

THEME

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January each year. It's a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the [Holocaust](#), [Nazi Persecution](#) and in subsequent genocides in [Cambodia](#), [Rwanda](#), [Bosnia](#) and [Darfur](#). Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis attempted to annihilate all of Europe's Jews. This systematic and planned attempt to murder European Jewry is known as the Holocaust (The *Shoah* in Hebrew). From the time they assumed power in 1933, the Nazis used propaganda, persecution, and legislation to deny human and civil rights to Jews. They used centuries of antisemitism as their foundation. By the end of the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women and children had perished in ghettos, mass-shootings, in concentration camps and extermination camps.

Eliezer 'Elie' Wiesel was born in 1928 in the small Romanian town of Sighet. He was the third of four children and the only son. He was 15 when, in spring 1944, German troops occupied Sighet. Soon after, he was moved with the rest of his family into one of the two ghettos created in the town. When both ghettos were liquidated the entire Jewish population of Sighet was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Decades later, Wiesel recorded his feelings during his first hours in Auschwitz: 'Never shall I forget that night, the first night in the camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed... Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.'

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RELATES TO US

What does this day mean for us?

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Lord, we place these people and situations before you and ask you to help. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

SCRIPTURE

St Paul writes to the Galatians that:

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This means that because we are all created equally by God (Genesis 1), we are all equal and should be treated as such. This echoes the teaching of Jesus when he said in Matthew 7: 12 “Treat others as you would like to be treated.”

Therefore, if the Nazis followed these teachings, they would have realised that we are indeed all equal and no-one is better than anyone else.

Key Questions and activities....

How could we stop this happening again?

Why do people think they are better than others?

What would you have said to Hitler, the very first time he was rude or nasty about Jews? Or when he said he wanted to get kill them all?



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

DAILY BIBLE READING



Sacred time this week can link to the British Value of **individual liberty**. This is because this British Value is about free, free to be who you want to be. During the holocaust, that liberty was taken away from people, purely for who they were. If they were Jewish, homosexual, a traveller, or had a disability that freedom and liberty was taken away from them and for most, so was there life.

PRAYER

O God, Who art full of compassion, who dwellest on high, grant perfect rest in Thy Divine Presence to all the souls of our holy and pure brethren whose blood was spilt by the murderers in Auschwitz, Belzec, Bergen Belsen, Dachau, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and other extermination camps in Europe; who were killed, strangled, burned and buried alive for the sanctification for Thy Name. For whose souls we now pray. May their resting place be in the Garden of Eden, may the Master of Mercy shelter them in the shadow of His wings for eternity; and may he bind their souls in the Bond of Live.

HASHEM is their heritage, and may they repose in peace in their resting places. Now let us say: Amen