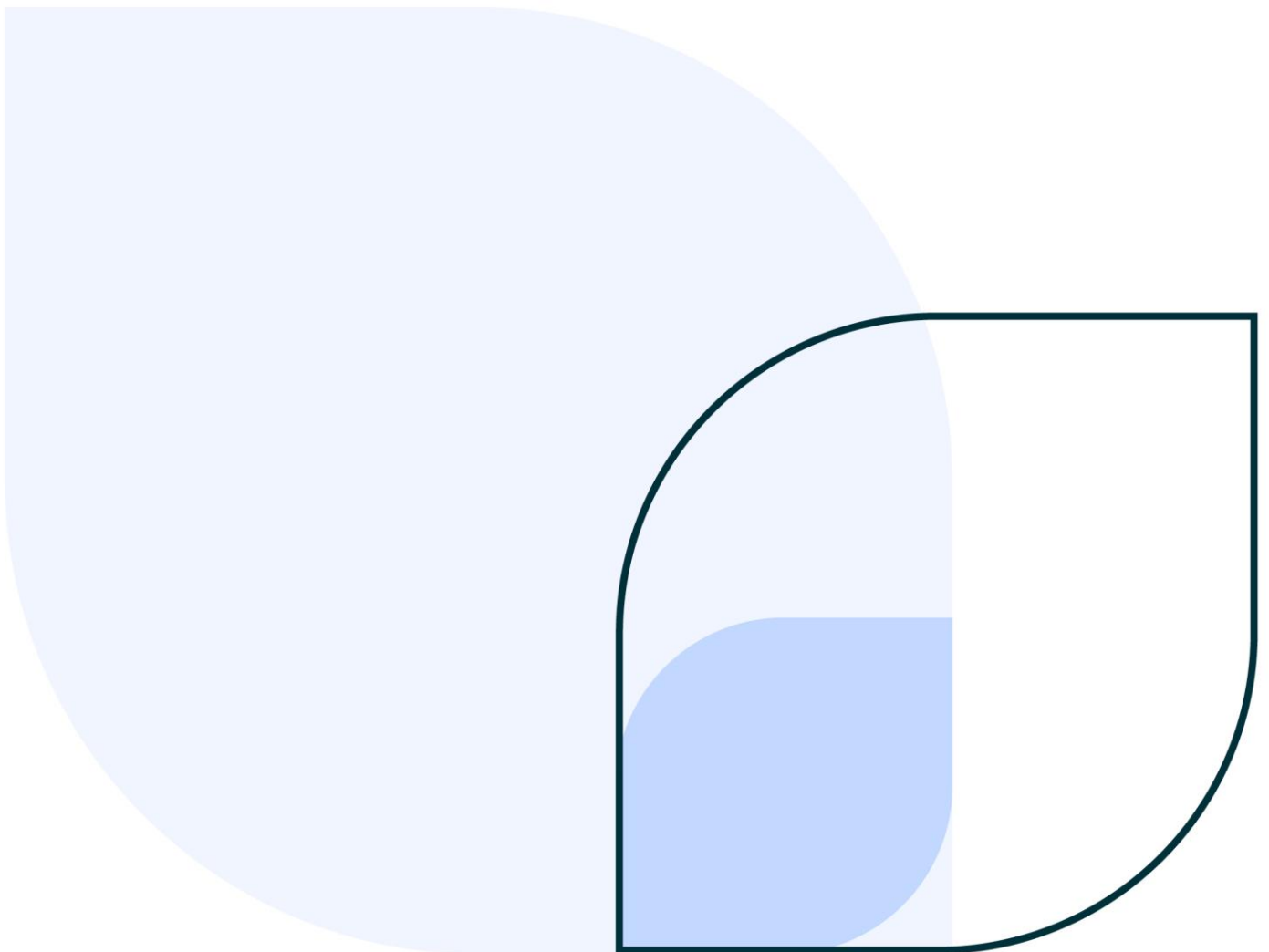


# Collective Worship

Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 resource  
In Memory of Many: Remembering the Victims of the Holocaust





## Key Concept / Message

### Slide 1

Holocaust Memorial Day is a time for reflection, remembrance, and a solemn recognition of the horrific events of the Holocaust. Each year, we come together on January 27th to remember the millions of people who lost their lives during the Holocaust, a time when hatred, prejudice, and intolerance led to unimaginable suffering. This day is an opportunity to not only reflect on the past but to think about the ways we can create a more just and compassionate world for future generations.

Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp, in 1945. This day is dedicated to remembering the six million Jewish people who were murdered during the Holocaust, as well as the millions of others who suffered under Nazi persecution. These included<sup>1</sup> Roma (Gypsy) and Sinti communities, disabled people, Polish and Soviet civilians, LGBT+ individuals, people racialised as black, political dissidents, and others who were deemed "undesirable" by the Nazi regime.

