

## Curricular Ideas for High School Social Studies

### **Introductions and Assumptions:**

- This unit contains pre-visit and post-visit ideas;
- It is modular, meaning that we intend for teachers to pick and choose according to their individual interests, teaching styles, predilections, student needs, available time, curricular contingencies, etc.;
- Like any unit, it is idiosyncratic and reflective of the author's tastes and style but unlike most curricula, we openly admit it and encourage teachers to take ownership and make this unit your own by adapting and substituting pieces;
- It fits very well into the letter and the spirit of the educational mandate (*Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies; Chapter 113, Subchapter C for High Schools*). Teaching the Holocaust *does not require* finding extra class time; rather, it focuses the essential knowledge and skills of the discipline of social studies in a manner that is more engaging, effective, and meaningful than alternative materials, and it does so in a time frame than is of the same length or even shorter than other potential subject matter.

### **PRE-MUSEUM VISIT: 1st Lesson**

To focus on identifying aspects of students' lives in which they have choices and the power to change themselves or to influence their circumstances directly and in significant ways, as opposed to the aspects of their lives that are beyond their power to change or influence.

Each student is given a sheet in which they are to indicate the extent to which they believe that they, personally, have the power to affect significant change in each of these areas. The scale to be used:

- 1 means "absolutely no power to affect significant change"
- 2 means "some power but there are serious limitations for me to change"
- 3 means "my power to affect change are nearly equal to my limitations"
- 4 means "I have considerable power to change but some limitations"
- 5 means "absolute power to affect change is in my control"

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hairstyle                      | <input type="checkbox"/> skin color  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mother tongue                  | <input type="checkbox"/> shirt you are wearing today                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> house you live in              | <input type="checkbox"/> the next movie you will watch                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> favorite sports team           | <input type="checkbox"/> the car you are driving                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> your siblings                  | <input type="checkbox"/> music you heard this morning coming to school     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> school you attend              | <input type="checkbox"/> homeroom assignment in school                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> shape of your nose             | <input type="checkbox"/> getting a particular politician elected to office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being informed on Iran crisis  | <input type="checkbox"/> getting an "A" grade on your next math exam       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> winning the next Texas lottery | <input type="checkbox"/> putting an immediate end to the war in Iraq       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (add or revise at will)        | <input type="checkbox"/> (make it yours with your choices)                 |

Students will form into groups of 3 or 4, compare their individual answers, discuss any differences that they have between themselves, and try to persuade each other to reach a group consensus. In the case of a failure to resolve a difference of opinion, have representatives of each position present the various sides of the argument to the whole class and invite general input and feedback.

### **2nd & 3rd Lessons:**

Explore an historical event (preferably one already familiar to students because that would expedite time and effort needed to learn details and it would also reinforce previous learning while exposing new aspects). Events should be about individuals who made choices that affected what happened to them but that also had dramatic affects others. Examples that come immediately to mind are: Rosa Parks on the bus in Birmingham, Washington crossing the Delaware, Paul Revere's ride, the assassination of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, the Battle of the Alamo.

TEKS Social Studies, High School, §113.32 (b) (2) specifically recommends Martin Luther King Jr's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and it fits perfectly into this context (a few short excerpts from MLK's letter follow the critical thinking questions).

Questions relating to the letter from the clergy to which MLK is responding:

1. What ideals did the clergy set as most important?
2. What was their basic argument against the actions of MLK and his followers?
3. How would the clergy like to see each side behave in the future?
4. In your opinion, which people would be best served by such an accommodation and who would be most disadvantaged?
5. Is the solution proposed by these clergy "fair" to all? Why or why not?

