, where they had a selection and determined who was still physically able to do work and was sent to another camp or was not physically able to work and was sent to an extermination camp. So we were in those ten camps. Some of them were transit camps and all the others were somehow affiliated with airplane manufacturing, either Messerschmitt-werker [Messerschmitt factory] or Heinkel-werker [Heinkel factory].

#### THE POLISH UNDERGROUND ( 2 MINUTES )

*Friedman describes the variety of resistance groups and the support he received from many of them during the war years.*

NF: There were all kinds of underground activities. There were those who were active in military kind of activities. My best friend, my Polish friend, the one who saved our lives, he died blowing up a German transport. But there were other activities. There were political activities. There was building of resistance. You have a picture of mine with four Polish friends in the town of Zawido. They were all students at the agricultural vocation school. That picture was taken by my Polish friend who enrolled them all into the underground. I was able--. Because of the support and help of the underground I was able to go in July of 1941 to the Warsaw Ghetto and in September 1941 to go to the Krakow Ghetto looking for members of my family because my mother's three sisters and two brothers lived in Krakow, and we stopped getting news from them. So the underground existed. There were different organizations. There was underground that was run by the socialists organizations, the Polish Socialist Party. There was underground that was run by the military veterans, by some of the academics. They all did different things to oppose and to do harm to the German establishment and German occupation.

#### THE RESISTANCE ( 40 SECONDS )

*Friedman describes his friend's act of resistance against the Germans.*

NF: Well, my friend was a member of the Polish underground and while I was in a camp--it was the end of 1942--he was involved in blowing up a German military transport. And he was cut down by machine-gun fire and was killed doing that. They knew that he was my friend, and they brought me the news of it.

THE DEATH MARCH (2 MINUTES AND 25 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes his final days as a prisoner of the Nazis. The approach of the Allied troops prompted the camp guards to lead prisoners on death marches away from the battle front.*

NF: There was a road leading to the liberation. The last camp that we were in was finally bombed by P51 Mustangs on the 16th of April. On the 23rd of April, that camp was closed and we were put later on what was known as Ganacker death march. The name of the camp was Ganacker. We left on the 23rd. By the 27th, two-thirds of the convoy was almost gone, either executed by the inability to keep going or exhausted and dying from exhaustion. The German commandant of that convoy made a deal, which we found out later, with the eldest of the prisoners that he's going to try to save. And we could hear it wasn't only the big guns. We only could hear already the machine gun fire so that the Allied troops were close by. So he made a deal with the eldest of the prisoners. He's going to try to save whatever that was left from the convoy for him trying to save his life when the Allies come to vouch for his benevolence so to speak. And he called us out in the clearing and he gave an order to the SS, that was still left with us, for each guard to take five or six prisoners and hold out in the farm house 'til the glorious German army vanquished the enemy and would reassemble. So we, my father picked a Hungarian SS-man, a SS-man of Hungarian background whom we used to watch his conduct. We knew he was a benevolent individual. He didn't harm anybody and he went with us, and we wound up in a barn on the outskirts of the village.

"THE NIGHTMARE WAS OVER" (1 MINUTE 19 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes the uncertainty and excitement of liberation.*

NF: And that barn on the morning of May 1st, we heard a rumbling and we ran to the cracks in the barn and we watched three tanks with five pointed white stars on the sides and soldiers marching behind it marching on the road into the village. We thought--. Five-pointed white stars to us was Russian stars. We didn't know the Americans used the same five-pointed stars, and we yelled, "Oh the Russians, the Russians are here." And the Hungarian said, "No, no, Americana." So we were sitting there, we started crazily dance. First of all we were shocked. We were free. It was over. The nightmare was over. And we couldn't react to it. One of them all of a sudden dancing and jumping up and down in the hay. We were up there screaming and dancing.

MEETING THE LIBERATORS (2 MINUTES 38 SECONDS)

*Friedman describes meeting with American troops after liberation. He was chosen to speak with them because he knew a few words of English from watching American movies.*

NF: And a couple hours passed by and I decided well, we have to find out what it is, what it means, are we free? Can we go? What's going on? So they picked me as a scout to go in to the village and find out what's going on. The reason they picked me is because I always bragged about I used to love American movies. I used to go to American movies whenever

they played in the neighborhood. And I used to brag about them so they felt I probably speak English. The only thing I knew in English is “I love you” and “goodbye darling.” How was that going to help me? They didn’t care. They sent me in to the village. And I came into the village and the village square in the village of Hebertsfelden there were American soldiers sitting around mostly on their helmets or leaning against the tanks or the jeeps. And they were eating. What they were eating-- I thought they were eating Napoleons. You know what a Napoleon pastry is? It has cream inside. But what they were eating was processed cheese between crackers from C-rations. I didn’t know. I never saw a C-ration. I never saw processed cheese. To me they were eating Napoleons. This is what the army was doing! And I was walking around, and I was wearing the concentration camp uniform. I was all of eighty pounds. Haggard. Dirty. Totally confused. Not knowing. I didn’t know how to assess my situation. Until one of the soldiers called to me in broken-German from an American army book on how to speak German, and he said “Kommen sie hier.” [Translation: Come here] And I went over to him and he started asking me who am, I so I said “I’m Polish.” I was unsure it was safe to say you were Jewish yet.

## Suggested Reading

**Teachers should review all resources provided in this guide before sharing them with students to determine the appropriateness for their class.**

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Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1989.

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- Toll, Nelly S. *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During World War II*. London: Penguin Young Readers Group, 2003.
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- Williams, Laura E. and A. Nancy Goldstein. *Behind the Bedroom Wall*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Edition, 2005.
- Willoughby, Susan. *Art, Music, and Writings from the Holocaust*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003.
- Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic*. London: Penguin Young Readers Group, 2004.

## **Resources for Teachers: K-12 Educational Programs**

The mission of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education is to support K-12 students and teachers in the study of World War II and the Holocaust. Our programs are free and flexible, and you can customize a program to fit your school's specific needs. We offer:

- Field Trips to the museum
- In-School Programs
- Traveling Trunks
- Traveling Exhibitions
- Online Teacher's Guides
- Summer Workshop for High School Students
- No Place for Hate Art and Writing Contest
- Professional Development Workshops
- On-Site Events

To reserve a program, or for more information, contact us at **470-578-2083** or by email at **[mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu](mailto:mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu)**.

### ***The Legacy Series***

The Museum of History and Holocaust Education's *Legacy Series* oral history program uses filmed interviews to preserve the experiences of Holocaust survivors, World War II veterans, and home front workers living in Georgia. Through our website, you can find short video clips excerpted from these filmed interviews, in which the individuals share their World War II and Holocaust experiences. We encourage you to use these in your classroom to support your teaching about World War II and the Holocaust, and to help your students meet history face to face.

**[historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_series.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_series.php)**



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