

## **A Proposed Evening Setup**

Memories@home is an annual event born from our understanding that we, young Jewish people living in Israel today, are growing increasingly disconnected from the official and outdated events of “Holocaust Memorial Day”.

Memories@home offers an opportunity for anyone seeking to connect with the memory of the Holocaust, in a different yet meaningful way. A way that offers the possibility to listen, think, talk, feel, and connect with the memories of survivors, as well as to ponder the challenges facing your peers today.

### **Suggestions based on Memories@home events from the past**

#### A general structure of a Memories@home event:

1. Conversation with a Holocaust survivor – 30 to 60 minutes
2. Artistic/creative segment (text reading, singing and/or watching a short video)- 15 minutes
3. Open discussion- 60-90 minutes

\* We suggest the event not exceed a length of two and a half hours.

### Removing the Sanctity of Holocaust Memorial Day

The evening will be set in an informal atmosphere – there is no need to dress ceremonially, we will not stand a moment of silence, and we don't have to be 'politically correct.' We recommend some light refreshments and ensuring that the space you're hosting in is comfortable, warm and open as possible.

#### How many friends should be invited?

The number of guests depends on your will and ability to host. The recommended number ranges from 15 to 40 people. The basic principal is to allow a diverse and challenging discussion, but to maintain an intimate atmosphere.

#### Who should I invite?

We recommend starting with your circle of your closest friends, but not limiting yourself to it. In order to create an interesting and thought provoking evening you should aim to diversify the forum, and expand beyond your regular pick of people.

You could mix between different circles of friends, choosing for example from your childhood friends, university friends work friends, etc;; another way to diversify the crowd is for several friends to invite people, each from their different circle.

\*\* Inviting parents or other people who are considered "second generation" (of Holocaust survivors) can add unique and meaningful value, but you should take into

consideration that the generation gap and perhaps the vastly different perceptions may change your planned discussion

\*\* You will find topics for discussion below in order to customize conversation topics for multi-generation guests.

## **Planning the Evening**

### **Conversation with a Holocaust survivor**

- On Holocaust Memorial Day, many of the Holocaust survivors take part in various events, so you should contact them in advance and arrange their transportation to the evening and back.
- As Memories@home is a unique event, ensure that the Holocaust survivor has been fully notified and prepared with regards to this evening's concept.
- It is strongly recommended to limit the survivor's attendance to their part of the evening only. The group discussion following the survivor's testimony may raise content which could be unpleasant or considered "inappropriate", especially to a Holocaust survivor. Additionally, their presence might hold the participants back from fully taking part in the discussion, and create a tense atmosphere. This should be conversed beforehand with the testament person.
- The survivor has a fascinating and complex story which is important for the evening participants to hear and internalize. However, the evening format will allow only for a part of it to be heard. It is important to explain to the survivor in advance that the evening includes other components as well, and clarify the time limitations.
- Remember - this is not an easy day for the survivor. They should be addressed respectfully and sensitively, and should leave with a good impression and experience.

### **Artistic Interlude**

- This part of the evening seeks to soften the "heavy" atmosphere that might be created by the survivor's testimony. We recommend that as a part of the collaborative concept of the evening, the interlude will be prepared by some of the evening participants.
- To be on the safe side, you might want to arrange for a short video or any other backup plan.

## **Discussion**

The discussion must be led by someone, but that person doesn't have to be the evening's host.

The discussion moderator is vital to its success, but it's important to remember their role is to facilitate the discussion, not to dominate it. A moderator should not make judgments, and allow all the participants to express themselves freely. They should keep an open and non-judgmental atmosphere, even towards controversial opinions.

To help people open up, the moderator can share some of their own personal feelings, and use them to provoke questions and other viewpoints, for example, "every year I feel somewhat guilty for not feeling connected to this day in its existing format – am I the only one here?"

It is important to closely follow the discussion's progress. Questions might need clarification, or sometimes a change of subject may be a wise move in order to include other participants. It's recommended to plan the discussion beforehand, to try and anticipate people's reactions to certain topics and the means to divert them to a fruitful conversation. Nonetheless it's important to keep a flexible mind and allow the discussion to grow in different directions.

