Holocaust Education Week

Lesson Plan

The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm (50 minutes)

HBO Documentary Films courtesy of Museum of Jewish Heritage
Grade Levels 6-8

STANDARDS:

SS.5.HE.1.1 Define the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What can we learn from the Holocaust so that part of history is never again repeated?

LEARNING GOALS:

- **Students will understand what the Holocaust was and when it took place.**
- **Students will understand how important it is to learn from the past so that innocent lives lost will not be forgotten.**
- **Students will understand how being an upstander applies to their lives today.**
- **Students will learn what Jewish life was like in Poland in the 1930's.**
- **Students will learn about the rise in power of the Nazis and symbolism they used.**
- **Students will learn about the increasingly harsh treatment of Jews before and during World War II; including destruction and loss of property, ghetto life, deportation, concentration camps, the death march.**
- **Students will learn about life after liberation.**

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- **HBO Documentary: The Number of Great Grandpa's Arm (courtesy of Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust)**
- **https://mjhnyc.org/education/lesson-plans-the-number-on-great-grandpas-arm/ scroll down to access video**
- **Movie is approximately 18 minutes**
- **Instructions, Teacher Key, Student Activity Sheet, Extension Activities (provided)**

The Jewish Federation OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

BEFORE INSTRUCTION:

- **As a class, discuss what the Holocaust was**
- **The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators**
- **The Nazis came into power in Germany in January 1933.**
- **They believe that the Germans belonged to a race that was "superior" to all others.**
- **They claimed that the Jews (and others such as Gypsies as well as people who had physical or intellectual disabilities) did not meet the "superior race" criteria and were perceived to be a threat to the German community.**
- **Discuss that in order to exterminate the "inferior individuals", especially the Jews, the Nazi's, under Hitler's leadership, created concentration camps, forced-labor camps and death camps.**
- **Discuss concept of an upstander and people who were part of the resistance movement who helped save thousands of Jews by hiding them in their own homes, helping them find places to hide, and helping them escape to safety in countries outside of Europe.**

Lesson Plan

THE NUMBER ON GREAT GRANDPA'S ARM

Grades 6–8

Goal:
Students will understand important themes and topics for studying the Holocaust, using the film *The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm*

Key Standards:
Common Core Literacy Standards in History 6-8.1, 6-8.2, 6-8.7

Materials Required:
HBO's *The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm* documentary (hbo.com/documentaries/the-number-on-great-grandpas-arm), Student Activity sheet

Time Required:
One to two 45-minute class periods

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Explain that today's lesson will focus on some important themes for studying the Holocaust. The Holocaust refers to the state-sponsored murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators in the 1930s and 40s, before and during World War II. Other minority groups such as the Roma and Sinti, homosexuals, and the disabled were also targeted and murdered. This film features a Holocaust survivor named Jack as he tells his great-grandson, Elliott, about his life.

2. If students need further background information, explain that during the Holocaust, the Nazis, who were elected into power in Germany in 1933, blamed the Jews for all of Germany's problems. The Nazis enacted legislation that took away German Jews' political and civil rights and encouraged other Germans to commit acts of violence against them. As the Nazis conquered other countries in Europe during World War II (including Poland, where Jack lived), they enacted anti-Jewish policies and segregated Jews into ghettos, which were walled-in areas of towns and cities with poor living conditions, where people were unable to leave and many died of disease and starvation. Eventually, they deported Jews to killing centers. Some were sent to do forced labor in concentration camps. World War II ended in 1945; two-thirds of the European Jewish population died during the Holocaust. After the war ended, most survivors left Europe and went to countries like Israel and the United States.

[For teacher's use, visit mjhnyc.org/guide for glossary, timeline, and background information]

3. Screen the film in segments, pausing to allow students time to write their responses on the activity sheet. Explain that all of the animations in the film are based on actual film footage and photographs from this time period, and that the illustrations often reveal more than what Jack is saying to his great-grandson, Elliott. As students watch the film, they will consider the following questions/prompts:

   - What symbols do you recognize? What do they represent?
   - Using prior knowledge, infer what is happening in the animation, beyond what Jack is saying.
   - What do you notice about the colors, tones, and shades of the animations? What do those choices convey about what is happening?

4. After students write their answers, they may pair-share with a partner as time allows. You may wish to discuss answers as a class after each pair-share in order to review answers and ask further questions – see the suggested prompts on the teacher key.

5. Wrap up: Ask students what they think the film's key messages are.

   - Jack's customer says that Jack will feed anyone who is hungry, whether they have money or not. Why is feeding the hungry important to Jack?
   - Elliott says that we must never forget the Holocaust, and that we must get stories from survivors while we still can. Why is this important? What is a consequence of forgetting the Holocaust, and why do some people want to deny that it happened?

