

## FILM BACKGROUND

***A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned***, directed by Lisa Reznik, presents a group of students who traveled to Berlin and Poland with the aim of trying to comprehend the reality of the Holocaust.

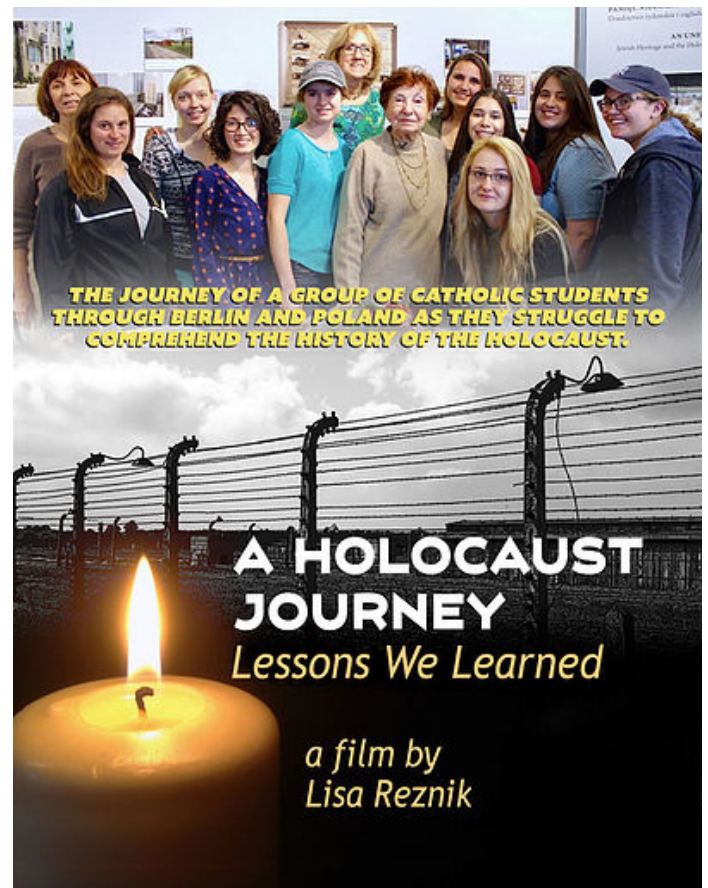
To honor the 25th Anniversary of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education at Saint Elizabeth University, Dr. Harriet Sepinwall and Dr. Margaret Roman spent two years planning a travel mission for students at this Catholic university in Morristown, NJ.

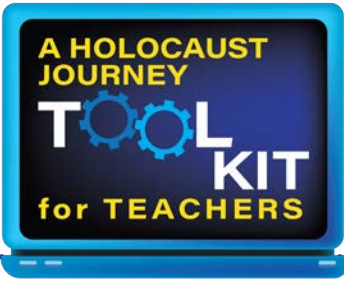
Professor Sepinwall invited Pinchas Gutter, a survivor of six concentration camps, to travel with the group to share the experiences of his family in Poland during the Holocaust. Students from the university, children of survivors, and members of the local community traveled together in 2016 to Germany and Poland.

We filmed the reactions of the students and interviewed them two years later about their experiences traveling with their professors.

***A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned*** captures the voices and perspectives of this group of students, offering a meaningful record of the intensive learning and emotionally draining experience.

The film introduces the key themes of the difficult history of the Holocaust in a manner that resonates with young people. In response to the continued interest in and need for Holocaust education, our story captures the voices of the participants as they step into history in an experiential manner. Our film about this rich educational journey can help audiences understand the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping that lead to the Holocaust and discuss how those remaining silent and indifferent to the oppression of others were factors in how this devastating genocide occurred in the 20th century.





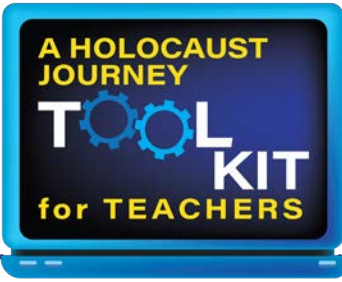
# FILM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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This resource is designed to assist the teacher in creating lessons that can be guided by the film and help the teacher develop a comprehensive historical lens that can influence classroom practices. This toolkit will enable teachers to align the film with classroom content and provide opportunities for connections within the course curriculum. Regardless of the amount of time the teacher has to teach the subject of the Holocaust - whether a week-long unit or a semester-long course - this resource is designed to allow the teacher to find ways in which the film and resource suggestions can enhance classroom learning.