## **Feedback**

For us to be able to learn and improve next years' Memories@home, we ask you to have the guests fill the feedback section of the kit.

## **Holocaust Survivor's Testimony**

The number of living Holocaust survivors is decreasing every year. Those who are able and willing to share their story are even fewer in numbers

Memories@home is a platform for survivors to tell their story, to be heard. Nothing is more important than this. It is our duty, in order for us to have a clear and direct understanding of the events. It is a great privilege to attend such an intimate and unique discussion.

Some survivors have health difficulties that might lead to a somewhat confused part of the evening. The situation is emotional and maybe difficult for them, and even a healthy person could find themselves having trouble delivering a completely coherent talk. Therefore, we recommend putting time and effort in preparation together with the speaker (specific instructions follow). Have an idea of the speaker's background and discuss what he/she will share, and prepare questions relevant to their story.

If this issue was evident during the survivor's testimony you can use it as a starting point for the discussion ahead.

We recommend suggesting the survivor arrive with a family member or another attendant (if one can be found), that could help around and give confidence.

### **Contacting and Inviting a Holocaust Survivor**

After receiving initial contact information, you should speak to the Holocaust survivor. Take note of the following:

- As the event is an unorthodox and unofficial evening in comparison to what they are used to, you should give them a sense of the concept.
- It is important to clarify where and when the event will take place, and assure them transportation will be available for them to and from the event. Take special consideration if the event is held in a venue with no elevator and ensure they are able to walk up/down stairs if necessary.
- Write down the specific address where the person will be picked up. You should leave them with contact information of a specific person responsible for communication with them.
- It is highly recommended the survivor leaves the event after their talk. The discussion following might be unpleasant to them, or their presence might hold the participants back and prevent an open atmosphere. It should be set beforehand with the survivor.
- The survivor has a fascinating and complex story, but the evening format will allow only a part of it to be heard. It is important to explain to the survivor in advance that the evening includes other segments as well, and clarify the time limitations. You could set in advance an exact time when their driver will pick them up.
- This initial conversation with the survivor should be followed by at least another one, a couple of days before the event, in order to remind them of the event, set a specific time for pickup and other matters that will pop up.
- Remember it is not an easy day for the survivor. They should be addressed respectfully and sensitively, and should be left with a good impression and positive experience. The testimonial certificate you will hand them in the event will be imperative to their sense of our appreciation, and must be prepared beforehand.

### **Discussion topics**

At homes where Memories@home is hosted for the first time we suggest you begin the evening with the question "Why are we here?" Discuss the concept behind the evening in the living room on Holocaust Memorial Day.

A few leading questions:

- If you weren't here today, how would you mark this day, if at all?

- Why meet in the living room and not participate in a national ceremony or watch Holocaust related programs?
- Do I feel guilty about the way I act on Holocaust day?
- Is it right to mark this day differently?

At the end of the opening discussion, try to direct the discussion to the topic of your choice.

Notice that there are specific options for houses that already hosted Memories@home in the past and are interested in gathering again with a similar group of people.

Attached are a few topics for discussion...

### **Holocaust remembrance and future generations:**

- The Holocaust in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries- Will we still mark Holocaust Day 30 years from now? In your opinion, how will a day like this look like? What would you like your children to know about the Holocaust and what lessons would you like them to learn about this day?
- How and should we remember this day and what must we learn from it- In the future, should the Holocaust Memorial Day be turned into a national holiday representing the survival of the Jewish people like Hannukah, Purim or Passover? Should we continue to commemorate this day by and teaching future generations the facts about the Holocaust, or should we focus on the memories and the lessons learned from it?
- German-Israel relations – Should the relationship between Germany and Israel continue to be influenced from the past? Is there a connection between Berlin in 2014 and Berlin during the Third Reich? Discuss the occurrence of the refusal to buy products made in Germany.  
Attached is a link showing Knesset members from the Jewish Home Party leaving the plenum during a speech given by the President of the European Parliament, who is also German:

