

LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

It is optional but important to notify parents/guardians when you are starting a Holocaust related unit with your students. If you feel it necessary to send a letter home with your students to communicate with their parents/guardians, a template has been included in this guide to use or reference for your own letter draft.

Regardless of whether or not you send a letter home with your students here are a few things to keep in mind:

- ✓ Encourage students and parents to take part in discussions at home that mirror those that take place in the classroom. Doing so allows students to digest what he/she has learned or confronted in the classroom while in the comfort of their home. At school they are participating in activities and discussions with their peers and it can be beneficial for a student to be able to participate in similar discussions with his/her family.
- ✓ The ability to discuss topics such as personal responsibility, respect for diversity, or other Holocaust specific themes will assist in the development of a student's critical thinking skills. Remind students during discussions to support their arguments with textual and/or factual evidence. He/she can bring their response journal home and share their assignments and reflections with their parents/guardians.
- ✓ If a parent/guardian is concerned over the subject matter assure him/her that their child will not be exposed to graphic images or concepts beyond the student's maturity. You will not be hosting any simulation activities.
- ✓ Encourage the parents/guardians to review the book(s) their child will be reading so they can familiarize themselves with the story.
- ✓ Remind parents/guardians that you will ensure your classroom remains a safe and positive setting where students can express themselves without fear of judgment or confrontation.
- ✓ If parents/guardians express further concerns, indicate that you will be closely following guidelines for teaching the Holocaust as outlined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Furthermore, you will be using and referencing materials from Holocaust-education authorities approved by the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust.
 - ✓ Provide parents/guardians with copies of one or all of the following documents found in the Teaching Guide:
 - Why Teach the Holocaust? – Page 6
 - Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust – Page 8

While completing the unit, you may also use the student reflection sheet located found online. After concluding the unit, encourage your students to take their completed reflection sheet home with them to review with their parents/guardians. This will help ensure that students are not only safely brought into the unit but they are safely led out.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Georgia Commission on the Holocaust and the Georgia Department of Education have sponsored the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. Each trunk contains a full complement of educational materials about the Holocaust and World War II. These trunks and materials are used as a supplement to curriculum already in place and to assist educators in fulfilling the state's Standards of Excellence.

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, study of the events of the Holocaust addresses one of the central mandates of education in the United States, which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen. The Holocaust Learning Trunk Project provides textual, visual, audio, and digital materials that when combined ensure students gain positive character development and a deeper understanding of importance of good citizenship.

The materials, lessons, and activities emphasize the important of looking beyond the facts and statistics to examine personal testimonies and give this era of history a voice with significance outside the classroom.

Through teaching and studying the Holocaust, as a class we will examine the historical context as well as its moral and social importance in our society. This subject raises questions of justice and explores concepts of prejudice, discrimination, and racism.

By learning the lessons of the Holocaust, students acquire an improved understanding of the basic civil rights in a democracy. Students will also better understand their role in their local community, nation, and international community.

In the next few weeks your child will be reading: _____

by _____.

In addition, we will be participating in the following activities: _____

Please indicate that your child has permission to read this book and/or use these resources:

Signature _____ Date _____

If you would like to learn more about the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project, please visit www.holocaust.georgia.gov

Thank you,