



## Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

### Who is a Holocaust survivor?

- A person who survived in Nazi-occupied Europe in the following manner:
  - Lived in a ghetto, work camp, concentration and/or death camp
  - In hiding
  - By passing as a Christian with fake documents
  - Living and fighting as a partisan (Jewish resistance)
- A person who fled to Russia
- A German or Austrian Jew who fled his or her country between 1933 and 1939

### Give a historical context

Explain to your students that a person's testimony is limited to the context of his or her experience and certain variables such as his or her age, gender, and country of origin.

Certain survivors were imprisoned at the beginning of the war, while others were imprisoned in later years. Some survived in hiding, others were in concentration camps, death camps, or in partisan or resistance groups. **All survivors have a unique and complex story.**

Ask students to pay attention to these different variables during the testimony and to understand that it is the **personal experience of one individual.**

You can also remind your students that, today, Holocaust survivors are growing old and dying. Your students are the last generation that will have the chance to listen to a Holocaust survivor's testimony.

### Preparing students for their meeting with a Holocaust Survivor

Survivors enjoy the opportunity to interact with students, so please encourage your class to ask questions and share thoughts after the testimony. Students can prepare a list of questions in advance to ask the survivor.

They might want to ask the survivor-speaker why he or she chooses to share his or her experience with others. Many survivors want to express and tell people what happened to them during the Holocaust; others are motivated by the will to fight racism and others see their testimonials as a form of commemoration.

If students do not have questions, they are **encouraged to share their thoughts and reflections following the testimony they have just heard.**

### **Giving students the opportunity to apply their knowledge following a testimony**

After the visit to the Holocaust Museum, you may ask students to write about their thoughts and feelings on what they heard and discussed with the Holocaust survivor.

You may ask what they learned from the testimony and what they hadn't known before.

- How did the meeting with the survivor affect their understanding of the Holocaust?
- What problems that were addressed by the survivor are still relevant today?
- In what way does a personal testimony help us to understand and discuss issues of prejudice, discrimination, social justice and genocide?
- What subjects would your students like to know more about?

### **Writing to Holocaust survivors**

Survivors are always glad to read the impressions of the students they met. Students can write to the survivors to share their thoughts and reactions to the testimony and to the new information they acquired thanks to the session.

All mail can be sent to the following address:

**Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre,  
5151 Cote-Sainte-Catherine Road (1 Cummings Square),  
Montréal (Québec)  
H3W 1M6.**

We will forward your mail to the survivor who met with your class.