

Holocaust Memorial Day

We mark this day because we want to remind ourselves that at all costs we should make certain that racial hatred never enters our lives.

What is Genocide?

Racial hatred leads to genocide. Genocide is when people are murdered because of their ethnicity, their racial background. Often when this happens thousands, sometimes millions of men, women and children are massacred because of who they are. This happens when hatred is supported by governments or people who have power.

What did the Nazis do?

In 1930s Germany the Nazi party came to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. He and his government encouraged and promoted racial hatred towards the Jewish population. *Soldiers would break into family homes, order everyone into the street force them into lorries with other Jewish families and take them to railway yards. Here they would be made to get into cattle trucks at gun point and were transported in dreadful conditions to concentration camps. In these camps families were separated, many were killed in gas chambers, poisoned, shot and either buried in mass graves or burnt in ovens. Anyone who protested was shot on the spot.*

The Nazi policy for the extermination of Jewish families could not have taken place without the support, the work, the actions of ordinary people like ourselves.

Why would ordinary people like ourselves allow this to happen?

- We would have been encouraged to hate people of another race.
- We would have not thought for ourselves.
- We would not have been independent.
- We would have allowed ourselves to be influenced.
- We would not have known the difference between right and wrong.
- We would have let our worst feelings guide us.
- We would have not stood up for what is right.
- We would have not stood up to hatred.

Everyone of us would deny we would do anything like this.

Are you so sure?

Stand up to hatred

What is hate?

Hate. We think we know it, but most of us will never face it. Hatred is a corrosive force, able to ruin lives, wreck co-operation, destroy communities, or races, or nations. It is present in small ways in daily life, but it is at its most lethal in prejudice, discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Hate is the opposite of love.

In this lethal form it was the driving force in Nazi Germany, in Cambodia, in Rwanda, in Bosnia and in so it is in Darfur today.

The past is powerful, from it we can learn to protect ourselves and our communities from the forces of hatred. Pay attention to history.

Britain today is not Nazi Germany, but the evils of prejudice, discrimination and intolerance are still with us. We categorise, stereotype, discriminate, exclude, bully, persecute, attack – because of race, religion, disability, sexuality. We damage, and are damaged, as a result of our refusal to accept our common humanity.

- **Anthony Walker was murdered in Merseyside for being Black. His killers spray painted Nazi symbols on local walls after the attack – 2005**

Acts of hatred always involve making a choice.

We choose to attack, to abuse, to exclude, to stand back and do nothing – or we choose to resist, to respect, to protect.

What can you do to stand up to hatred?

- **Refuse to stand by and allow others to commit acts of hatred. Protest**
- **Recognise the language of hatred. Don't use it. Don't let hate take hold.**
- **Recognise when hate crime is taking place and report it**
- **Learn from history that the ultimate result of unchecked and unchallenged hatred, prejudice, discrimination and racism is genocide.**

On Holocaust Memorial Day 2009 make the choice to STAND UP TO HATRED

Note to tutors:

Please use this document as a script. It will be important to explain some of the language. Use the questions as starting points for discussion. Please prepare students for a sombre and serious year assembly.