

**Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford  
Holocaust Education and Memorial Committee  
2012 Student Education Project**

“Personal Responsibility in the Face of Evil: Choices Matter”

**Theme Summary**

How can we help students understand such an incomprehensible event as the Holocaust and relate it to their own lives? As much as the Nazi engine was driven by one evil madman, it was also fueled by the daily choices made by everyone who lived during that time. Whether as individuals or as members of groups, the followers of government orders made decisions and choices that affected the advancement of the Nazi movement. Many people lived in denial, terror, submission, and in collaboration with the regime, but a brave, selfless minority risked their own and their families' lives to look evil in the face and defy it.

Our children make moral and ethical choices every day. The choices they make in their own lives, both large and small, will help to shape the world they live in. We ask the students to examine and understand the choices and actions of those who lived during the Holocaust, including:

neighbors

local civic groups

educational institutions

the media

national governments and

worldwide governments

As a result, we hope that the students will feel compelled to examine their own daily choices in a new light as they appreciate the power of the individual.

**Resources**

New Bedford tailor Abe Landau experienced the atrocities of the Holocaust which he chronicled in his memoir *Branded on my Arm and in my Soul*, just released by Spinner Publications. It is a moving personal account of one man's journey that can serve as a tool for students to explore and understand the impact of their choices on their lives and on the lives of others around them. In his memoir, Abe Landau provides a glimpse into how individuals lost their humanity and succumbed to the mass hysteria engineered by a powerful government and enabled by long-standing prejudice. Long after the war was over, Abe continued to speak out against hatred and bigotry. His memoir is an important one for your students to read as they, too, as teenagers, must make the right choices to become responsible adults.

**Suggested Readings**

**Middle School**

*Branded on My Arm and in My Soul* – a memoir by Abraham Landau

*The Diary of Anne Frank*

*Eva's Story*, Eva Schloss

*Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps*, Andrea Warren

*Reckless Courage*, William Fuller

**High School**

*Night*, Elie Wiesel

*Branded on My Arm and in My Soul* – a memoir by Abraham Landau

*All But My Life*, Gerda Weissmann Klein  
*The Ghetto Diary*, Janusz Korczak  
*Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters at Auschwitz*, Rena Kornreich Gelissen

### **Documentary Videos**

*Children of Chabannes*  
*Life in a Jar*  
*Into the Arms of Strangers*  
*A Boy from Warsaw*  
*Abraham Landau videos*

All these materials are available at the Holocaust Resource Library of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford

### **General Guidelines**

- Students may choose to write an essay, a poem, or create an art project based on their interest and ability.
- Essay and poem submissions should be typed double-spaced. Essays should be limited to 300 words. Written student interpretations of their art project are also welcomed and encouraged.
- The student's name, grade, school, and year should be prominently displayed on the title page together with the teacher's name (for art projects, this information should appear on the back of the project).
- For student art projects, entries should not be made with barbed wire and other possibly dangerous material, or loose particles. We suggest that images of swastikas and guns be downplayed.
- Art projects should be no larger than half of a large piece of poster board.
- Entries should be submitted to the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford, 467 Hawthorn Street, North Dartmouth, MA 02747 by April 19, 2012. The office is open between 10 am and 4 pm Monday through Thursday. Please call at 508-997-7471.