WITNESS TO HISTORY
The Holocaust Remembered by Florida Survivors

TEACHER’S GUIDE
Written by Ursula Szczepinska

An original exhibition of THE FLORIDA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Designed by Aimee Alvarez Baruch
This Guide complements The Florida Holocaust Museum’s exhibition “Witness to History: The Holocaust Remembered by Florida Survivors.” The exhibition can be requested at no cost by schools throughout the state of Florida at exhibitions@thefhm.org or accessed online. It is built around the Museum’s permanent exhibition and can be used by teachers who introduce Holocaust history to their students for the first time or for more advanced studies.

Throughout the exhibition, historical information is combined with primary sources pertaining to the lives of Holocaust survivors who settled in Florida. Teachers and students will also be able to work with primary sources left behind by those who perished and make sure what happened to these individuals is not forgotten. The exhibition and the Guide include text, video, and visual content. The Guide also provides hyperlinks for specific resources that correspond with the activities.

In the Guide, each of the 19 exhibition panels is accompanied by 2 activities that may include clips of video testimony, archival photographs, and other primary sources. Under the guidance of their teachers, students will get to know history, new vocabulary, and learn how to conduct research and discuss their findings with their peers. While studying this challenging history, students will be able to see how historical events impacted individual human beings. Finally, they will understand that we all can make a difference.

The content of the exhibition and the Guide can help teachers meet the requirements of HB1213: Educational Instruction of Historical Events and of Holocaust Education Mandate. This exhibition and Guide can be used in Social Studies and Language Arts classes. Teachers are advised to choose activities that are appropriate for their students’ grade, age, and sensitivity level. It is also possible to combine parts of different activities or use just a part of an activity in a teacher’s curriculum.

The Guide includes multiple references to The FHM’s Virtual Tour of our permanent exhibition. The hyperlinks will take teachers to specific sections of the permanent exhibition but teachers are also encouraged to explore other parts of the Tour. The Virtual Tour page on our website has a tutorial video and a very helpful tutorial document (first document at the top of the page) with the location of video testimony clips. It is also possible to schedule a free docent-led Virtual Tour and a meeting with a Holocaust Survivor through our “Zoom with a Survivor” program.

We highly recommend using the exhibition and this Guide along with our Museum Guide for Educators that focuses on the content of our permanent exhibition. The Museum Guide has activities that can help teachers prepare students for a Virtual Tour and help them process what they have learned. It also includes guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, a glossary, bibliography, and webography. You can use it on our website or download it to your computer.

For more information about any of the resources recommended in the Guide, please contact The Florida Holocaust Museum at education@thefhm.org.

Thank you for using our resources.

Ursula Szczepinska
Director of Education & Research
The Florida Holocaust Museum
OBJECTIVES

Through working with this exhibition and Guide, students should be able to:

1. Translate statistics into people’s lives.
2. Work with primary and secondary sources.
3. Define the Holocaust and its time frame.
4. Gain knowledge about complex human behavior during the Holocaust.
5. Understand the events leading up to World War II.
7. Understand the U.S. response to the Holocaust in politics, media, and among individuals.

Activity 1:

Have students read the definition of the Holocaust at the top of the panel. Students should break it down into separate words and look up the definitions of each word. Discuss the definition with students in their own words. Make sure everybody understands the new words.

“The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators over a twelve-year period between 1933 and 1945.”

Activity 2:

Prepare a big sheet of paper or open a new document on your computer. The document needs to be visible to all students. Copy the timeline from Panel 1 and either paste it or re-write in a vertical format the way it is on the panel.

With students, read through the timeline entries and make sure they understand all the words. Highlight the entries they are familiar with. Discuss them with the group. Mark the entries that you know you will include later in the Holocaust unit and advise students they will learn more about these particular events.

