

# Commemoration

## GUIDE



Yom Hashoah  
Commemoration, 2016



Centre commémoratif  
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

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Memorial Centre

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Canada

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# The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and its Museum

## TO LEARN, TO FEEL, TO REMEMBER, TO ACT

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust, while sensitizing the public to the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference. Through its Museum, its commemorative programs and educational initiatives, the Centre promotes respect for diversity and the sanctity of human life.

The Museum's collection is unique in Canada. It contains over 11,600 artefacts, historical documents and photographs donated by Holocaust survivors and their families. Every year, the Centre acquires new objects that document the life of Jewish European and North African communities before the war and during the Holocaust. The Museum reflects Quebec, Canadian, and international histories and invites visitors to learn about the genocide of the Jewish people by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. The Museum exhibit and pedagogical tools for teachers encourage individuals to consider the implications of prejudice, racism and antisemitism, as they learn about the various aspects of the Holocaust.

The Museum's permanent exhibit tells the stories of Jewish people before, during and after the Holocaust. Soon after World War II, Montreal welcomed over 9,000 Holocaust Survivors. Approximately 4,000 of these individuals still live in the city today.

### Facilities & Services:

The Museum is located in the main lobby of 1 Cummings Square (5151 Côte-Ste-Catherine Road).

It can be accessed by public transportation: Metro Côte-Ste-Catherine, or the 129 bus.

The Museum is accessible to individuals with reduced mobility and/or hearing impairments. All films can be viewed with French or English subtitles.

Tel: (514) 345-2605

Website: [www.mhmc.ca](http://www.mhmc.ca)

For museum hours, group tours and admission fees, please contact our reservation agent at (514) 345-2605, ext. 3291.

To download the free tablet app for iPad:

<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/montreal-holocaust-museum/id719081593?mt=8>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/search?q=MHMC&c=apps>

The Montreal Holocaust Centre has developed various pedagogical tools in accordance with Quebec Education Program guidelines both for elementary and high schools. You can visit the teacher's section of the MHMC website to download lesson plans and activities at <http://www.mhmc.ca/en/pages/teachers>

# About this Guide

The Holocaust was the systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. An estimated six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Beyond the enormous losses suffered by the Jews, the Holocaust fundamentally and irrevocably changed the lives of survivors and Jewish communities in Europe forever.

The commemoration guide was created to accompany the travelling exhibit entitled “*And in 1948, I came to Canada*” – *The Holocaust in Six Dates* to help the organisations hosting the exhibit with the organization of commemorations related to the theme. Four types of commemorations are included in this guide, with descriptions, suggested themes, readings and links to useful websites.



Yom Hashoah  
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# The Relevance of Holocaust Commemorations

In organizing Holocaust commemorations, we remember the six million Jewish victims, as well as the non-Jewish victims of Nazi oppression. We particularly honour the memory of those with no family left to remember them. We also remember rescuers and liberators and honour survivors, who have rebuilt their lives after going through such horrific experiences and who have contributed in so many ways to the countries that opened their doors to them.

Commemorations help students and adults develop knowledge and awareness of genocide and war. It helps them reflect on the ideologies and actions that led to the genocide, and on measures that can be taken to prevent future genocides. Commemoration is both somber and inspirational, and is therefore a fitting way to conclude an educational experience. It has an emotional appeal and is steeped in religious and social traditions of many communities and societies. It focuses on the loss of individual human lives, and the loss for humanity. It is a form of active engagement and commitment linking the past to the future, and is suitable for people of all ages.

Remembering, discussing and learning about the Holocaust is important not only because it helps us gain a better understanding of the past, but because it also raises awareness about contemporary forms of antisemitism, xenophobia and other forms of hatred. It illustrates how these can create the preconditions for genocide.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw several genocides and crimes against humanity in addition to the Holocaust, including the Armenian genocide, ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and genocide in Srebrenica, the Cambodian Genocide, and the Rwandan Genocide. Conflicts claiming hundreds of thousands of lives continue to plague society today.

Commemoration and education raise awareness about the danger of prejudice, hatred, radical and extremist movements and totalitarian regimes. They show appreciation for the diverse cultures which make up Canada. Commemorations contribute to the promotion of human rights and foster the personal responsibility of citizens in democratic societies. The Government of Canada and each provincial government have recognised a Holocaust memorial day, Yom Hashoah. This official recognition highlights the importance of commemoration.