Questions relating to "MLK's Letter from Birmingham Jail":

1. How does MLK justify being involved although he is an "outsider"?
2. Why does MLK attack the clergy's focus on effects but not on causes?
3. Why did MLK embrace the tactics of "direct action" rather than negotiation?
4. How and why does MLK distinguish between a "just" and an "unjust" law and how does that he then use that to justify willful disobedience to the law of the land?
5. Do you agree with his reasoning? How important is obedience to all law? What is anarchy?
6. Under what conditions or circumstances should laws be disobeyed? Who can decides?
7. What historical examples of willful disobedience to the law does MLK mention?
8. Choosing one of his historical examples, identify aspects of MLK's equivocation that you regard as accurate as well as aspects that you believe are not.
9. How does MLK's definition of "extremist" differ from the understanding that is apparent with the other clergy?
10. What are MLK's reasons for condemning both the using of "immoral means to attain moral ends" and of "moral means to preserve immoral ends"?

Excerpts from MLK's letter:

"I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

"Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

"We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

"I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

"I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fan in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with an its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."

### **4th through 6th Lessons:**

The Holocaust was an extreme situation in which oftentimes the only available choices were bad ones and yet victims were powerless to avoid making choices or to break out of these restrictive parameters. Teachers may wish to introduce the term used by Professor Lawrence Langer: "choiceless choices." Choiceless choices describe decisions made "(i)n the absence of humanly significant alternatives... alternatives enabling an individual to make a decision, act on it, and accept the consequences, all within a framework that supports personal integrity and self-esteem." In another place, he explains that "choiceless choice" take place "where crucial decisions did not reflect options between life and death, but between one form of abnormal response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victim's own choosing." (Triage following a huge disaster such as an earthquake may be the closest non-Holocaust analogy.)

Giving student no choice (something that may be discussed later), assign each an historical instance and have them write a description of the context, the options available to the victims and the extent to which the instance reflects Langer's definition of the concept of "choiceless choices".

1. A group of people hiding in a secret annex are listening to Nazi soldiers on the other side of a thin wall search for any signs of Jews who are evading discovery. Capture meant certain death for the whole group so when an infant begins to whimper and cry, what are the choices for its mother?
2. Read the opening pages by Wyadyskaw Szpilman in The Pianist, pp. 11-13 or view the scene recreated in the film version directed by Roman Polanski. How does Szpilman's opening comment: "(I)f I felt like watching the exciting activities of the smugglers, I could skirt the wall instead. The afternoon was best for smuggling" support the notion that, although sometimes lethal (as in this case) was smuggling necessarily an exceptional or extraordinary activity?  
(It may be helpful to know that the food rations allowed for Jews by the German Army of occupation in Warsaw in 1942 was 184 calories per person per day, whereas 2,000-2,800 calories per day is the normal range to maintain weight, strength and health.)
3. Emanuel Ringelblum, historian and relief worker in the Warsaw ghetto, described in his diary entry of May 26, 1942 what might be called: "the dilemma of Jewish self-help":

"Relief work doesn't solve the problem...people have to die anyway. It lengthens suffering but cannot save them...It remains a proven fact that the people fed in the soup-kitchens will all die if they eat nothing but the soup supplied and the dry rationed bread. The question thus arises whether it would not serve the purpose better to reserve the available money for selected individuals, for those who are socially productive, for the intellectual elite, etc. But...the question arises why should one pronounce judgment on artisans, laborers and other useful persons, who were productive people back in their small towns, and only the ghetto and the war have turned them into non-people, into scrap, into human dregs, candidates for

mass graves. There is left a tragic dilemma: What shall one do? Shall one [hand out the food] with little spoons to everybody, and then no one will live, or in generous handfuls to just a few...?" (DOCUMENTS ON THE HOLOCAUST, p. 232).

4. On September 4, 1942 the head of the Jewish Council in Lodz, Poland, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski addressed, the people of the ghetto:

"I cannot give you comfort today. Nor did I come to calm you today...I have come like a robber, to take from you what is dearest to your heart. I tried everything I knew to get the bitter sentence canceled. When it could not be canceled, I tried to lessen the sentence...(Y)esterday...(I tried) to save at least one year - children from nine to ten<sup>1</sup> but the would not yield. I succeeded in one thing - to save the children over ten. Let that be our consolation in our great sorrow...