Activity 1:

Before exploring the panel, discuss with students how they understand antisemitism. Together, analyze the working definition of antisemitism created by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Talk about time frame (when do they think it started?), what prejudice means, define the word “stereotype.” Write the ideas on the board/computer screen. Ask students to read the panel: stop after every paragraph and discuss the content. Where needed, edit the ideas on the board so they reflect more accurate definitions.

Activity 2:

Discuss with students the concepts of rejection, exclusion, dehumanization that were at the core of Nazi ideology. How does hatred start (discuss the role of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, misconceptions)?

Divide the images from this panel among your students. It is OK if multiple groups have the same image. Each group needs to have a designated speaker who will later present the group’s observations. Ask students to discuss it in light of what they have just learned and have the speaker present their findings to the rest of the class.
Activity 1:
Prior to this lesson, choose Jewish communities you would like to focus on, based on your planned Holocaust unit. Ask students what they know about pre-WWII Jewish communities in Europe. Talk about culture, social and economic aspects, the size of communities you chose to focus on, e.g., how big the Jewish community in Germany was.

Divide students into small groups and, under your supervision, ask them to look up the locations from the photo captions. Where are they on the map? How many Jews live there today? Are there any memorials to the Holocaust?

Activity 2:
Go back to the definitions you have previously discussed in Panel 1 and 2: “antisemitism,” “prejudice,” “Holocaust.” Make sure students refresh their memory of these definitions. Read the text of the panel.

As a group, analyze the pictures in the panel. Ask students to describe in their own words what they see. Help students understand that they are looking at innocent human beings who were targeted by the Nazis and their supporters as an alleged “threat” in the name of a hateful ideology. Students should understand the correlation between the concepts of antisemitism, prejudice, stereotypes they discussed earlier, and persecution of innocent human beings.

Activity 1:
With students, analyze with students the explanation of the difference between the persecution of Jews and non-Jews by the Nazi regime that can be found at the top of this panel. Have they heard about non-Jewish victim groups of the Nazi regime and can share the information with the class?

Together, read the definitions for each of the victim groups. Analyze the photographs with an emphasis that these individuals were innocent and the only reason they were incarcerated was the hateful Nazi ideology based on pseudo-science and political goals. Use archival databases: Arolsen Archives, USHMM, Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau to check if there is more information about these individuals and what happened to them.

Activity 2:
Analyze the chart of markings for prisoners. Discuss the concepts of dehumanization, identity, generalizations. Help students understand that, to their oppressors, these prisoners were no longer individual human beings but numbers and patches of different colors.

Divide students into groups and have each group discuss the same question: how can we protect and preserve these people’s humanity in memorialization projects? Have each group present their findings. Write them down on the board/screen and pin it for the duration of your Holocaust unit, encouraging students to add new ideas as their studies progress.
Activity 1:
Discuss with students the situation in Germany and globally before 1933. What were the effects of World War I? What were the concerns and struggles of the German population between 1918 and 1933 (e.g., loss of territory and status, unemployment, stock market crash, new political system, unrest on the streets). Analyze what propaganda means and why it is important to investigate the message we receive from politicians before we build an opinion.
As a group, analyze the photograph of Adolf Hitler with Youth Workers. In their propaganda efforts, Hitler and the Nazis paid a lot of attention to young people. Discuss with students why young people were one of the target groups.

Activity 2:
Add the timeline from this panel to the previous timeline from panel 1. With students, listen to Herbert Karliner’s testimony. Work with students on adding the events from Herbert’s testimony to the timeline, with historical events on one side and Herbert’s personal experiences on the other. Ask students to write a short essay about the concepts discussed in panels 2, 3, 5 and Herbert’s testimony.

Activity 1:
Divide students into teams and have them analyze anti-Jewish legislation on The FHM’s Virtual Tour. Assign two or three laws to each team and have them present a summary to the rest of the class. How do they understand these laws in the context of isolation and discrimination? Remind students that these laws were executed against innocent people in Germany but also in other occupied areas. Ask students to analyze a wedding picture of Salomon and Flora Schrijver (notice the markings on people’s clothing). Together, research what happened to Salomon and Flora Schrijver: use the Pages of Testimony submitted to Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names by The Florida Holocaust Museum on behalf of Holocaust survivor Sam Schryver.