***A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned Toolkit*** focuses on the following essential historical and pedagogical themes:

- **Historical Background to the Holocaust**
- **Non-Jewish Victims**
- **The Wannsee Conference**
- **Deportation**
- **Ghettoization**
- **Survivor Testimony**
- **Concentration Camps - Death Camps**
- **Rescuers**
- **The Next Generation**
- **Lessons Learned**
- **Journaling Practices**



## GETTING STARTED

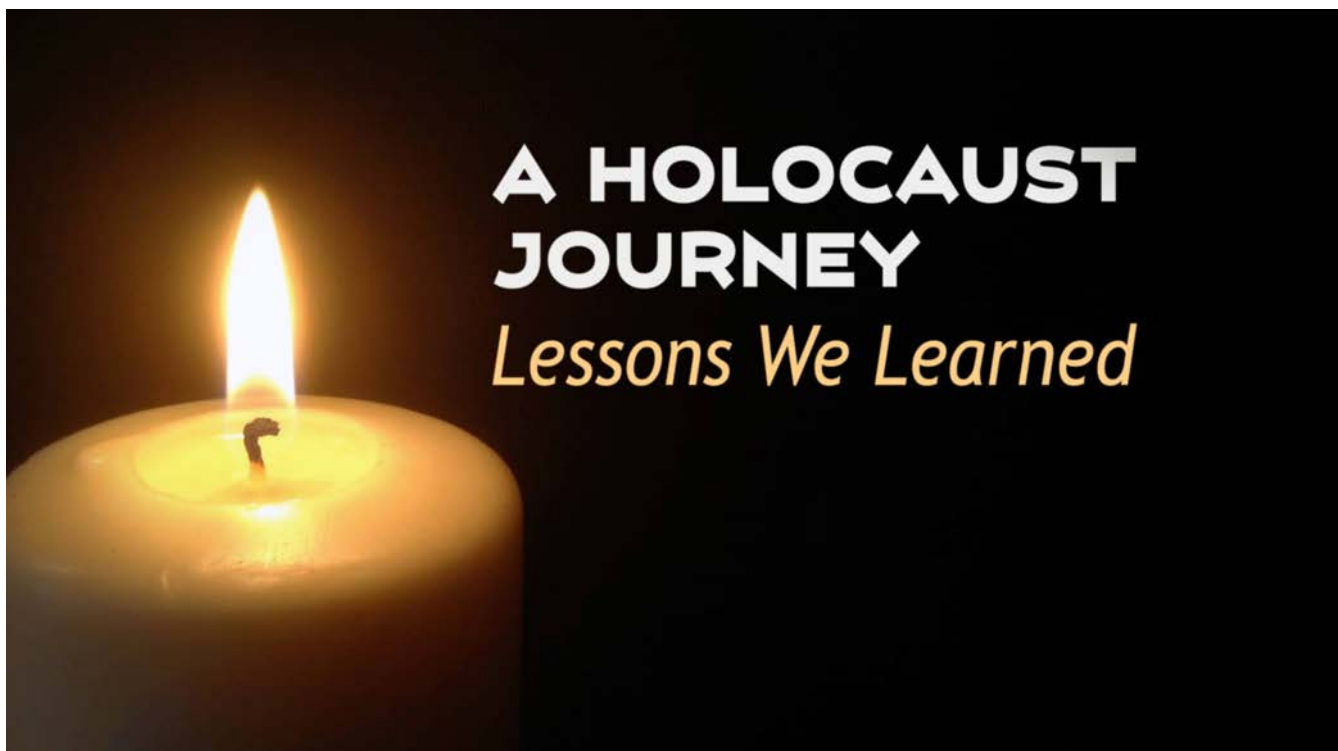
Link to watch *A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned*:

<https://vimeo.com/627723232/01e41b1313>

The film is 30 minute long. It can be used as an introduction to a Holocaust unit or further along in the curriculum. This is dependent upon the background knowledge of students and how the teacher would like to utilize the film to provide support and emphasis of the historical narrative. Teachers should consider the following:

*A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned* can provide...