**Comment [KC1]:** This sentence doesn't make sense—is it quoted correctly?

Give me these sick people (with tuberculosis), and perhaps it will be possible to save the healthy in their place...(A)t a time of such decrees one must weigh up and measure who should be saved, who can be saved and who may be saved. Common sense requires us to know that those must be saved who can be saved and who have a chance of being saved and not those (for) whom there is no chance to save in any case..." (DOCUMENTS ON THE HOLOCAUST, pp. 283-4).

5. Jacob Gens, Chief of Police in the Jewish ghetto in Vilna, Lithuania heard that the Nazis were planning to deport and murder 1,500 Jewish residents of the neighboring town of Oszmiana. So he volunteered to send Jewish policeman to do the job. The Vilna police bargained, lied, cajoled, pleaded and convinced the Nazis to allow 1,094 of the youngest, healthiest and strongest to enter the Vilna ghetto and take jobs in the forced labor factories. But the remaining 406 people who were too young, old, sick and crippled and who could not work were rounded up by Jewish police who knowingly handed them over to the Nazis who did the actual killing away from the Jewish police.

Did the Jewish police save 1,094 lives or did they assist in the murder of 406?

It may be helpful to know that the Jewish Police were armed with small wooden sticks while the Nazi overseers, who monitored and controlled the whole operation, were fully armed with rifles, machine guns and armored vehicles.

Shortly following this operation in October 1942, Jacob Gens gave this public speech in the Vilna ghetto:

Many of you see in me a traitor, and many wonder what I am doing here among you, at a literary gathering in the ghetto. I, Gens, lead you to death. I, Gens, want to save you from death. I, Gens ordered the uncovering of hiding places [delivering Jewish in hiding to the Nazis]. I, Gens, am trying to find work permits, more working places [employed Jews were exempt from deportation and certain death] and I am trying to help the ghetto.

<sup>1</sup> Rumkowski means that he managed to saved one year's cohort by bargaining with the Nazis. Their original demand was to deport to death all children younger than 12 years old but Rumkowski succeeded in convincing them to spare the 10 and 11 year-olds, although he failed to save children 9 years-old and younger. This, his listeners knew and accepted as the being the best arrangement that was possible, under these horrific conditions.

**I care for Jewish blood, and not for Jewish honor.<sup>2</sup>**

When the Germans come and ask for 1,000 people I provide them for them, for if we Jews do not give of our own free will, they [the Nazis] will come and fetch them [Jewish victims] by force, but they will not take one thousand, but many thousands – and the whole ghetto will be in danger.

You [his audience] do not come into contact with the filth of the ghetto. You will emerge from the ghetto and your hands will be clean, and if you survive you will be able to say: we emerged and our conscience is clean. But I, Jacob Gens, if I survive, I will come out and my hands will be dirty and dripping with blood. Nevertheless, I will stand before a Jewish court and I will say: I did everything in my power to save Jews, to bring them to the gates of deliverance; and in order to ensure that there should be a remnant left, I myself had to lead Jews to their deaths. And in order to ensure that people come out with clean hands, I had to be infected with all the filth, to behave like a person without a conscience.”

The German Secret Police discovered that Gens had contacts with anti-Nazi partisans and ordered him to report on September 9, 1943. To the suggestions that he run or hide, Gens replied: “If I, the head of the ghetto, run away, thousands of Jews will pay for it with their lives.” So he appointed a successor, reported to Gestapo headquarters, was tortured and shot. That night, two Jewish girls stole out of the ghetto and placed a wreath on his grave. A few days later, the whole ghetto was liquidated. Of the 57,000 Jews that were in Vilna when the Nazis occupied the city, between 2 and 3,000 survived, mostly in hiding places and in the forests.

6. Abba Kovner was the leader of a group of young Jews in Vilna who understood the nature of the Final Solution and realized that remaining in the ghetto meant eventual deportation and death. Unable to find weapons to smuggle into the ghetto and organize an armed resistance, they decided to escape through the sewers and join the partisans who were fighting in the surrounding forests.