Activity 2:
Look at the image of the yellow star and images of other markings in The FHM’s Collections Database and Virtual Tour. Listen to clips of video testimony on the Virtual Tour. Analyze different responses to the star markings. Keep in mind that different types of markings were introduced in different years in various parts of Europe.
PANEL 8 "APPEASEMENT & SILENCE. THE WORLD’S RESPONSE."

Activity 1:
With students, investigate the goals and outcomes of the Evian Conference. Use The FHM’s Virtual Tour for examples of how the world responded to the Nazi regime. Look for newspaper coverage of the events through The FHM’s Virtual Tour, the USHMM’s exhibition Americans and the Holocaust and the History Unfolded project.

Activity 2:
With students, listen to Arthur Meier’s testimony on The FHM’s Virtual Tour about his family’s struggle to emigrate to the United States. Through the USHMM’s exhibition, Americans and the Holocaust, ask students to analyze the immigration system in the U.S. prior to WWII. What obstacles did people face when trying to escape persecution in Germany? How did that change once the United States entered the war?

PANEL 9 “UPROOTING A CULTURE. DEPORTATION AND SEPARATION.”

Activity 1:
In light of the discussion of the previous panel, have students explore The FHM’s Virtual Tour about the St. Louis and listen to a presentation on the fate of the passengers provided by the USHMM. How does it connect with Florida’s history? Ask students to add the history of the St. Louis to the timeline they have been working on.

Activity 2:
Listen to Miriam Kassenoff’s testimony as part of this panel. How did immigration challenges impact Miriam’s life? Divide students into teams and assign clips of The FHM’s survivor testimony pertaining to immigration that are part of The FHM’s Virtual Tour. You can find the location of each testimony clip through the tutorial document on the Virtual Tour page on our website. Ask students to add information about these survivors or the diarists to the timeline on the side of personal experiences. If the testimony clips or diary excerpts contain dates of historical events that are not part of your timeline, add those on the other side.

PANEL 10 “REMOVAL AND CONFINEMENT. THE GHETTOS.”

Activity 1:
After reading the panel and secondary sources of your choice on ghettos, choose excerpts from at least 2 diaries included in the “Salvaged Pages” anthology edited by Alexandra Zapruder (the anthology is available in our free Teaching Trunks.) Analyze these diary excerpts and discuss people’s responses to the ghettoization. Help students understand that every diary or testimony needs to be seen as a personal lens and that every victim had unique experiences even when confined to the same location.

Activity 2:
Divide students into teams and assign clips of The FHM’s survivor testimony pertaining to ghettoization that are part of The FHM’s Virtual Tour. You can find the location of each testimony clip through the tutorial document on the Virtual Tour page on our website. Ask students to add information about these survivors or the diarists to the timeline on the side of personal experiences. If the testimony clips or diary excerpts contain dates of historical events that are not part of your timeline, add those on the other side.
Activity 1: If your local library or another entity has online access to an archival newspaper collection, ask your students to research the coverage of Holocaust events (1933-1945) in national and Florida newspapers. Choose specific events from your timeline and have students investigate if there was any mention of that event in the media. You can also use newspaper information from the USHMM’s exhibition “Americans and the Holocaust” and the History Unfolded project.

Activity 2: Divide students into groups and assign individual case studies featured in the USHMM’s exhibition “Americans and the Holocaust.” How were these families affected by immigration policy in the U.S.?

Activity 1: As a group, go through the different rescue efforts featured in this panel. Have students point out the main differences and similarities in the rescue initiatives. Next to each picture in this panel, there is a caption with a name of a survivor and a location where he/she lived and where the rescue took place. Divide students into groups and assign them these names and locations: have them enter this data in The FHM’s Collections Database and check if we have artifacts pertaining to that person and/or location.