- a sense of **place**, both in the past and present, to the history of the Holocaust.
- an introduction to **survivor testimony**.
- the impact of **authentic learning sites** associated with the Holocaust.
- a lens into how a nation defines the **historical narrative** of the Holocaust.
- a view of how survivors and individuals **interact** with the history in authentic learning sites.
- a **method** for analyzing history and developing relevant lessons for today's world.





# GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

Teaching the Holocaust and genocide requires the teacher to make careful considerations about content and pedagogy. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has established teaching guidelines that anchor and ground these considerations to create sound and meaningful lessons. Please consult these guidelines before teaching a unit on the Holocaust or genocide.

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/guidelines-for-teaching-the-holocaust>







## CREATING CONTEXT: ESTABLISHING THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Prior to or after showing the film, students should be exposed to the historical narrative of the Holocaust. This will allow teachers to contextualize the history and place emphasis on key concepts that are associated with the film. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) has designed a timeline activity which deconstructs the history utilizing primary sources and student engagement. This activity is designed as a two-day or four-day activity. See link below.

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/teaching-materials/holocaust>

Additionally, the USHMM Learning Site includes a traditional timeline of the Holocaust that can be utilized by a teacher to create a webquest or as a resource for student research. See link below.

<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/before-1933>

*The goal of the Nazi Euthanasia Program was to kill people with mental and physical disabilities. In the Nazi view, this would cleanse the “Aryan” race of people considered genetically defective and a financial burden to society. The Euthanasia Program predated the Holocaust by approximately two years. The program’s functionaries called their secret enterprise “T4” after the street address of the program’s coordinating office in Berlin: Tiergartenstrasse 4.*





# NAZI IMPACT ON THE AGED AND HANDICAPPED

As a standard practice in teaching the Holocaust, it is an essential strategy to engage students in the definition of the Holocaust and genocide. Two institutions have created material and lessons which address defining the Holocaust:

- The Echoes and Reflection Curriculum

<https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-1-studying-the-holocaust/#content>

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/mosaic-of-victims-an-overview>

Additionally, the film explores the historical significance of the impact of the Holocaust on the handicapped. This USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia explores the in-depth aspects of the Nazi Euthanasia Program.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/euthanasia-program>



*Just as the Nazis forced Jewish people to wear a yellow Star of David, they forced people they labeled as gay to wear inverted pink triangles (or 'die Rosa-Winkel'). Hitler saw gay men as a threat to his campaign to purify Germany, especially because their partnerships could not bear children who would grow the Aryan race he wanted to cultivate. It's thought that somewhere between 5,000 and 15,000 men were sent to concentration camps for reasons related to sexuality.*





# THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE: THE WANNSEE VILLA

On January 20, 1942, 15 high-ranking Nazi Party and German government officials gathered at a villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to discuss and coordinate the implementation of what they called the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question.” (USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia) The film explores the conference meeting. Primary sources related to this meeting can be found in the USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia (link below) and at The House of the Wannsee Conference website (link below).

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/wannsee-conference-and-the-final-solution>

<https://www.ghwk.de/de/konferenz/protokoll-und-dokumente>



*Entrance to the Memorial and Educational Site-House of the Wannsee Conference, Am Grossen Wannsee No. 56/58 in Southwest Berlin*



## DEPORTATION

Deportation as a topic during the Holocaust is explored fully at the following USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia link.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/deportations>

In the film the concept of deportation is contextualized through the testimony of Pinchas Gutter. Utilize the following links to emphasize the historical narrative alongside Gutter's testimony. The timeline link below can further give more context to the concept of deportation.

<https://timelineoftheholocaust.org/?evtmonth=7&evtday=22&evtyear=1942>



*Soon after the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, they began implementing the first stage of deportation by forcing Jews out of their homes and into ghettos. Freight and passenger trains were used for the deportations – prisoners were sealed inside with little or no room to sit or lay down for the hours-long train trip.*

*Many of those packed onto boxcars like this one died during the journey to the camps through starvation or overcrowding.*







# GHETTOIZATION

Ghettoization during the Holocaust is emphasized in the film through the testimony of Pinchas Gutter. Being forced into the Warsaw Ghetto, Gutter elaborates on his experience in the ghetto and later his deportation to Majdanek. The Echoes and Reflections lesson link below will help develop a broader arc of the Nazi ghetto system and its implications for Jews.