**Left:**  
Prisoners in Auschwitz  
at liberation in 1945

**Right:**  
Candle lighting at  
the Yom Hashoah  
Commemoration in  
2016

## Commemorations

### International Holocaust Remembrance Day

January 27<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, by Soviet troops in 1945, was designated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005. It commemorates the victims of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. Educational and commemorative events are held in many countries throughout the world.

### Yom Hashoah

Yom Hashoah, which commemorates the millions of Jewish victims of the Holocaust, was established by the Israeli parliament in 1951. It is observed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in the Hebrew calendar, which marks the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The Hebrew calendar is a lunar calendar, the date of the commemoration changes every year. To determine on what day it falls each year, consult the [Remembrance Day Calendar](#) of the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*.

Yom Hashoah was declared Holocaust Memorial Day in Quebec in 1999 and in Canada in 2003. About 4,000 survivors still live in Montreal today. Many of them continue to be involved as volunteers at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, which, together with its Remembrance Committee, organizes the annual Yom Hashoah commemoration in Montreal.

Immediately after the War, Holocaust survivors began to organise events to remember those who were murdered. The first commemorations took place in former concentration camps and displaced persons camps. Today, Yom Hashoah is commemorated by Jewish communities, governments and individuals around the world, in synagogues and in the broader community. Yom Hashoah commemorations may feature a talk or testimony by a Holocaust survivor, the viewing a film on the Holocaust or short clips of survivor testimonies, recitation of the names of victims, readings related to the Holocaust, appropriate musical presentations, the lighting of six candles by survivors in memory of the 6 million Jewish victims, and sometimes seven candles in an effort to include the other victims of the Nazis. Interfaith ceremonies are also organised in some Canadian cities.

Please visit Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names where you can find 4.5 million names of Jews murdered in the Holocaust (<http://yvng.yadvashem.org/>). You can also consult the Names List of Victims of the Holocaust on the USHMM's website (*United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*), where 5,000 names are listed (<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20141010-dor-names-list.pdf>). One of the central features of remembrance is the understanding that although we speak of millions, each person's name and life is to be remembered.

Ruins after the Warsaw ghetto uprising, 1943







Broken windows  
after Kristallnacht,  
1938

## Kristallnacht

*Kristallnacht* is a German word meaning the Night of Broken Glass. It marked the escalation of state orchestrated persecution against Jews in Germany, annexed Austria, and parts of German-occupied Czechoslovakia. On November 9-10, 1938, hundreds of synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses were destroyed throughout Germany and cemeteries were also desecrated. The wave of violence affected hundreds of communities for whom the synagogue represented the core of Jewish religious and cultural life. It is estimated that at least 7,500 Jewish businesses were looted, while Jewish-owned community and residential properties were destroyed.

Kristallnacht was strategically planned. Anti-Jewish rioters acted upon direct orders from SS officials. Fire marshals received strict orders from the Nazis to prevent individuals from attempting to stop the destructive fires that burned the centuries-old synagogues to the ground. The SS and Gestapo (Secret State Police) arrested approximately 30,000 Jewish men, and deported them to German concentration camps. It is estimated that 91 Jews were killed during the events of Kristallnacht, and these events signaled a terrifying warning for what was to come.

The German government declared that the Jews themselves were to blame for the pogrom. A fine of one billion Reichsmarks was imposed on them and their insurance payouts were confiscated. The events of Kristallnacht are often referred to as a pogrom, an adaptation of a Russian word meaning devastation, and an organised massacre of helpless people, particularly Jews. To learn more about Kristallnacht go to [http://mhmc.ca/media\\_library/files/Kristallnacht%20guide%20d'ecoute%20version%20Web.pdf](http://mhmc.ca/media_library/files/Kristallnacht%20guide%20d'ecoute%20version%20Web.pdf). You can also watch a survivor who witnessed Kristallnacht talk about her experiences here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBTf9pNWqSo&list=PLTVPX97wH3o63xJUgz0wg6UpFQw0RzIhh>.