Activity 2: Listen to the testimony of Toni Rinde and of Allan Hall. How were their experiences different or similar? What role did non-Jews play in their respective survival experiences? Add Toni’s and Allan’s experiences to the timeline. You can access a longer testimony from Toni via The FHM’s content on USC Shoah Foundation’s IWitness educational platform (free registration required).

Activity 1: Divide students into groups and assign two rescuer profiles per group. Direct students to Yad Vashem’s section on the Righteous among the Nations and gather more information about those rescuers. If available, check for testimony of survivors who owe their lives to these individuals. Each group will then share their findings explaining the impact the choices of these brave individuals had on the lives of survivors. Add the respective data to the timeline.

Activity 2: Examples of bravery and compassion among persecuted Jews can be found in many primary sources. Helping family members and other victims, caring about one another, and trying to overcome numerous hardships was a form of unarmed resistance. Among such authentic accounts are the experiences of the Igel Family from Przemyśl, Poland.

In 1939, Leon Igel was a medical school graduate. He was on his way to the United States when World War II broke out. He was not able to return to his native Poland and found himself in New York, without any support network. Leon could not practice medicine in the new country, did not speak English, and did not have any funds. He spent the first night in New York on a park bench. Meanwhile, his relatives in Poland were impacted by the war with their hometown of Przemyśl first occupied by the Soviets, then by the Germans. Leon was their hope for getting out of Europe. In spite of very difficult beginnings in the U.S., Leon went out of his way to help his family the best he could. Read the translation of one of the letters Leon’s father, Gotz Igel, wrote to him and a letter from Leon’s sister, Sala who was deported by the Soviets to Siberia with her two young children. With students, discuss the concepts of mutual help, choices, sacrifices, hope, desperation, family, togetherness, persecution. Look for examples of these concepts in these two letters.

Explain to students that they will not be able to understand everything in the letters as their knowledge of the Igel family’s situation will be fragmentary and will depend just on the content of the letters. Leon Igel was the uncle of Toni Rinde whose testimony was part of Panel 12. Add Leon’s, Sala’s, and Gotz’s experiences to the timeline.
Beloved Lonek!

The mailman has just brought me your letter and I’ve covered it with tears. I’ve started to read it several times and couldn’t finish. I came back from Lvov last week and am staying with Milek for now. I don’t know how long I’m going to stay, whether I will return to Lvov or stay here will depend on the circumstances. I can’t explain all the details but I’ve been moving from one place to the other like a Gypsy. Milek would like me to stay with him and I have to admit they are both very kind to me but it’s about something else that I can’t explain to you. Milek’s mother-in-law had died two weeks before our mommy. I told you in my previous letter what day our mommy died but I’ll write again: the 12 of Av [August 16, 1940].

Yesterday Milek ordered a concrete foundation for a headstone for 2,300 rubles. It will be double size, prepared for me too. Milek wants the headstone to be made of marble which one can’t buy in Przemyśl but it should be available in Lvov. It’s supposed to cost 6,000 rubles because mom is buried among the highest aristocracy, so we have to adjust to the other headstones. In that area a grave costs between 50 and 60,000 rubles. He had to overcome lots of difficulties before he got that burial plot as no one wanted to believe that he will bury mommy there. He also managed to ensure that I would have a place next to mommy. So it will be one foundation over both graves and one wide marble headstone in the center of that foundation.

Milek works as the head of a fruit warehouse. He makes quite good money. His supervisors like him because he’s very talented. Munio is still lingering in Stubienko even though there’s nothing left for him there but it’s hard for him to leave.

Sala’s address: [in Russian]

Help her however you can - she’s very poor. Send her some food or clothes because it’s very cold over there and her children will freeze.

