

A Study Guide For

7 Days Of Remembrance..... And Hope



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Seven Days of Remembrance...and Hope

Teacher Resource Package

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Synopsis:

Country of Origin: Canada

Release Year: 2010

Director: Fern Levitt

Runtime: 62 minutes

Themes: Holocaust, Activism, Citizenship

Each year, 60 students from diverse backgrounds across Canada participate in the March of Remembrance and Hope. Like the March of the Living, this trip takes students to the Nazi death camps in Poland but this trip differs in that it is a multi-faith trip aimed at university students. Director Fern Levitt focuses on six of the participants, all of whom filter their experiences through a particular lens relevant to their personal histories. Participants include a gay activist, a Sudanese immigrant, and an Iranian whose family was persecuted for their Baha'i faith. When asked to dedicate their march to a cause of their choice, responses are wide-ranging, including the fallen soldiers in the IDF, the children who died in Gaza and the victims of the Rwandan and Darfur genocides. The particularity of these responses underscores the message that if the Holocaust is going to have any relevance to young people today, it has to be processed and internalised in an individual way.

The March of Remembrance and Hope (MRH) is an initiative of the Canadian Centre for Diversity that has been running for over a decade. Before embarking on the nine-day tour, the students undergo two months of interactive preparation. Three months after returning from Poland and Germany, they reconvene for a 3-day leadership retreat to develop action plans for post-program projects. The goal of this 6-month program is to equip students with the tools needed to take action against racism, prejudice and discrimination. More about this program and other initiatives of the Canadian Centre for Diversity can be found on their website at <http://www.centrefordiversity.ca/>.

Curriculum Links

Seven Days of Remembrance...and Hope can be used to meet the requirements of the Media Studies component of English, Grades 9-12. It can also be used to meet the requirements of Grade 10 History (CHC2D), Grade 10 Civics (CHV2D), Grade 11 Canadian History and Politics since 1945 (CHH3C), Grade 11 Canadian Politics and Citizenship (CPC30), Grade 12 Canada: History, Identity and Culture (CHI4U), Grade 12 World History: The West and the World (CHY4U), Grade 12 Adventures in World History (CHM4E) and Grade 12 Canadian and World Politics (CPW4U).

Ways into the Text: Context

Before leaving for the March of Remembrance and Hope, the students spend a couple of months learning about the Holocaust. Similarly, before viewing this film, students should have some knowledge of the subject. There are numerous online resources relating to Holocaust education that students can access to learn more. Listed below are a few websites that can provide students with an introduction to learning about the Holocaust:

Yad Vashem

http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/index.asp?WT.mc_id=ggcamp&WT.srch=1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/education/>

Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Centre

<http://www.wsherc.org/>

USC Shoah Foundation Institute

<http://college.usc.edu/vhi/about/segmentsforthe classroom/index.php?gclid=CiiCttuyzqcCFcW8KgodfBMmFA>

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme

<http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/emainpage.shtml>

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour

<http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/hhb>

Breaking the Film Into Segments

The film is divided into seven segments, each one dealing with a different day of the trip. Teachers can break the class into different groups and assign each one a specific day to explore in detail. Below is a list of discussion questions relating to each day. Students should answer each question relating to their segment and then reconvene as a class to share their responses with each other. Day three is divided into two segments: one dealing with the students' visit to Auschwitz One and one dealing with their visit to Auschwitz Two (Birkenau). Before doing this, the class should first view the opening segment of the film and answer the following questions:

Opening Segment

1. What is the opening image of the film? Why do you think that the director chose this image to open with?
2. The opening sequence is a montage of clips that are repeated later in the film. Why do you think that the director chose these particular moments to emphasise at the beginning?
3. Watch the opening segment without sound. How do the images affect the viewer? Watch the segment again with the sound on. How does the music contribute to the way the viewer responds to the images? How do the words of the participants influence the viewers' responses?

Day One

1. The film informs us that the cameras will follow students as "they confront their own ideologies." What do you think this means?
2. Day one begins with students on the bus touring the city of Berlin. What does the mood on the bus seem to be?
3. One of the first monuments that the students visit is the memorial to the gay victims of the Holocaust. Research Hitler's campaign to exterminate homosexuals. How many homosexuals were killed? What other minority groups did Hitler target? Why do you think that the monument includes a video of a modern-day gay couple kissing?
4. The students visit the Wannasee Conference Villa. What happened there? One of the students remarks that beginning the trip by "seeing [the Holocaust] from the perpetrators' perspective is a smart way to approach it." Why? Do you agree? Why/why not?
5. Students visit the Holocaust Memorial designed by Eisenmann. Read more about this memorial at <http://www.talkitect.com/2008/11/holocaust-memorial-berin-germany.html>. What was the architect trying to achieve? Do you think that it is an effective memorial? Why/why not? How do the students seem to react to it?
6. What participants speak in this segment? What are their reasons for going on the trip?

Day Two

1. This segment also begins with the students on the bus. However this time, the director intercuts images of the students on the bus with archival footage of trains bound for concentration camps. What effect is this juxtaposition designed to have on the viewer?
2. Pinchas' account of what happened to him during the War is followed by the students' reactions to his life story as they reflect on it at the end of the day. One of the students expresses her disbelief that people can be so barbaric and wonders aloud "if its human nature...that is bad, or [if] it is that some people are more prone to being bad." What do you think? Why? Provide evidence to support your response.
3. What evidence is there to suggest that already at this early stage of the trip, students are beginning to realise that what they anticipated they would think and feel will, in fact, be very different from their actual responses when they visit the camps and hear the survivors' stories first-hand?
4. What are the different reactions to Pinchas' story? How does each student relate to the same information differently?
5. Ola Mohajer expresses her regret that Pinchas' generation will soon die out and there will be no more living witnesses to the Holocaust. How can society ensure that their stories live on after they are gone?