Poppies at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, 2014

## November 11

Remembrance Day is observed in Canada on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, the anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, which marked the end of the hostilities of World War I. There are commemorative ceremonies in many cities across the country. At 11 AM, people observe a two-minute silence to remember members of the armed forces who have fought for Canada and remember those who died in military service.

In many places, wreaths are laid on soldier's graves or monuments to those killed in duty for their country. Government officials often speak, students read poems, or study the history of a particular war. There is considerable literature that can also be studied. Approximately 100,000 Canadian soldiers died in the First and Second World Wars. An estimated 35 million soldiers were killed worldwide.

Short video clips and information about planning a commemoration for Remembrance Day are available at <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/world-war-commemorations> or on the site of the Memory Project: <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories>. The University of Victoria also has a considerable oral history (audio) collection of veteran interviews, available online: <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/search/collection/collection13>.

# Sample Program for Commemorative Events

## Opening music

This will set the tone of the commemoration. For suggestions about music, please visit the website of the *Holocaust Memorial Day Trust* at: <http://hmd.org.uk/resources/music/music-and-your-holocaust-memorial-day-event-guide>.

## Opening remarks

Through these remarks, you can introduce the subject matter and highlight its importance for students and the general public today. See above why it is important to organize commemorations.

## Readings

See the selection of poems below or contact the Remembrance Coordinator of the MHMC for further suggestions.

## Video clip of a survivor

See the clips by topic on the DVD included in this guide.

## Candle lighting

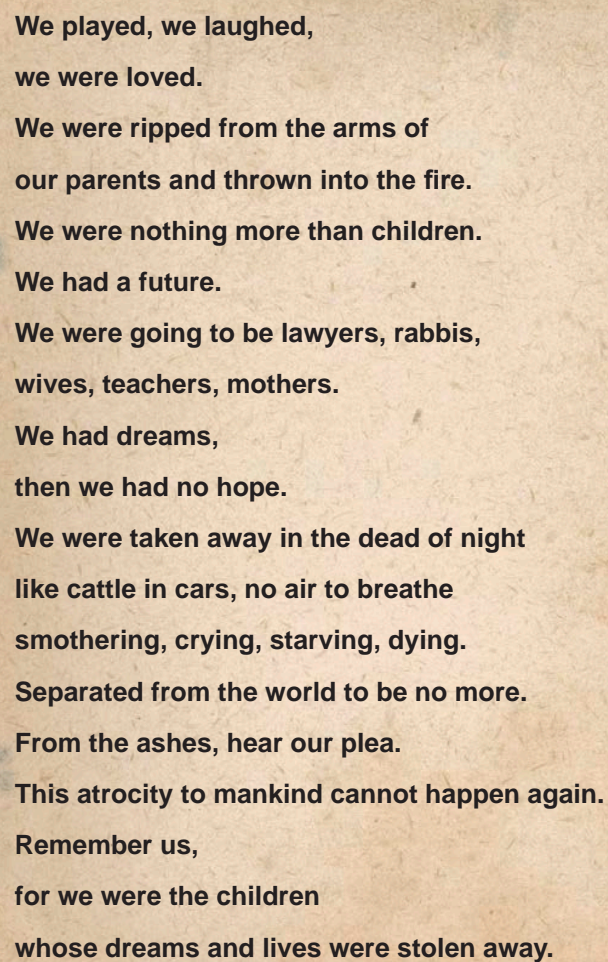
Usually six candles are lit to remember the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. One can also light candles in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered, in honour of the other victims of Nazi oppression, in tribute to the partisans, ghetto and resistance fighters and Allied Armed Forces that liberated the camps, in honour of people who were righteous, non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust and in honour of the future generations who will continue Holocaust remembrance.

Candle lighting at  
the Yom Hashoah  
Commemoration in  
2016



# Suggested Readings for Commemorative Events

## Holocaust



We played, we laughed,  
we were loved.  
We were ripped from the arms of  
our parents and thrown into the fire.  
We were nothing more than children.  
We had a future.  
We were going to be lawyers, rabbis,  
wives, teachers, mothers.  
We had dreams,  
then we had no hope.  
We were taken away in the dead of night  
like cattle in cars, no air to breathe  
smothering, crying, starving, dying.  
Separated from the world to be no more.  
From the ashes, hear our plea.  
This atrocity to mankind cannot happen again.  
Remember us,  
for we were the children  
whose dreams and lives were stolen away.