Christians are called to love their neighbours, care for the vulnerable, and stand against injustice. Sadly, not all Christians in Europe demonstrated this during the time of the Holocaust which is a matter of great lament. The events of the Holocaust remind us of the importance of these key Christian values and the need to ensure that such hatred and prejudice are never allowed to happen again. Within this act of collective worship, we reflect on the lives lost, the lessons we can learn, and how we can contribute to a world where love, kindness, and justice prevail.

The horrors of the Holocaust are a stark reminder of what can happen when prejudice, discrimination, and hatred are allowed to flourish. By remembering the past, we are called to ensure such atrocities never happen again, and to promote a future where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

## Gathering

### Slide 2

Begin with your usual greeting to gather everyone together (familiarity is a helpful part of providing a safe environment in the aftermath of difficult times). As children enter worship, use a reflective piece of music (for example [Requiem Mass in D minor](#), – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) to set the tone.

You may like to start with an opening prayer, such as this one:

Almighty God,

We remember before You all those who suffered and perished in the Holocaust.

On this day of remembrance, help us to honour their lives and the lessons they teach us.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/nazi-persecution/>



Grant us the strength to stand against hatred,  
And the compassion to show kindness and respect to all people.  
May we work together to build a world of peace, justice, and dignity for all.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

### Slide 3

## Bible Passage

Let us reflect on a passage from the Bible, which speaks to the heart of what it means to stand against hatred and injustice:

Matthew 25:35-40 (NIV)

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

This passage reminds of the importance of caring for others, particularly those who are marginalized or oppressed. It challenges Christians to respond with compassion and action, just as Christ did. As we gather today for Holocaust Memorial Day, we reflect on a passage from the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus speaks about the importance of caring for the most vulnerable. This passage underscores the Christian calling to actively love and serve others, especially those who are suffering or in need. Jesus identifies himself with the vulnerable, and through this identification, he calls his followers to act with compassion, care, and justice.

During the Holocaust, millions of people were subjected to extreme suffering and dehumanization—Jewish people, Roma and Sinti communities, disabled individuals, LGBT+ individuals, political dissidents, and others who were targeted by the Nazi regime. These individuals were often denied their basic human rights, treated as less than human, and subjected to unimaginable horrors. This passage challenges Christians to reflect on how they, as Christians, are called to respond to suffering and injustice in the world today. This story in Matthew reminds Christians to remember that those who have suffered are not faceless statistics—they are human beings, made in the image of God, each one deserving of compassion and dignity. Today, let us remember the suffering of the past and commit ourselves to loving and serving those who are also suffering today. Let us ensure that we never forget the lessons of the Holocaust—that every life is precious and deserving of dignity, and that we have a responsibility to stand against injustice wherever it occurs.



# Engagement

## Slide 4

Holocaust Memorial Day is a time to remember the millions of people who suffered and died in the Holocaust during World War II. Many were treated cruelly because of who they were—whether because of their religion, race, or where they came from. As we remember them, we also think about how we can build a world of kindness and understanding where such terrible things never happen again.

### **Listening: Hearing Others' Needs**

In Matthew 25, Jesus says, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...” Listening to others means paying attention when someone is in need. The people affected by the Holocaust were often ignored, their voices silenced, and their suffering forgotten by many. It’s important that we continue to listen to the voices of the past, remembering their stories and the lessons they teach us. By doing so, we honour their memory and ensure that we don’t repeat the same mistakes.

Looking back helps us build a future where prejudice and injustice are not allowed to grow again. We must carry their voices with us, not just to remember, but to act in a way that prevents such horrors from happening again. Jesus teaches to listen to those who are suffering—whether they are hungry, scared, or alone. Listening to others helps Christians understand their struggles and show them that they matter.

### **Empathy**

Empathy means trying to understand how someone else feels. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus says, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” This means that when Christians care for someone who is suffering, it’s like they are caring for Jesus himself. Jesus called His followers to treat everyone with kindness and dignity, no matter what they look like or where they come from.

On Holocaust Memorial Day, Christians remember the suffering of those who endured the horrors of the Holocaust, reflecting on how Jesus was with them in their pain. In the darkest of moments, such as in the camps of Auschwitz, Christians believe Jesus is present with those who suffered, sharing in their grief and torment. This stirs them to remember the importance of standing up for others, showing compassion, and acting with kindness, especially in times of great injustice.

### **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a powerful way to heal and move forward. In Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that love and care for others go hand-in-hand with forgiveness. The people who suffered in the Holocaust experienced great pain and loss. Jesus showed that forgiving others helps break the cycle of anger and hurt. Forgiveness doesn’t mean forgetting what happened, but it helps us find peace and healing.

Encourage students to reflect on one of the following prompts, which could also be used as a follow-up activity after this act of worship.

### **Reflection Prompts:**

1. I can help my community remember the past and show respect for those who suffered by...



2. To understand others better, especially those who have been hurt, I could...
3. To make everyone feel welcome, I could...

#### Reflection Questions:

4. Why is it important to listen to the voices of those who have suffered, both in the past and today?
5. How can we show empathy and kindness to people who are suffering, even if we don't fully understand their pain?
6. How can forgiveness help to break the cycle of hurt and suffering, and why is it important for building a better future?

