

ARTICULATING CONNECTIONS

A Seventh Grade Holocaust Unit



Quilt 3, Square 14

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The story of the Kindertransport Memory Quilt can be incorporated into a seventh grade Holocaust curriculum as part of these units:

A timeline of events affecting the Jewish people in Germany and Austria from 1918 through 1938

A comparison of the lives of Jewish people before the rise of Hitler to their lives after Kristallnacht

The relevance of the Holocaust today

The power of one to change the world: tikkun olam

The role of art as social commentary, historical document, method of protest and means of personal expression

Coordination between discipline areas shows the relevance of the Kindertransport today and stresses its importance. Connections to social studies, literature, art, music and Jewish studies are noted in bold.

Procedures and Connections

What was life like for the Jews in Germany before the rise of Hitler?

Divide students into pairs. Tell them to imagine they were part of a German Jewish family in December 1938. Give them five minutes to write down all the ways their lives as children would be different from their lives before Hitler came to power. Have students share their lists.

Ask students how their restricted life would make them feel about themselves, their country and non-Jewish Germans.

Ask students what could have been done to help the Jewish children in Germany.

Divide the class into small groups. Either give each group pictures of nine Kindertransport Memory Quilt squares and the explanations that go with them or give students the website and have them select nine squares of the quilt to view. Tell students to explain the meaning of the squares and figure out what happened.

Have students form a hypothesis that explains the quilt squares and the events that might have transpired.

Put these hypotheses and ideas on the board. Have students look at them and come up with one idea explaining the origin of the quilt and the event it is based on.

Tell students the story of the Kindertransport, give them a book or article to read which tells the story or show a video of the story. (Check the book and video link for suggestions.)

Video: My Knees Were Jumping – Remembering the Kindertransport (narrated by Joanne Woodward)

Non-fiction:

The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Love, and Survival
Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Ten Thousand Children: True Stories Told by Children Who Escaped the Holocaust on the Kindertransport

Anne L. Fox and Eva Abraham-Podietz

Tell them the story of Nicholas Winton. Show the video, *The Power of Good*.

Questions for discussion:

1. Why didn't more countries, including ours, offer to take the children?

Connection: Social Studies – economics, immigration, isolationism

What does this story say about the power of one person?

Connection: Social Studies – powerful people who produced change

Literature - novels and biographies of heroes and powerful people

How would the world be different today if those people had not lived?

Jewish Studies: - ancient or modern Jewish heroes

the need to make the world a better place

How would Jewish history or life today be different if those people had not or did not exist?

2. What must the parents have felt as they made the decision to send their children away?

3. How did being a child on the Kindertransport affect life at the time and in the future?

4. What happened to these children after the war?

5. What happened to the children who were not on the transport?

6. How is this story relevant today?

Connection: Social Studies – Are there conflicts in the world today?

Where are they?

What are they about?

Do they involve ethnic cleansing or genocide?

What is happening to the children

involved in these conflicts?

Are the children being sent to other

countries where they will be safe and

have someone to take care of them?

What agencies or people are in charge of

this?

Do any Jewish agencies participate?

Literature – stories, fiction and non-fiction about today's

children caught in a struggle between peoples and

countries

Jewish Studies – Why was the quilt made?

Why would someone want to contribute a square?

Discuss the place of art as a source of comfort, a means of personal expression and an emotional warning never to forget.

7. Does the quilt have anything to say to us today?

Connection: Jewish studies
Social Studies
Art
Music

Discuss the role of art in our every day lives: personal expression; means of protest; record of events, people, and feelings; depiction of the relationship between peoples, and as a warning that history can repeat and reinvent itself in modern terms. If there is time, show examples of art through the ages that gives us a feeling for what was going on and how people felt about it. (Check Art and Society in the Books, Videos & Websites link for ideas and examples.)

Art Project **Culminating activity**

Tell students to think about the Holocaust and to create a piece of art that records some event that happened, expresses how he or she feels about the Holocaust or protests a specific event during the period between 1935 and 1945. The art work could be a drawing, a poem, a song, a collage, etc..

Connection:

Social Studies, Art – Tell students to pick one of the conflicts in the world today and create a piece of art that records it or a specific event in the conflict, expresses how he or she feels about it, protests some aspect of it.

Jewish Studies – Describe Jewish life today. Discuss the problems and conflicts that confront Jewish people now. Tell each student to design a square for a quilt about modern Jewish life.