"Ari Pinchot: *Paper Clips* Producer"

MAGAZINE PAGES 6–7

The interview with Ari Pinchot, producer of the documentary *Paper Clips*, highlights how a film about students from Whitwell, Tennessee, who created a memorial to educate themselves and others about the Holocaust, is a powerful reminder of the terrible effects of intolerance and bigotry. This lesson is structured to be done either in parts or in its entirety. In the first section of the lesson, students discuss the importance of remembering the Shoah and design their own conceptions of a memorial for the victims of the Shoah. In the second part of the lesson, students consider the goals and content of their proposed memorials to help them plan an appropriate commemoration of Yom Hashoah.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will sketch ideas for a Holocaust memorial.
- Students will express why remembering the Shoah is important.
- Students will develop an activity or program to help commemorate Yom Hashoah.

VOCABULARY

מַצֵּבֶת זִכָּרוֹן	memorial
סֶרֶט תִּעוּדָתִי	documentary
שׁוֹאָה	Holocaust
עָבָר	past
עָתִיד	future

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

"'I think films take people on journeys. They have the ability to teach something in a firsthand way, to help you experience something as if you're there. Movies can be an important tool in teaching history, because a child sitting in a dark theater watching a film is able to personalize and absorb those messages.'"

Have you ever seen a documentary film? Which one? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

Have you ever learned something new from a film?

How do movies have the power to make history personal?

"'I think it was inspiring to see these individuals going out of their way to collect so many paper clips in memory of the victims of the Holocaust; after all, the students had no real cultural connection to those who died. And yet, the kids launched the project because they overlooked their cultural differences with the victims to see their shared humanity.'"

What might surprise people about the project that the students in Tennessee undertook? Why?

What does it mean to have a cultural connection to someone or something?

Do you feel a cultural connection to the victims of the Holocaust? Why or why not? Do you feel another type of connection to them? If yes, what is it?

"'It's a lesson about the effects of intolerance and bigotry. It teaches the importance of respecting people and breaking down stereotypes. People must understand that we share a common bond: We're all human beings.'"

How does the film *Paper Clips* teach these lessons?

Have you ever witnessed intolerance and/or bigotry of any sort? Was it directed at you? If yes, how did you feel as the object of the intolerance? If not, how did it feel to see others being treated with prejudice?

How do you think that each of us can help remind ourselves and others about the common bond that Ari speaks about in this quotation?

"'No, my family was not affected by the Holocaust and without that personal connection, I've struggled to empathize with those who suffered.'"

What does the word "empathize" mean?

Do you think that empathy is important for learning about the Holocaust? Why or why not?

Has the Shoah affected your family? How?

If your family did not directly suffer during the Shoah, how can you create a personal connection to the victims? Why is that important?

ACTIVITY: REMEMBERING 6 MILLION SOULS

1. At the beginning of class, place a jar filled with paper clips in the front of the room. After students enter class, have each guess how many paper clips are in the jar. When all the students have guessed, reveal the true number of clips in the jar and then ask:

How many of these jars full of clips would we need to get one million paper clips?

How many would we need to get 6 million paper clips?

Does that number surprise you? Why?

We will now read an article about a film that documents a school's project to collect 6 million paper clips. When you hear the number "6 million," what comes to mind?

2. Read the article on pages 6–7 of BabagaNewz. Use the Quotes & Questions to help guide your class discussion of the article.

What about the article did you find the most interesting?

What about the article did you find the most surprising?

What about the article did you find the most inspiring?

3. Study and discuss the Jewish text cited below.

How does the text help explain the reasons for creating memorials for the Shoah?

What, other than a physical structure or sculpture, can serve as a monument or memorial to the Shoah?

4. Ask students to imagine that they, like the middle schoolers in Whitwell, Tennessee, are to create a memorial for the victims of the Shoah.

Why do you think it's important to remember the Shoah?

Divide the class into small groups to discuss the following questions and to draw a sketch of their proposed memorial. The teachers' section of www.babaganewz.com includes links to various Holocaust memorials around the United States. You may want to distribute images of some of these

memorials for students to reference while designing their own unique memorials.

What would your memorial look like?

How can the design of the memorial reflect the identity of its creators (i.e., how can the fact that you are Jewish students in grade x be reflected in the project)?

What shapes or images would you include?

Where would the memorial be situated?

What materials would you use to create the memorial?

How would it memorialize the individuals who perished during the Shoah? How can it also recognize the vast number of Jewish people who were murdered?

What would you name your memorial?

Would you include any written text on the memorial? If yes, what would it be? If not, why not?

Invite the groups to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

5. Now that your students have designed large-scale memorials, explain that they will incorporate some of their ideas into creating a meaningful program to help in the school's commemoration of Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Brainstorm your class's involvement in a commemoration with the following questions. After you brainstorm, assign tasks to groups of students to help implement their ideas.

What can we do to help the school and our class get a grasp on the number "6 million"?

Why is it important to be able to get a sense of that number, but also understand that it represents 6 million individual souls?

How can we make sure that the number is not just a number?

What are traditional Jewish ways to memorialize the dead? [lighting a *yahrzeit* candle; learning Torah in someone's memory; donating tzedakah in memory of the deceased; naming a baby after someone who has died, etc.] **Why do you think that these have become ways to remember people who have died?**

How can we incorporate one or some of the traditional Jewish ways to remember the dead into our commemoration of Yom Hashoah?

JEWISH TEXTS

ISAIAH 56:5

And to them will I give in My house and within My walls a memorial and a name.... I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

What are the Hebrew words for "memorial" and "name" in this verse? [*yad vashem*; This verse is the source for the name of the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem.]

Why do you think that the word "*yad*" is used to mean memorial?

What does it mean to give someone a name? Why does the verse emphasize that it will be "an everlasting name that shall not be cut off"?