<https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-04-the-ghettos/#content>



*Beginning in 1939, Jews throughout German-controlled Poland were forced to move into ghettos—specific areas of cities and towns that were separated from the rest of the population. Jews had to leave behind their homes and most of their possessions when they moved to ghettos.*

## RESISTANCE

*Under The Eagle Pharmacy at 18 Plac Bohaterow Getta square in Krakow was run by Polish pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz. Clandestinely, and at incredible risk to their own lives, he and his staff used the pharmacy to help Jews with medicines, money and food and to even forge documents.*

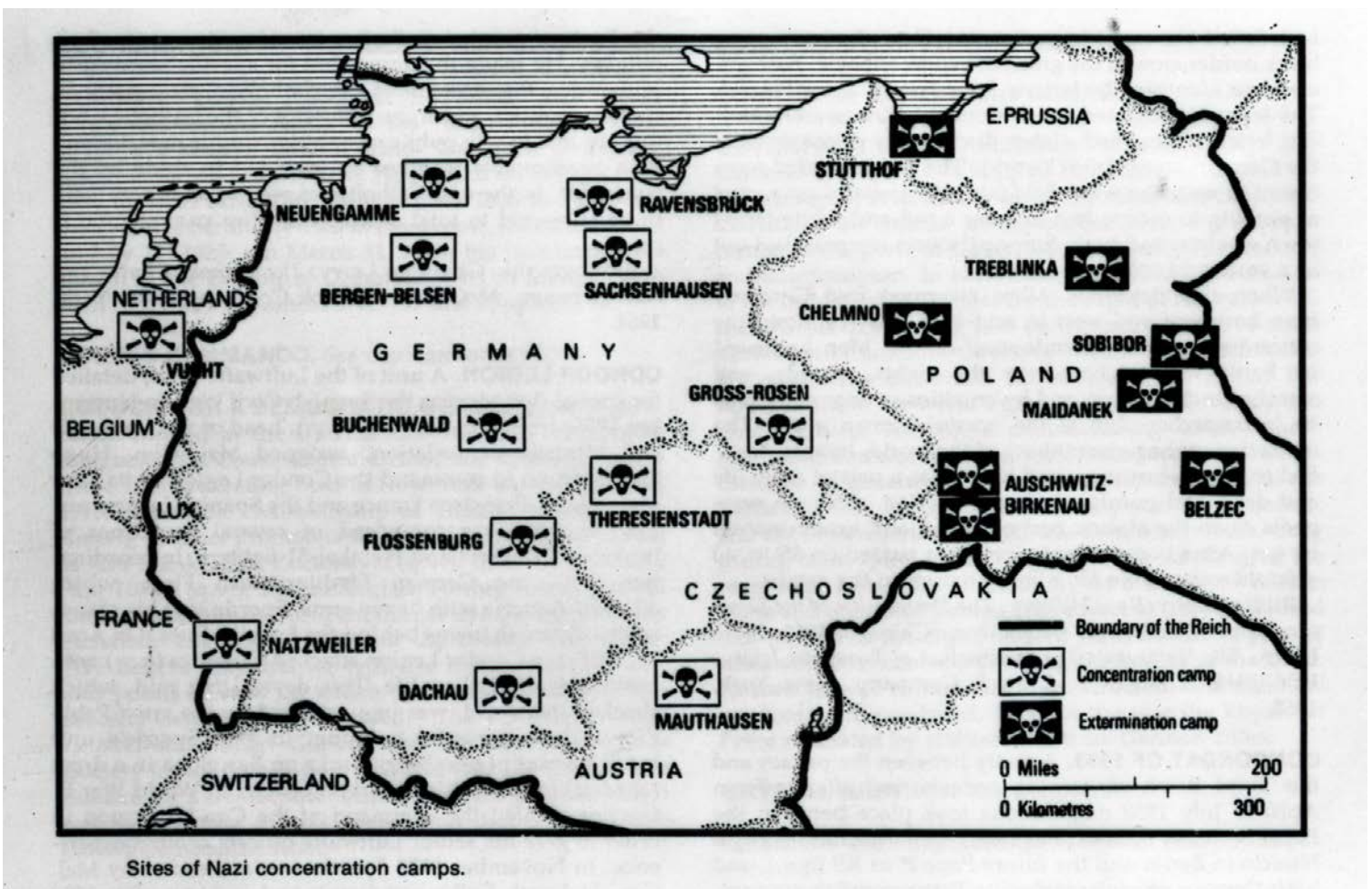




# CONCENTRATION CAMPS & DEATH CAMPS

The film takes participants to concentration and death camps which stand today as authentic learning sites. The sites of Majdanek, Treblinka and Auschwitz-Birkenau serve as reminders of the horrors of this period. Today, visitors embark on travel journeys which take them to these sites to learn about the atrocities that took place there. The film contextualizes these sites by communicating the historical narrative alongside the testimony of Pinchas Gutter. Providing students with full scale understanding the the scope of the Final Solution, this Echoes and Reflection map below addresses the Nazi Prison Camp System.