As Kovner was directing his group into the sewer, his mother approached and begged him not to leave her, to take care of her in the ghetto. Kovner left and went on to be a brave leader and military hero who bravely fought the Nazis until their defeat. But in speeches he would remark that he is forever nagged by the thought that rather than being a hero who risked his life to fight against Nazism, he was a coward who abandoned his own mother to be killed.

Some teachers like to use fiction or fictionalizations such as the scene in William Styron’s *Sophie’s Choice* when Meryl Streep is told to keep one child but give up the other to be killed or Steven Spielberg’s film version of Thomas Kennelly’s *Schindler’s List* that contrasts Oscar Schindler’s calm complacency when taking over a Jewish apartment at the start of the film with his tearful farewell speech at the end when he openly weeps for not having done more to save Jewish lives. I prefer non-fiction if it is available and do not believe that these fictional accounts offer better examples, but each educator to their own.

---

<sup>2</sup> Great tie in with MLK’s rejection of immoral means for a moral end.

## Lesson 7: Immediately before visiting the museum

Written on the blackboard on the morning of the visit or distributed on the bus from school have every student read Martin Niemöller's poem:<sup>3</sup>

*First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—  
because I was not a communist;*

*Then 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 out.*

### \* \* \* \* Visit DHM – tour the display \* \* \* \*

On the way home from the Museum or, first thing back in class following the visit, have the students consider the complexities in the life of Martin Niemöller (1892 – 1984).

Start by describing a German Navy officer (without giving his name) who was a strong nationalist and a decorated veteran of World War I, having fought bravely as a commander of a U-boat. Involved with the right-wing *Freikorps* after WWI, he was unsympathetic to democracy and quite hostile to the Weimar Republic. In 1931, he was ordained a Protestant pastor. Question: How would he likely have responded to the Nazi rise to power? Answer: He welcomed Hitler enthusiastically.

Describe a Protestant Pastor who was disturbed by the realization that the Nazi government was acting in conflict with what he understood to be Christian beliefs and in 1934, as a leader in the anti-Nazi Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche), he speaks out against Nazism and writes critical letters to Hitler. Question: What was his fate in the Third Reich? Answer: He was arrested for “malicious attacks against the state,” released with a suspended sentence, but continued with his opposition to the Nazi government. Rearrested in 1938, he was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, later transferred to Dachau.

**Both** of these describe the same complex individual - Martin Niemöller.

<sup>3</sup> Over the years Niemöller articulated different versions, naming different groups in slightly different orders; this version is the most commonly quoted.

Question: How do you think Niemöller reacted to the outbreak of war in September 1939?

Answer: In prison in a Concentration Camp, he volunteered to serve his country and defend the Nazi government that had incarcerated him, by serving in the Navy. His offer was rejected by the authorities and he remained in the Camp until he was finally liberated by the Allies.

Question: What might you expect Niemöller's politics to be following World War II?

Answer: Niemöller became a committed pacifist and pushed for a Germany that was militarily disarmed and not aligned with either East or West. He avoided choosing sides in the Cold War (i.e. not speaking up for either side but standing for political neutrality). Early in the Cold War, he showed support for Communism by visiting Moscow in 1952; and in 1967, early in the Viet Nam War, he visited Hanoi saying: "Whoever wants peace must be willing to live together with their enemies. We have to stop the arms race and to risk trusting each other."

Question: Are you surprised that a man who spent 7 years in Nazi Concentration Camps often in solitary confinement, believes in disarming and extending trust to one's enemies?

### **Post-visit teaching unit. Option 1: Doing History**

Working in groups, students will look at specific incidents in the Holocaust with an eye to understanding the context and significance of the choices that were made and possible alternative options that were considered but not acted upon. This process will require several classroom periods; students will be given documents, photos, film clips and other written materials but also encouraged to search for more. Each group will prepare a report (oral and or written, at the teacher's pleasure) that may be evaluated.