**Barbara Sonek** (1942-2010) was an art teacher and poet living in New York.

## The Butterfly

The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing  
against a white stone. . .

Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly 'way up high.  
It went away I'm sure because it wished to  
kiss the world good-bye.

For seven weeks I've lived in here,  
Pinned up inside this ghetto.  
But I have found what I love here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut branches in the court.

Only I never saw another butterfly.  
That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don't live in here,  
in the ghetto.

Czech Jewish poet **Pavel Friedman** (1921-1944) wrote this poem on a thin copy paper in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942. He was deported and murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. The poem was discovered after the liberation.

## First They Came...

First they came for the Socialists,  
and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists,  
and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews,  
and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—  
and there was no one left to speak for me.

German Lutheran pastor **Martin Niemöller** (1892–1984) was an outspoken critic of the Nazis, and spent seven years in concentration camps until his liberation by the Allies in 1945. His statement, which is often cited like a poem, comes from his lectures after the war. The poem warns against political apathy and the dangers of keeping silent in the face of dictatorship, discrimination and persecution, which can ultimately lead to genocide.

## If This Is a Man

You who live safe  
In your warm houses,  
You who find, returning in the evening,  
Hot food and friendly faces:  
    Consider if this is a man  
    Who works in the mud,  
    Who does not know peace,  
    Who fights for a scrap of bread,  
    Who dies because of a yes or a no.  
    Consider if this is a woman  
    Without hair and without name,  
    With no more strength to remember,  
    Her eyes empty and her womb cold  
    Like a frog in winter.  
Meditate that this came about:  
I commend these words to you.  
Carve them in your hearts  
At home, in the street,  
Going to bed, rising;  
Repeat them to your children.  
    Or may your house fall apart,  
    May illness impede you,  
    May your children turn their faces from you.

This poem, written in Turin in January 1947, introduced the book of the same title, by Italian Jewish writer **Primo Levi**. In his book, he describes his arrest, deportation and imprisonment in Auschwitz from February 1944 to its liberation in January 1945.

## Partisan Hymn

Never say this is the final road for you,  
Though leaden skies may cover over days of blue.  
As the hour that we longed for is so near,  
Our step beats out the message: we are here!

From lands so green with palms to lands all white with snow.  
We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe,  
And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth,  
There our courage and our spirit have rebirth!

The early morning sun will brighten our day,  
And yesterday with our foe will fade away,  
But if the sun delays and in the east remains –  
This song as motto generations must remain.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead,  
It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead,  
This song a people sang amid collapsing walls,  
With pistols in hand they heeded to the call.

Therefore never say the road now ends for you,  
Though leaden skies may cover over days of blue.  
As the hour that we longed for is so near,  
Our step beats out the message: we are here!

Lithuanian Jewish poet **Hirsch Glick** (1922-1944) was involved in the artistic activities and the underground movement of the Vilna ghetto during the war, and participated in the ghetto uprising in 1942. He wrote this song in 1943 and it continues to be sung at memorial services around the world today. Glick was later deported to a concentration camp in Estonia. As the Soviet troops were approaching, he escaped and he is presumed to have been killed by the Germans.



# Suggested themes for Yom Hashoah

## Destroyed Communities, A Life That Is No More

The Holocaust destroyed the vibrant life of Jewish communities throughout Europe. It wiped out the entire Jewish population of villages and towns, their culture and their way of life. Through survivor testimonies and readings, we can weave a tapestry of faces and stories in an attempt to reconstruct the shattered world of European Jewish communities.



The wedding of Stephan Molnar and Edit Gero, Budapest, Hungary, 1932



Graduating class of the Lipcani Jewish high school, Moldova, 1926

## Final Solution, on the Edge of Annihilation



The gates of the Birkenau camp, Poland, 1945

Between 1938 at 1945, the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews and tried to systematically destroy all the Jewish communities of Europe. Jews were herded into ghettos, where thousands died of starvation or illnesses. They were crowded into cattle cars and deported to concentration camps, where many were killed immediately.