<https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-5/?state=open#content>



*By the end of World War II in 1945, the death camp system stretched from France and the Netherlands in the west to Estonia, Lithuania and Poland in the east.*





# SURVIVOR TESTIMONY: PINCHAS GUTTER

Survivor Pinchas Gutter travelled with the students on this Holocaust journey and shared his story with them. Pinchas Gutter's testimony served as the inaugural testimony for a project entitled Dimensions in Testimony. This project has recorded approximately 20 Holocaust survivors in a way that allows viewers to prompt real-time questions and receive responses from hours of pre-recorded videos. In the future, this technology will beam a three-dimensional image of the survivor into a space and allow participants to ask questions live. The link below will take you to the first phase of this project and allow you to ask questions of Pinchas and receive real-time responses.

<https://iwitnessbeta.usc.edu/dit/pinchas>

This is a current link to Pinchas Gutter's biography.

<https://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Data/EducatorData/ContentEdit/Pinchas%20Bio.pdf>

Additionally, an activity in IWitness can be found regarding the testimony above. This requires a free registration to log on to the activity. You can find the full testimony of Pinchas Gutter here as well as curated clips of his testimony.

<https://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi/>



*Ten-year-old Pinchas Gutter was separated from his parents and twin sister when they were deported from the Warsaw ghetto to the killing site of Majdanek.*



# THE NEXT GENERATION

As Pinchas Gutter takes this journey with his family, his future storyteller, the next generation, the viewer comes to know the power of testimony and the meaning this testimony conveys to his family. Daniel Gutter, the grandson of Pinchas poignantly reflects upon the trip experience in real time and the impact this journey has had on his understanding of his grandfather's story. This reflection and journaling moment can be utilized by a teacher to emphasize the importance of the second generation (2G) and now the third generation (3G). The following link can provide a teacher with resources and a deeper lens into second and third generation families.

3GNY - Descendents of Holocaust Survivors

<https://www.3gny.org/>

Additionally, the teacher can further develop the practice of journaling when teaching about the Holocaust by connecting with the following writing projects:

- Facing History and Ourselves

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/journals-facing-history-classroom>

- Dispatches from Quarantine

<https://alexandrazapruder.com/dispatches-home>



*Rumi Gutter (left) daughter of Pinchas Gutter and Daniel Gutter (right) grandson of Pinchas Gutter found this photo honoring Pinchas at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial museum. The photo is part of a display from the Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation which supports efforts that help new generations engage with Jewish life in ways that are relevant.*





# RESCUE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Rescue during the Holocaust took on many forms and through European. The following USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia article contextualizes rescue within the narrative of the Holocaust.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/rescue>

This USHMM poster set can be utilized to broaden the lens on rescue.

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20141010-dor-posterset-rescue.pdf>

Yad Vashem serves as the official organization that certifies rescuers. This website can be utilized to access stories of rescue for every country that participated in rescue activities.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous.html>

The Echoes and Reflections lesson entitled “Rescuers and Non-Jewish Resistance” can serve as an in depth learning opportunity on the subject of rescue.

<https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-7/?state=open#content>



*Holocaust Rescuer Mirosława Gruszyńska (left) whose family has been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem with Professor Harriet Sepinwall who helped plan the Holocaust Study Mission for students from Saint Elizabeth University.*



# LESSONS LEARNED: USE YOUR VOICE

In the final frames of the film, the students reflect upon lessons learned. Ask students to record, preferably in their class journal, the myriad of lessons learned by the students as a result of studying the Holocaust in an experiential learning setting.

After the students record these reflections, engage in a classroom discussion. Finally, ask students to record in their journal the lessons they take away from experiencing the film, *A Holocaust Journey: Lessons We Learned*.



*Journaling can help students process their thoughts. Use journaling to engage students in a careful examination of a topic to explore a key event or theme in the history of the Holocaust.*