1. **1936 Berlin Olympics** (attractive to those interested in sport and cultural politics)
2. **Voyage of the St Louis** (raises issue of America's immigration policies)
3. **Neighbors killing neighbors** (the example of Jedwabne, Poland; Jan Gross's book called *Neighbors*)
4. **Neighbors saving neighbors** (possible foci: Denmark, Le Chambon or Bulgaria)
5. **Art as a vehicle of political protest and the mobilization of consciousness** ("First They Came for the Communists," by Pastor Martin Niemöller and "Ballad of the Doomed Jew of Europe," by Ben Hecht in *The New York Times*, Tuesday, September 14, 1943; see Appendix).
6. **Judgment and Prevention** (Nuremberg War Crimes Trials).

After students have some understanding about these Holocaust-era historical events, they will be given another set of events, more contemporary, with the intention of drawing comparisons (i.e. similarities and differences). It is important to emphasize that whereas the Holocaust-era events were largely perceived as being unprecedented, there is a strong tendency to see the contemporary ones through the lens of the past.

1. 1936 Berlin Olympics – **1980 Moscow Olympics.**

The USA et al boycotted the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow in protest of the unilateral (“imperialist”) military occupation of a much weaker country by a world power who unilaterally decided to force regime change and to impose a political system that was more to the liking of the invader, i.e. the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. (See appendix for examples of articles on the two Olympic Games easily available on the Internet.)

2. Voyage of the St Louis – **Vietnamese Boat People, 1979; or the Sanctuary Movement; or Elian Gonzales from Cuba; or Coyotes and Minutemen on the Texas/Mexican border**

3. Neighbors killing neighbors – **Yugoslavia, 1992-8**

4. Neighbors saving neighbors – **Rwanda, Darfur**

5. Art as Political Protest – **“The Hangman,” by Ogden Nash and “Outside of a Small Circle of Friends,” by Phil Ochs (see Appendix)**

6. Judgment and Prevention – **Trial of Slobodan Milosovic or Saddam Hussein**

**Post-visit teaching unit. Option 2** (Less Challenging and Less Work)

Theme: People Can Make a Difference

The back dust cover of Jackie Waldman’s book, *The Courage to Give*, has in large letters: **“You are not defined by what happens to you but by what you do about it.”**

From the introductions to Jackie’s books:

“I seemed to be leading a charmed life.” (A Dallas native, Jackie had married Steve in college, worked as a special education teacher, resigned to raise their three children, then started a flourishing business.)

“My life was filled with soccer games, gymnastic carpools, school carpools, school plays, friends, family gatherings, and the athletics that were always so important to me. I went to aerobics class every day, sometimes twice a day, and jogged three to five miles a day. As the kids got older, I started by own

business...And it grew...Before long, I had twenty-five employees and twenty-five sales reps across the country...

It was around that time that I started having a strange tingling sensation around my waist. At first, I thought I was just imagining it. Then I attributed it to stress. But when the tingling progressed down my legs to my toes, and my legs became numb, I went to the doctor...On July 12, 1991 – I'll never forget that day – the doctor walked into my room and told me and Steve that I had multiple sclerosis. Even the doctor seemed sad...Steve and I held each other and cried. We were so frightened...

We tried intravenous steroids first, but that didn't help. Then we tried chemotherapy. With that, some feeling returned to my legs. I was so excited, so hopeful...I assumed I would be fine. I tried to ignore the overwhelming fatigue I felt on a daily basis. I pushed myself forward, believing that if I just tried hard enough, I would beat this disease – even though I had read there was no known cure...Looking back I realize I was in complete denial – big time denial.

When I finally quit denying that I had a serious illness, I became very angry. Why me? Why was God punishing me? What had I done so wrong? Did I get this disease as payback for the fact that my life had gone so well? That things had come easily for me? How fair is this? I asked angry questions over and over and over. They went through my mind continuously. I wasn't really looking for any answers. I was just asking out of anger.

As part of my anger, I resented any happiness I saw around me. When Steve played the piano and the kids laughed and sang with him, it made me angry. When Steve came home, whistling while he cleaned the dinner dishes, and then helped the kids with homework after working all day, it made me angry. The more he did without ever complaining, the angrier I became. How could they have fun? Didn't they know how much pain I was in?...I had to close my business and sell the entire inventory.