Others died through slave labor, starvation and brutal treatment. Mobile death squads called *Einsatzgruppen* slaughtered nearly one million Jews, at mass murder sites, in the occupied parts of the Soviet Union. The retreating Germany army forced thousands of camp inmates on death marches without food or drink, and killed all who could not keep up or collapsed.



Deportation of Jews from the Lublin ghetto, Poland, to a killing centre, 1942

## Children in the Holocaust



Group of children at the OSE [Children's Aid Society] home in Palavas-les-Flots, France, 1942

Approximately 1.5 million children were murdered during the Holocaust. The discrimination against and exclusion of Jewish children increased in the 1930s with the Nazis rising to power. With the invasion of Poland and the start of World War II, their situation became increasingly precarious: they were forced into ghettos with their families, many starved and fell prey to disease, and many witnessed violence against or the murder of their parents. They too were subject to violence and murder.

When the Nazis began deportations and mass killings, many children were killed immediately. Some managed to flee and live in hiding, with their relatives or through help from kind and courageous non-Jews. Others survived by their own wits. Many were so young when they were separated from their parents, that they forgot their real identity and their past.

By the time liberation came, numerous children were left orphaned, without siblings or extended family. Through the efforts of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the War Orphans Project, orphaned children were among the first Jews allowed into Canada after the War.

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/orphelins-orphans/english/>



Children in the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany at the end of the war

## Resistance, Uprisings



Membership card for the *Fédération belge de la Résistance*, 1946

Most resistance during the Holocaust was unarmed. Jews tried to retain their humanity, dignity, and sense of civilization in the face of the Nazis' attempts to dehumanize and degrade them. In many ghettos, underground schools, cultural activities and religious services were organized. Young people were often active in the underground resistance, producing newspapers and radio programs and preparing acts of sabotage.

Some partisan groups (resistance fighters) were able to fight the Germans with weapons and several uprisings took place in ghettos. In the concentration camps, despite the atmosphere of total terror and isolation and the threat of punishment inmates tried to help each other and also managed to organize a number of revolts.

Some of the most notable moments of resistance were the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the Treblinka death camp revolt, the Sobibor uprising and the Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoner revolt. To learn more about survivors of these uprisings and revolts, visit the following sites.

Warsaw:

[http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw\\_ghetto\\_testimonies/fighters.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/fighters.asp).

Treblinka:

<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/treblinka/revolt.html>.

Sobibor:

<https://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/en/the-revolt/survivors-of-the-revolt>.

Auschwitz-Birkenau :

<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/sonderevolt.html>.

Jewish partisans returning to Vilnius, Lithuania, after it was liberated in July 1944



## Liberation

The Nazis were finally defeated and the last camps were liberated by the Allied forces in May 1945. After Liberation, survivors tried to pick up the fragments of their former lives and find other survivors from their families. They often returned home to find their property confiscated, their belongings stolen and renewed antisemitism in their home country.

Some tried nonetheless to continue their lives in these countries. A number of survivors managed to immigrate to Palestine, but most ended up as refugees in displaced person camps, waiting for a country to accept them. Despite the loss of their families, homes and communities, many survivors found the strength and resolve to rebuild their lives and put down new roots, particularly outside of Europe. They managed to build families and contribute to communities around the world in many fields of human endeavor.



Group of children in front of the OSE [Children's Aid Society] home in Le Raincy, France, 1945



Group of newly liberated prisoners of the Theresienstadt camp, Czech Republic, 1945



Musée commémoratif  
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Memorial Museum



Un lieu d'espoir :  
un appel à l'action citoyenne

A place to learn and be inspired to act

Agir  
To act

5151, ch. de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine  
514 345-2605

**HORAIRE**

Dimanche Sunday	10 h 10 AM	16 h 4 PM
Lundi Monday	10 h 10 AM	17 h 5 PM
Mardi Tuesday	10 h 10 AM	17 h 5 PM
Mercredi Wednesday	10 h 10 AM	21 h 9 PM
Jeudi Thursday	10 h 10 AM	17 h 5 PM
Vendredi Friday	10 h 10 AM	14 h 2 PM
Samedi Saturday	Fermé Closed	



Apprendre  
To learn



Ressentir  
To feel



Se souvenir  
To remember

Bénéficiaire de la  
Beneficiary of



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