### **The Jewish People and their struggle against racism:**

- Are we obliged? Does the fact that we are descendants of Holocaust victims require us to act differently towards other minorities? Do the Jewish people need to fight racist expressions wherever they arise? Is this a part of us after the Holocaust? Do we need to bequeath this message? What price are we willing to pay in exchange for fighting racism? (For example- the fear of losing Israel's relationship with Turkey if we recognize the Armenian genocide).
- Racism at home- How does the Jewish majority treat the minorities living in Israel – Arabs, Druze, refugees from Arab countries? Should the State of Israel consider its people's past when dealing with refugees? Should we put taking care for ourselves, the Jewish people, as a top priority, or should we take care of all minorities? Discuss racism within the Jewish people- towards Sephardic and Ethiopian Jews (for example- schools which do not accept Sephardic Jews, landlords who will not rent their apartments to Ethiopian Jews). Discuss the racist expressions used on TV, soccer fields and using every day slang.
- What is Racism? – Do we use the term “Racism” too often? What is the proper definition for “Racism”? What is the difference between racism and

hatred against someone who is different than you? Is the desire to maintain a Jewish majority in Israel legitimate? Does this justify exclusion of the minorities?

- Anti-Semitism today- Does anti-Semitism exist in 2014? Do we tend to confuse between anti-Semitism and the hatred of Israel? Has anti-Semitism taken a new form of hatred towards Israel? How should we act against anti-Semitism around the world? What is the difference between Jews living in Israel and Jews living in the Diaspora?

### **The Holocaust of the Jewish People compared to other Holocausts**

- There is only one Holocaust- Do we know anything about the Armenian genocide? Do we know about the genocides in Rwanda and Yugoslavia? Were there any other “Holocausts”? Is there a significant difference between all these events? Is our Holocaust different from the rest? For those who think so- what makes it different? Is it the number of victims? The way the murders were carried out? Is it the identity of the victim or the executor?
- What is this costing us?- Why does the State of Israel not recognize the genocide of the Armenian people? Does our people’s Holocaust impose a special role on us? If so, what role? Attached is a link on a debate held in the Knesset regarding the Marmara flotilla events and setback of the relationship with the Turkish government.

### **Holocaust Education - Delegations to Poland, official ceremonies, dealing with horrors:**

- Holocaust and school education- Is our education system doing a good job teaching about the Holocaust and remembrance?
- Delegations to Poland- What do these delegations contribute to our youth? What feelings do they provoke? Is it right to send student delegations to Poland? Should these delegations be dealt with differently- if so, how? The future- Should our children be taught about the Holocaust in a different way than we were taught? Should we teach our children about other people’s genocides in addition to our Holocaust?

### **Holocaust and Heroism**

How do you feel about the attempt to create a myth of heroism around the Holocaust?

Is it hard for us to admit that we walked like “lambs to the slaughter”? Why?

Does the heroic myth created around the Holocaust fulfill any of our needs as Israelis?

### **The Holocaust and the Sephardic Jews- “The Holocaust of the Jews” or “The Holocaust of the European Jews”**

You can open this discussion by talking about the Holocaust of the Jews in Libya, Algeria and Tunisia. Today, do the Sephardic Jews feel as if they don't belong? Do Ashkenazi Jews care about the Holocaust because it is the Holocaust of the Jewish people of the Holocaust of their own families?

### **The Holocaust at home- discussion topics for audiences of the second and third generations:**

- Questions for the second generation of Holocaust survivors- Growing up in a home of Holocaust survivors- Parents' attitudes – hypersensitivity vs. insensitivity.

While growing up, did you feel a difference between yourselves and other children with “normal” parents? Was there ever talk about the Holocaust at home? If so, in what context? Was there ever any talk about personal or general experience? If not- were you ever curious? Did you ask? Did you ever feel ashamed being the child of a survivor? Did you want to hide it? Did you ever invite friends home? What was the attitude towards food/ luxury/ physicality / Economic issues? How did growing up with survivors affect Jewish identity? Was there ever a feeling that lessons should be learned from the Holocaust? What insights did you parents bring regarding family management or our life as a nation? What is the meaning of the Holocaust Memorial Day for you? Do you consider this day a personal memorial day or a national day?

- What happens when the children of Holocaust survivors become parents themselves? – How did your own childhood experience influence the way you raise and educate your own children? What did you learn as a child and decide to pass on to your children? What was important for you to change and do differently? What is the main message that you learned from the Holocaust?

