



Lesson 5: Remembrance

**by Josephine Cripps, Teacher, Summit K-12 School, Seattle
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Goal: Students will become acquainted with individual victims of the Holocaust. Students will begin to perceive and appreciate the “human face” of the Holocaust.

Activities:

As students enter the classroom, they take seats in a circle. The focal point of the circle is a memorial candle, unlit. Next to the candle, a basket contains a variety of the Identification Cards, the ones used by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. These are the cards each visitor receives upon entering the USHMM. The basket contains enough Identification Cards for each student (and the teacher) to take one.

[Identification cards can be downloaded in an 8.5 x 11 format at www.ushmm.org, or contact the Holocaust Center at info@wsherc.org to have a set mailed to you.]

When the class is assembled, the teacher begins:

Today we will honor the memories of a few of the millions who died during the Holocaust. I am passing around a basket of Identification Cards. Each card tells the story of one person—a real person—who was a victim of the Holocaust. I want to stress, the people on the cards are real. Their stories are real.

As I pass the basket around, please take a card at random. When we all have a card, we will read them silently.

As the students read silently, the teacher circulates. She quietly helps students with the correct pronunciation of names and places.

When students have read their cards to themselves, the teacher models the next step. She holds up her card and shows everyone the photograph on the inside. She then reads aloud the first three pages of the Identification Card. Before she reads the last page, she may ask her students a question:

Do you think this person survived the Holocaust?

Students may speculate briefly, and then the teacher reads the last page of the Identification card. The students learn the fate of the person on the card.

In turn, one by one, the students present the people on their cards.

When the last student has introduced the person on her card, the teacher opens a discussion. She may ask some of the following questions:

How many of the people were from Poland? From Holland? From Germany?

How many were children?

Which people survived the war? Where did they go after the war?

Which people died? How did they die?

The teacher deepens guides the students as they view the Holocaust through the lens of the Identification Cards. She offers the students a reminder:

The cards were selected by chance and offer only a microscopic sample of the 11 million who died.

Even so, the students may start to see important patterns emerge: many of the victims were Polish, child victims usually did not survive, many survivors emigrated to Palestine, and so forth.

The teacher closes the discussion and calls for a volunteer to light the memorial candle. As the memorial candle is lit, the teacher (or a student) remembers the victims of the Holocaust:

We light this candle in remembrance of the people whose names we have learned today. We also remember those people whose names we may never know, but whose lives honor. In our own lives, the best way we can honor the dead is to work for justice now, for the living.

Teacher collects the Identification Cards and thanks the students for their work.

Note: The teacher may wish to use recorded music at the outset of this lesson, to underscore the mood of solemnity. Pieces by Holocaust victims Erwin Schulhoff, Gideon Klein, or Pavel Haas work well, and the teacher may wish to share these musicians' life stories with her class.

Materials:

Identification Cards from the United States Holocaust memorial Museum

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A memorial candle

Matches