Day Three (Auschwitz One)

1. There are a number of instances in this segment where the filmmaker intercuts images of Auschwitz as it looks today with archival footage of Auschwitz during the war. Similarly, there are times in this segment when the director juxtaposes shots of the students with footage of the prisoners standing in the same places. Find at least five examples of this and discuss the reasons you think the filmmaker chose to do this at these particular moments. What effect is each of these comparisons designed to have on the viewer?
2. The tour guide tells the students that "whoever did not enter Auschwitz will never enter and whoever entered Auschwitz will never really exit." What does he mean by this? Do you think that this will hold true for the participants of the trip? Why/why not? Provide evidence to support your response.
3. Four different students speak to the cameras in this segment. What is the reaction of each student to what they are seeing? Discuss the ways in which each one personalises what they see to their own life experience. Include direct quotes in your responses.

Day Three (Auschwitz Birkenau)

1. As the students march together from Auschwitz One to Birkenau, each one dedicates their journey to a cause of their choosing. At first, each voice is heard quite distinctly but soon all the voices blend together. What effect is this designed to have on the viewer? What do you think that the filmmaker is suggesting by doing this?
2. One of the participants dedicates his march to a friend in the Israeli killed in the second Lebanon War. The Palestinian girl next him dedicates her march to the

children who died in the Gaza massacre. In a different context, this could have led to a tense exchange. Discuss how the visit to Birkenau was able to unite two people of such disparate political views.

3. Five different students reflect on their reactions to Faigie's life story. How do their respective reactions differ? Include quotes to support your response. Who sees things in positive terms and who sees them negatively?
4. How has the overall mood of the participants shifted between Day One and Day Three?
5. When one student expresses her wish that the world "be like we are right now in this room", another person responds that "the world **is** like this. We just have to make it grow." Do you agree with this? Why/why not?

Day Four (Majdanek)

1. Discuss the way the filmmaker uses archival footage in this segment. At what points does she use it? What effect is it designed to have on the viewer?
2. Four different students are interviewed in this segment. What are their different reactions? How does each one personalise the experience of walking through the gas chamber and crematorium?
3. Navid comments that "seeing the magnitude of what a few simple demented ideas could cause" makes it important for us to "remind [ourselves] what makes [us] human. What does he mean by this? What do think makes us human?
4. Jeremy expresses his frustration with people trying to comfort him. Why does he not want people to hug him? How has Jeremy changed over the four days of the trip?

Day Five (Warsaw)

1. Why do you think that the director begins the segment by showing the students having a good time sightseeing in modern-day Warsaw?
2. How does the mood of this segment change? Discuss when and how the filmmaker changes the mood from happy to sombre.
3. The students visit the site of the Tykocin Forest, site of a massacre in 1941. Find out more about that particular pogrom at http://www.enotes.com/topic/Tykocin_pogrom.
4. What effect does the story that is narrated designed to have on the viewer? Would the images be as effective without the story? Why/why not?

Day Six (Treblinka)

1. Pinchas sings a song in Yiddish as footage of dead bodies fills the screen. Do you think an English song would have the same impact? Why/why not?
2. Ola asserts that if enough people had stood up against the Nazis, the Holocaust would not have happened. Do you agree? Why/why not?
3. Ola argues that "you need to have collaborators if you want to do something evil." What does it mean to be a collaborator? Do you think that a person needs to actively participate in atrocities in order to be considered a collaborator? What other ways are there of facilitating crimes against humanity?

4. The filmmaker inserts archival footage of a peasant woman and her child looking over a grim scene of dead bodies and then walking away. Why do you think that she included this picture in this particular segment of the film? What reaction do you think she hopes to elicit?

Day Seven

1. What is the mood on the final day?
2. One of the students expresses her commitment "to take that challenge on that our parents in the past have left us." What challenge is she referring to?
3. All of the students who speak in this segment say that the trip has instilled them with a sense of hope for the future. What allowed them to move from a sense of despair that they felt in the middle of the trip to a sense of hope at the end?
4. What are the participants doing today? How do their educational and extra curricular activities reflect their continued commitment to create a better future?

Ways into the Text: Characters

Sixty students participated in the March of Remembrance and Hope, but the filmmaker focuses on six students in particular. Students should fill out attached chart to reflect on the experiences of each of these participants. Include direct quotes from each subject. What are the similarities and differences in their outlooks? What images does the filmmaker use to accompany their thoughts? How do these images impact on the viewer?

Name	Direct Quote	Accompanying Images	Impact on Viewer
Shakira Abubakar			
Jeremy Andrews			

Rudi Okot			

Name	Direct Quote	Accompanying Images	Impact on Viewer
Spencer J. Harrison			

Navid Khavari			
Ola Mohajer			

Websites Cited (All Websites Cited Are From April, 2011)

Yad Vashem

http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/index.asp?WT.mc_id=ggcamp&WT.srch=1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/education/>

Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Centre

<http://www.wsherc.org/>

USC Shoah Foundation Institute

<http://college.usc.edu/vhi/about/segmentsfortheclassroom/index.php?gclid=CiiCttuyzqcCFcW8KgodfBMmFA>

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme

<http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/emainpage.shtml>

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour

<http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/hhb>

Talkitect.com

<http://www.talkitect.com/2008/11/holocaust-memorial-berin-germany.html>

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