- Questions for the third generation of Holocaust survivors- what does it mean to be “Third generation”? – Do you feel as though you are a part of the “Third generation”? Do you feel that the Holocaust influenced your education? Did it influence who you are today? Do you think, feel or deal with the Holocaust and its consequences on a daily basis? Do you view your parents as the “second generation”? Do you see how the fact that they are children of survivors has shaped their identity?

Your relationship with your grandparents- How did the fact that they are survivors affect them? Have you ever been interested in listening to their stories? Is there a considerable difference between those who experienced the horrors and between those who were raised in an independent and relatively safe country? Did the Holocaust impact your Jewish identity? What is the main message that you learned from the Holocaust? Is this a national message regarding our need to stay protected, or rather a universal message?

- Perception of the Holocaust- generation gap- After our discussion- how would you state the differences between the perceptions of the second and third generations?

(The presence of the Holocaust in their lives, the impact it had shaping the person, perception of the Holocaust as a personal/national event). Is there a difference between the main messages each generation takes from the Holocaust? Will there be a “fourth generation”? Will the children of the third generation see the Holocaust as we do? How would we like to shape the “fourth generation’s” memory of the Holocaust?

**“A new Holocaust day”- (Intended for those who have already participated in Living Memory in the past)**

- This option is intended for groups who have already participated in Memories@Home with a similar group and are interested in taking part in this evening once more with new content.
- It is important that the moderator of the evening will be someone who is experienced and knows the content and concept of Memories@Home.
- The main idea of the discussion is building “a new Holocaust day” which reflects the Holocaust Memorial Day as its members wish to see it. The purpose of the discussion is to build a thought- provoking discussion.
- Thoughts about... - What do we think about Holocaust Memorial Day as it is today? Break apart the components of this annual day and examine each one.

The Siren- Is the siren a crucial part of the Holocaust day as the members of the group see it? What does the siren symbolize? What does it make you feel? What idea does it serve?

Holocaust films- Do you believe it is correct to screen Holocaust-related movies all day long during this day? Does this make memories more tangible? Is it easier to understand the Holocaust by watching the films? Are they engraved in our minds and hearts? Is it appropriate of Israeli channels to broadcast everyday content (for example – if the Champions League falls on the same day as the Holocaust day)?

Ceremonies- How would you want these ceremonies to look like?

Public places- Should public places and businesses stay open during this day? Should this be a day off?

- New ideas- Should the Holocaust Day in Israel be mentioned on the same day as the International Holocaust Day? Should we fast on this day? Should this day become a national holiday similar to holidays that symbolize Israel/the Jewish people's catastrophes? Is it right to start new traditions that would commemorate the survivors of the Holocaust and how the Jewish People over remember not the distraction but the



overcoming instead? Should we teach about other nations' tragedies on Holocaust Day, or should we individualize this day?

- Thoughts about the future- Will Holocaust Day look different after the generation of survivors is no longer with us? Will Holocaust Day look the same in 50 years? Should we change the day's layout every so often?

### **Holocaust in our daily lives – Topic for Israelis**

- The use of “Holocaust jargon” and humor – for example “It’s as hot as it was in the Holocaust” , “Your boss is a Nazi”, “This neighborhood looks like a ghetto” and other Holocaust jokes. How did the Holocaust make its way into the slang of our daily lives? Is it natural? Should we fight this phenomenon? Is it a legitimate way to joke around, or does it symbolize the lack of understanding of the Holocaust and its meaning?

The bill prohibiting the use of Nazi symbols and names- is this law the proper way to deal with the Holocaust? Is it right to try and take these words out of our lexicon? What purpose does this law serve? Can it affect the way we express ourselves?

Maccabi Tel-Aviv soccer team fans call themselves “Super-Juden” and Hapoel soccer fans call themselves “Super-Judenrat”

- Using the Holocaust in modern controversies- The Iranian threat, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the evacuation of Gus Katif, Ultra-Orthodox Jews using Nazi symbols during demonstrations (the Emanuel case) - can we compare? If so, what is the limit- sending out a message at any cost or honoring the Holocaust?

If you have any questions, comments or interesting ideas, **we'd love** to listen, speak and consult with you.  
Good Luck!