I had ruined an absolutely perfect life.

Steve didn't bargain for this, I told myself over and over. Instead of wasting his time with me, he could be with an energetic, vibrant woman...All day long, terrible thoughts began to run through my mind. Why doesn't Steve care about the pain and turmoil I'm in? Why does he keep telling me he loves me and that my MS doesn't matter to him? What if I have to come down the aisle at my daughter's wedding in a wheelchair? What if my family is just pretending to still love me? When they were alone with their thoughts, did my children resent me?...

When the movie *Schindler's List* was released, (my friend) Dee and I went to see it. After the movie, we talked about the power of Oskar Schindler's courage and kindness – saving over one thousand lives and, indirectly, all the future generations that would be born to these people. We talked about the courage of the people during the Holocaust.

We began to brainstorm the idea of a week in Dallas celebrating the value of kindness as part of the National Random Acts of Kindness™ Month. And we decided to turn those ideas into reality.

The week of February 7-14, 1995, changed my life. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King III, W. Deen Mohammed, and Dennis Weaver came to Dallas and spoke at kindness rallies, at schools, and at interfaith services. We had a kindness rally for 10,000 school children. Some of the acts of kindness Dallas experienced were the girls from the YMCA handing out hot chocolate to downtown workers as they left their buildings, children's art exhibits depicting kindness, interfaith services, children and adult choirs singing in the malls and even the Dallas police handing out kindness citations.

For the very first time since my MS diagnosis, I was giving to others and not thinking about myself. My motivation for the week had been my admiration for the courageous Holocaust survivors, for making kindness more powerful than violence. I felt better than I had felt since being diagnosed.

I realized true survival isn't about my legs working or overcoming fatigue; true survival is survival of our spirit; no matter what. After seeing *Schindler's List* and Kindness Week my pity party ended.

I then trained to become a docent at the Dallas Memorial Center for Holocaust Studies (previous name of the Dallas Holocaust Museum). Soon I was speaking with fifty middle school students each week, taking them on tours of the center. During each tour, I would become emotional when I told them about one particular survivor. He was their age – fourteen years old – when he was taken to the camps. He lost his parents, brothers, and sisters. You'd expect him to be angry. He was one of the kindest, most courageous persons I've had the honor to know; he was the founder of this memorial center. He took his loss and pain and used it as an opportunity. He wanted students and adults to learn about the Holocaust so it could never happen again.

I left the tour each week exhausted – but feeling new energy that I had discovered. And kids wrote me letters affirming that same feeling of hope and love. I felt a lightness I had not felt in years. And my healing began.

A pattern in my life began to become clear. As I was working with those who had suffered and felt their courage, I was learning how to find the courage to live with MS, how to find the courage to give. As with the Holocaust survivor...by putting aside pain – physical and mental – long enough to reach out and give to others, I was seeing how to begin to heal. There may be no cure for MS, but there is a cure for the anger, sadness, and fear, and the very people I was giving to were teaching me how to find my courage. I finally understood that my MS is a part of who I am, but only a very small part."

Jackie wrote a book, "The Courage to Give," that tells the stories of 30 incredible people who rose above painful suffering and adversity because they had the courage to give to others. The kindness that they showed to others was returned to them, and it gave them strength. We are inspired by their stories that Jackie shares.

The day after her book was released, Jackie was invited to appear on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. She was later to appear again with her later books: *Teens with the Courage to Give*, *America September 11: The Courage to Give*, *Teachers with the Courage to Give*, and *People with MS with the Courage to Give*.

**Assignment:** Every student can be assigned a different story (or read several and chose one that resonates with them), read it and write a personal reaction.

### **Summary evaluation to the complete Holocaust Unit:**

Based on everything that they have considered in this unit of study, write an essay in support or in refutation of the famous quote by George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (in *The Life of Reason, Volume 1, 1905*).