I sent Uncle in Brooklyn a letter the moment I found out about that scene but I haven’t heard back. I don’t know if he didn’t receive my letter or didn’t want to write back. But I will write to him again during Chol HaMoed. Today is Erev Sukkot. On Rosh Hashanah I was in Lvov and on Yom Kippur I was at Milek’s in Przemyśl. For Sukkot I’m staying with Milek.

Please write more often – it will be comforting to me. If you have any old clothes to send, please do. We have nothing so we’ll be able to use it. Do not send your fur coat - I don’t want it to go missing in transit and we can’t wear such fur coats here. If you are able to send something, mostly underwear - we have nothing.

Except for our mommy, we haven’t lost anyone from our family. Everybody is, thank God, trudging along. My biggest worry is [?].

I don’t have anything to add so I wish you well and send kisses. I hope I will be able to see you again.

Dad
March 14, 1943 Samarkand
Beloved Lonek!

I finally received a telegram from you. I suppose my children will update you on everything in detail in their letters. As far as our beloved Dad and my husband’s brothers are concerned, there’s no news. I’ve been on my own for 2 years. Living conditions are harsh but maybe I’ll be able to survive and to get to my children. I’m imploring you, beloved Lonek, please don’t forget for even a moment about my orphans who are alone in the world and have no one but you. I’m dead and can’t help them. If you can, please send money to Teheran for mailing as I need clothes and shoes.

What's new with you? How is your health? Did you get married? Send me a long letter, write often, and please write to the children - it will make them less homesick. I won’t write much in the first letter, maybe it will get delivered faster. Don’t forget that you have a sister in Samarkand.

Love and kisses,

Your well-wishing sister Sala
Activity 1:
Divide students into groups and assign research questions regarding the six killing centers: Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek. Where were those camps located? Who ran them? What was the time frame of their operations? How many victims were murdered at each site? Did anybody survive? What is on site of these death camps today?
Each group should have the same set of questions and present their findings to the rest of the class.
After discussing students’ research results, add operation dates of each death camp to the timeline.

Activity 2:
Analyze the photo of shoes and clothing of the victims at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Help students understand that these items belonged to innocent human beings. Through the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau’s database and Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, research individual victims of the Holocaust who were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau and other killing centers. You can either do preliminary research on your own and assign students specific names of victims, or let students explore the databases and choose 2 names to report on.

Activity 1:
After reading this panel content, have students go back to the previous panels and look for examples of armed (e.g., partisan units, uprisings) and unarmed resistance (e.g., education, cultural life, religious activities, soup kitchens, mutual help, surviving one more day) among Jews and non-Jews. Was there resistance in ghettos or camps (including death camps) and if so what type (armed, unarmed)? Students should include examples of group resistance and individual efforts. Have students add dates pertaining to resistance to the timeline they have been working on. They should write a summary of their findings and present it to the class.

Activity 2:
Listen to Lillian Bielski’s testimony as part of the panel and look up Tuvia Bielski’s shirt in The FHM’s Virtual Tour (it is located in the Upstanders Gallery). You can also listen to a testimony of Ruth Bielski Ehhreich, Tuvia’s daughter. What were the key points of the Bielski Brothers’ rescue effort? How was their partisan work different from other partisan groups?

Activity 1:
Have a group discussion on how students understand the concept of liberation. Through your own preliminary research, choose 2 to 3 camp sites liberated by the Allies (both Western and the Red Army). Discuss the conditions in those camps and have students add the time frame of operation of these camps to the timeline along with the date of liberation. What were the challenges for Jews and non-Jews who were liberated (e.g., health issues, displacement, loss of family members, antisemitism, a new political system in home country, education gap).

Activity 2:
Have students explore the liberation section of The FHM’s Virtual Tour. Listen to testimony clips of liberators and survivors. What was their experience with liberation? What did the allied troops encounter upon entering camp sites? What did their presence mean to survivors? Add personal experiences of these survivors and liberators to the timeline.
Activity 1:
After reading the panel, explore The FHM’s Virtual Tour with its artifacts pertaining to post-Holocaust trials. What challenges did the prosecutors face? What were the verdicts of the International Military Tribunal and Subsequent Trials? Have students research what happened to the perpetrators connected to the killing sites from panel 14.