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HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a letter to Jack or Elliott. In your letter, include:

   - What you learned from the film.
   - How you feel after viewing the film.
   - Any questions you still have about Jack or Elliott that you want to ask them.

2. View one of the other survivor interviews on the HBO website (hbo.com/documentaries/the-number-on-great-grandpas-arm). Prepare a presentation about that survivor, including an illustration of something they describe in their interview. View historical photos from comingofagenow.org, mjhnyc.org, ushmm.org, or yadvashem.org to help guide your illustration. Be sure to cite your sources for any photographs you use to guide your illustration. Your presentation should also include the lesson the survivor passes along at the end of their interview.

3. Visit comingofagenow.org and choose one survivor's story from the 13 on the site. Complete the Think and Write questions for the survivor you choose, and be prepared to give a brief presentation about what you learned from their experiences.

4. Read a survivor memoir, like *The Girl Who Survived* by Bronia Brandman or *Hidden: A True Story of the Holocaust* by Fanya Gottesfeld Heller. (An interview with Ms. Brandman is available on the HBO website.) Prepare a brief presentation about their experiences, including maps of where the survivor is from, illustrations you create depicting his/her experiences, and actual photographs of places and things he or she experienced. Be sure to cite your sources for any photographs you use.

TEACHER KEY

THE NUMBER ON GREAT GRANDPA'S ARM

Film Clip	For each clip below, jot down images that stand out to you. Use the following prompts as your guide: • What symbols do you recognize? What do they represent? • Using prior knowledge, infer what is happening in the animation, beyond what Jack is saying. • What do you notice about the colors, tones, and shades of the animations? What do those choices convey about what is happening?
Jewish Life in Poland/Childhood [3:31 – 5:12]	• Children swimming, playing, happy childhood • Father made hats for a living and is described as smart • Family had a horse, not a car • Bright, bold colors are used in this section
Rise of Hitler/Nazis [5:21 – 6:54]	• Symbols: swastika (Nazi symbol), Star of David (symbol of Judaism) • Armies marching, rallies, people making the "Heil Hitler" arm gesture • Nazis painting "Jude" and Star of David on windows of Jewish-owned shops • Synagogues are on fire and shops are vandalized • Muted colors, black-and-white with red are used in this section
Ghetto [6:54 – 7:58]	• Jews are being rounded up and forced to march to the ghetto with no possessions • Ask students: The illustrator shows the Jews marching to the ghetto, and then reveals the bystanders watching. Why do you think he made this choice to reveal the Jewish victims and the bystanders in this way? Why do you think the bystanders are just watching? What is a danger of remaining silent in the face of injustice? • People are sleeping on the floor in the ghetto • Illustration of boys with bowls conveys hunger • Jews are being forced to wear the yellow star as a way to identify them
Arrest [8:03 – 9:10]	• Young people with their hands up are being arrested • Ask students: Did they commit a crime? • Nazis are forcibly dragging a Jewish person away

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Nazi Invasions/War [9:12 – 9:48]	• A colorful map is taken over by black to show the spread of Nazi domination • Ask students: What does this show about the reach of Nazi power and control as the war progressed? • Armies are marching with guns, swords, bayonets, etc. • Soldiers are parachuting down to the ground as part of warfare • Colors are black-and-white, dark toned
Deportation [9:48 – 10:31]	• Jews are rounded up for deportation • The face of a young person inside a cattle car is visible • Jews are forced into cattle cars • Ask students: What do these train cars look like? • Colors are muted/black-and-white
Concentration Camps [10:35 – 13:40]	• Jack's father sends him a hat with money • In the camps, there is barbed wire, and people are wearing uniforms • There is extreme hunger depicted • Guns are shown high above prisoners, threatening them with death • Numbers are tattooed on Jews' arms • Ask students: Why do you think the illustrator shows the people fading away, with just the numbers remaining? • Auschwitz's gates are shown with "Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work Makes You Free") • Ask students: How is this a form of deception? Why would the Nazis put this at the entrance to the camp? • Muted colors – Jews are still shown in color but less vibrant
Death March [13:42 – 14:38]	• Long lines of Jews are marching, wearing uniforms from the camps and no shoes • Some people are looking at the camera • Ask students: Who is taking the photo? What may be on the other side of the street? • People are marched past a farmhouse • Ask students: Who would have seen the death marches?
Liberation [14:38 – end]	• People are still in camps but smiling • A boy is walking • Ask students: What do you think the gray is on the side of him? It is rubble – what does that reveal about conditions in Europe post-war? • There is a ship sailing for America • Ask students: Why did most survivors want to leave Europe? • Brighter colors are used again

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

THE NUMBER ON GREAT GRANDPA'S ARM

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