## Response

### Slide 5

Pause to remember those who suffered and died during the Holocaust; you may want to use a candle as a focal point for this time of remembrance.

Conclude with a prayer such as this:

Loving God,

As we close this time of remembrance, we thank You for all the lives we have honoured today on Holocaust Memorial Day.

Grant us the strength to stand against hatred and the compassion to value every life, regardless of faith, identity or background. May we work for a world where all people are treated with justice, dignity, and love.

In the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ,  
Amen.



# Spiritual Development

Practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home and school together:

## EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to pray for a more inclusive society.

It has five steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. Lord, as we reflect on this day, we pause to give thanks for the lives remembered.
2. Help us to see where lack of care towards others has crept into our hearts and minds and seek Your forgiveness.
3. Reveal to us opportunities to stand for justice, love, and dignity.
4. Guide our actions toward unity, compassion, and understanding.
5. May we live out Your calling to honor the dignity of every life, today and always. Amen.

## ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

"Holocaust Heroes"

To help students reflect on the bravery and compassion shown by individuals during the Holocaust and inspire them to act with kindness and courage in their own lives.

1. Introduction: Share a brief story or example of a Holocaust hero, like Oskar Schindler (who saved over a thousand Jews), Anne Frank (who wrote about her life hiding from Nazis), or Irena Sendler (who saved 2,500 Jewish children). Explain how these people showed incredible courage and compassion during a time of great fear and hatred.
2. Discussion: Ask students, "What does it mean to be brave? What does it mean to show kindness, especially when others are being unkind?" Guide them to understand that even small acts of kindness or standing up for others can make a huge difference.
3. Hero Drawing: Ask students to choose a Holocaust hero or think of someone who shows courage and kindness. They can either draw the person and write a short paragraph about why they are a hero, or they can create their own "hero" who shows kindness and courage in today's world.
4. Sharing: Once everyone has finished, invite students to share their drawings and the stories of their heroes. Discuss how we can show courage and kindness in our own lives, just like the heroes they've learned about.



### "Kindness Chain"

To encourage students to think about how they can show kindness and tolerance, drawing inspiration from the lessons of the Holocaust.

1. Introduction: Briefly explain that one way we can honor the memory of those who suffered in the Holocaust is by making the world a kinder, more understanding place. Talk about how small acts of kindness can create a ripple effect.
2. Writing Kindness Promises: Give each student a strip of colored paper. Ask them to write one kind act they will commit to doing, inspired by the lessons of the Holocaust Memorial Day.
3. Creating the Chain: Once everyone has written their act of kindness, help students link the strips of paper together to form a "kindness chain." As they tape or glue the links, they can reflect on how their actions will help create a community of compassion.
4. Sharing (optional): Invite a few students to share their kindness promises with the class. Afterward, hang the kindness chain somewhere in the classroom as a reminder of the students' commitment to making the world a better place.

### "Building Bridges"

To teach students the importance of building connections and friendships with others, promoting kindness and unity.

1. Introduction: Explain that one of the lessons from Holocaust Memorial Day is that people should treat each other with respect, no matter their differences. Just like a bridge connects two places, kindness can help connect us with others.
2. Building the Bridge: Give each student a strip of paper or craft stick. Ask them to write or draw one way they can show kindness to someone else. It could be something like "I will help someone who is new to our school" or "I will listen to my friends when they need to talk."
3. Connecting the Strips: Have students share their ideas and then link the strips together to create a "bridge of kindness" that can be displayed in the classroom.
4. Reflection: As the bridge grows, reflect on how each act of kindness helps connect us with others. Talk about how small actions can build strong, supportive communities.

### CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

#### Personal Reflection:

- What can I do in my daily life to treat others with more empathy and respect?
- How can I help preserve the memory of those who suffered during the Holocaust?
- In what ways do I contribute to creating a culture of kindness and understanding in my own life?
- How can I make sure my words and actions reflect kindness, especially toward those who are different?
- How can I reflect on the past to make sure I'm part of creating a more inclusive future?



### Community and Society:

- How can we ensure that the history of the Holocaust is taught and remembered in our community?
- How can we support those in our community who may feel like outsiders or who are facing discrimination?
- How can our community actively work to build bridges between different cultures, religions, and backgrounds?
- How can we hold ourselves accountable to not just talk about inclusion but to actively work for it?
- How can we build stronger relationships between generations, learning from both history and modern experiences?

### Global Perspective:

- How can we work globally to ensure that events such as the Holocaust are never repeated?
- How can we ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are never forgotten by future generations?
- How can we amplify the voices of those around the world who are fighting for justice and equality?
- What actions can we take to ensure that we don't ignore the suffering of people in other parts of the world?
- How can we work for a world where every person, regardless of background, has access to safety, dignity, and opportunity?





## Collective Worship – Our approach

### Invitational

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### Inclusive

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is ‘what Christians believe’, saying things like:

‘I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?’

‘The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...’

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### Inspiring

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?