

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As your child begins the unit on genocide, the Holocaust, and the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust Memorial Center and Teacher Advisory Committee would like to provide some resources for your family. Because genocide is a sensitive topic, we feel it is important to provide support for adolescents both at school and in the home. We hope that this resource will help you jump start conversations with your child about their genocide studies and the complex issues that arise.

The first question your child might ask is, “What does this have to do with me?” Helping students find connections between our lives here in America and the stories of people who lived in a different time and place can help them discover our common humanity. The following prompts might be helpful ways to begin the conversation in ways that are engaging and thought provoking.

- Every family has its own unique history that shapes its identity. What is your family history?
 - Where is your family from?
 - When did they arrive in the United States?
 - For what reasons did they decide to come to America?
- What family traditions or customs does your family have?
- Explain how your identity influences the choices that you make.
- Did your family face any prejudice because of their country of origin, language, religion, or racial/ethnic identity?
 - Discuss where you think the negative stereotypes come from, and how people can be shown that they are not true?
 - What would you do if someone viewed you differently from how you view yourself?
 - What kinds of stereotypes and propaganda (oversimplified explanations of who people are and what they believe) do you see today in the news or social media?

Some helpful tips:

- Remember that your child may ask questions that have no clear answers. The idea is to talk about the issues and think them through as a family. Sometimes you don’t need to respond at all; your child might just want to be heard and use you to help them think out loud!
- Be open to discussing what they have heard in class and listening to their opinion, feelings, and emotions.
- Change the narrative. Rather than looking at the Holocaust or other story of genocide as an ‘us vs. them’ discussion, ask your child to tell you about the people who were persecuted--who they were, how they lived, how they survived and rebuilt their lives. Discuss the importance of acknowledging the horrors of the past but recognizing the strength with which the horror was met.

While these are just a few ways to support your student while learning about the sensitive topic of genocide, there are many more resources available. Please reach out, so that we can provide the help and guidance you may need.

Sincerely,

Additional Resources

- [USHMM Bibliography List of Books](#)
- [Talking with Kids About War and Genocide](#)
- [Vocabulary of the Holocaust List with Definitions](#)
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/going-beyond-intelligence/201811/how-should-you-talk-your-child-about-the-holocaust>
- [Echoes and Reflections Holocaust Timeline](#)