Activity 2:
Read and discuss the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Have students research the role Raphael Lemkin played in coining the term “genocide” and his advocacy for the Convention. How is the Convention applied today? Help students identify post-Holocaust examples of genocide and how the Convention was used in response.

Activity 1:
With students, explore the history of DP camps. What were the challenges for Displaced Persons? How different and similar were the challenges of Jews and non-Jews in DP camps? How do those challenges correlate with the topics discussed in the activities for panel 16?

Activity 2:
Have students research Albert Einstein’s refugee experiences. What was his life like in Germany before the Nazis came to power? What made him stay in the United States? Why is it important that refugees from different walks of life have a chance for a safe haven?
Activity 1:
Based on their learning experience with this exhibition, ask students to identify up to three key points that in their opinion can bring change in our world. Have a discussion with references to the exhibition and sources of inspiration.

Activity 2:
One of the goals of The Florida Holocaust Museum is to encourage students to become Upstanders vs. bystanders in the face of injustice. Together, discuss why we need to respond and look for examples from local and global history when individual responses made a difference. Why is it meaningful for victims of injustice to know that other people care about them? Have students write an essay summarizing their experience with the “Witness to History” exhibition - ask them to reflect on the lessons they can draw from this history and how to apply these lessons to their daily decisions today.

**FREE RESOURCE HUB**

- The FHM's “Witness to History: The Holocaust Remembered by Florida Survivors” exhibition
- The FHM’s Collections Database
- The FHM’s Museum Guide for Educators with a Glossary and Bibliography
- The FHM’s Testimony Tuesday Series (no need for a Facebook account)
- The FHM’s Virtual Tour with Tutorials
- Florida Department of Education Commissioner’s Task Force on Holocaust Education
- International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
- USC Shoah Foundation’s IWitness
- The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
- The USHMM’s Americans and the Holocaust exhibition
- The USHMM’s Holocaust Encyclopedia
- The USHMM’s History Unfolded: US Newspapers and the Holocaust
- Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names
- Yad Vashem’s Deportation Database
- Yad Vashem’s Photo and Document Archives
- Yad Vashem’s Righteous Among the Nations Database

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**TRANSLATION OF ALBERT EINSTEIN’S LETTER**

Today, seven years ago, on November 10, 1938 started the organized action of annihilation by the Germans against the Jewish people. By now the power of the large scale criminals has been broken - after they murdered millions of our brothers. But while we mourn the dead, let us not forget our concern about the survivors, who were left in terrible misery so they can rediscover the route towards a normal life.

Solidarity and mutual assistance is for us Jews the only weapon for the preservation of our threatened existence. All Jews must constantly keep this alive in their minds. However, we emigrants from Germany and Austria, who - due to this mutual assistance - escaped the annihilation must perceive the obligation to render assistance even stronger then anybody else. Let us pay this debt in the spirit of gratitude. Our knowledge about the unique circumstances in these countries enables especially us not only to give, but also to participate actively in the practical execution of the relieve work. Let us spare no effort to achieve that our knowledge of these countries and their people is made use of.

This is all we can do. However, one more item must be expressed: The United Nations have the difficult task to create true peace, which answers the demand for justice and fairness. From them we have to expect that the ruins of European Judaism will have a future. Today the opening of the gates of Palestine is in the foreground of our interest and our hope. We hope that England in a time of our great distress will not forget what she and her allies has solemnly promised us at the end of the first world war. The solution to the problem is not Englands alone, but that of the United Nations. If this partnership of Nations is to take roots in the heart of man, confidence must be gained by constructive action in the spirit of responsibility and humanity.

A. Einstein

Written at Princeton October 1945
Printed in "DER AUFBAU" (a New York weekly newspaper in German) on or about November 10, 1945.