

# Inclusive craft activities for Holocaust Memorial Day



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

This resource for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is designed to be accessible for young people and adults with a range of SEN, physical or sensory impairments, and is available for anyone who would like to take a creative approach to marking HMD. It is suitable for use in an education or community setting. The activities are varied in terms of ability level, we have provided guidance throughout so you can select the right elements for your group.

The four activities included provide starting points for your group to engage with how we can be upstanders, not bystanders, in our communities today.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. We promote and support Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) – the international day on 27 January to remember the six million Jews murdered during the **Holocaust**, the millions of people killed under **Nazi Persecution** and in subsequent genocides in **Cambodia**, **Rwanda**, **Bosnia** and **Darfur**.

Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

Through taking part in a project, participants will:

- Understand more about Holocaust Memorial Day, and how we can fight for change
- Feel empowered by sharing their message, and connecting to the wider world
- Gain skills, such as hand-eye coordination, decision-making, team work and the ability to express thoughts and feelings



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You could display your art publicly to inspire others. Take a photograph of your artwork and post it on social media to share your message online. Please tag us on Twitter: [@HMD\\_UK](https://twitter.com/HMD_UK).

## Starter activity

**This activity is suitable for a group with the ability to read or listen, and discuss the story. If it is not suitable for your group you can begin with the introduction below.**

If appropriate, as a group read and discuss the experiences of The Veseli Family – provided at the end of this resource as an easy to read life story (full story and others available at [hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk)).

### Discussion questions:

- What different things did the Veseli family do that was brave?
- What were the risks of them helping the Jews?
- Why do you think they did this?
- Do you think it was the right thing to do? Why or why not?
- What can we do today to stop people being treated badly?

Today we are going to be inspired by the Veseli family's bravery, and think about what we can do to help people and make the world a better place today. We are going to make artworks as a group to share our messages with other people.

## Introduction to your craft activity

**This introduction is suitable for all groups.**

Before you take part in an activity, discuss as a group:

- Today is the day for us to remember people who were attacked and murdered because of who they are.
- When we see discrimination and hatred we should speak up and do something.
- Today we will make pieces of art that have a message. They are our way of standing up for what is right, and making our voices heard.
- What message do we want to share? What would we like to change in society? What have we seen or experienced that is unfair or not right?

## Deciding on your message

**Group leaders might want to think in advance about some ideas that your group would like to focus on for their message. Something that they are passionate about, or that affects them and their community. However, where possible it is great to get the group involved in making this decision, so they are committed to sharing a message that is important to them.**

1. What is your message about?

### Example ideas:

- A problem in our community, such as a library closing down
- A new community such as refugees who we want to feel welcome
- A bigger hope for the world, such as ending wars
- Holocaust Memorial Day and why it is important to learn from history

2. What do you want to happen?

**Example answers:**

- We want the council or local government to change their plans
- We want to make people think about something
- We want individuals to pledge to make a change in their lives
- We want people to hear the stories from history that we have learned about

When you have decided on your message, and what you want to see happen, you can look at the options below and make something visual to share your message with others.



## Activity one: Tactile art

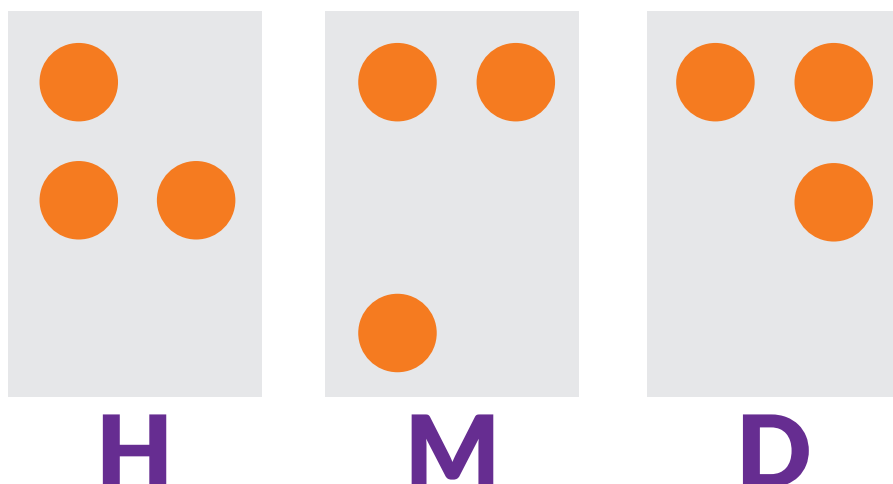
**This activity requires some fine motor skills, and is suitable for practicing that skill. It uses different textures so provides a sensory artistic experience. Other activities below are more suitable for people with less dexterity.**

Tactile art uses texture and sculpture to create art that can be experienced through touch as well as sight.

**You could:**

- Create a placard where the words are raised from the board for people to feel, or a placard in braille.
- Read more life stories from our website, and create portraits of the people you learn about – how can the portraits be textured or 3D? What materials could you use?
- Create a display of memorial flames to commemorate HMD, using materials that feel different for different flames, such as felt, cotton wool, feathers, corrugated cardboard, sandpaper or bubble wrap. Display them creatively – in a wall display, or hung from a mobile.

After the project, hold an exhibition where people are invited to touch the art works.



You may like to consider using braille in your tactile art activity.

## Activity two: Let your message grow

**This activity includes lots of options for people to be involved with different levels of dexterity. It is a very flexible activity for you to make more simple or more complicated, as suits your group. Using paint to make handprints provides an opportunity for a sensory experience.**

Create a tree to display your message and ask people to add to it, so it grows.

You can create a simple tree out of cut-out cardboard, or by collecting branches and tying them together so they look like a tree. Add colour by wrapping the branches in coloured wool. If you know a knitting group in your community they could help you.

Once you have a tree your group and other people can make leaves. Individual leaves can carry individual messages. Your leaves could be as simple as cut out paper written on in pen, or as complex as fabric cut with crimping scissors and embroidered with a message. This is a lovely opportunity to invite community groups into your setting to add their own messages on leaves. New leaves can be added to the tree at any time so your tree, and message, can continue to grow.

Leaves could hold pledges for what the person is going to do as a result of seeing your message, or just them saying that they agree with your message, like signing a petition.



### Create a fingerprint or handprint tree

Draw a trunk and branches on a large sheet of paper, and write your message on the trunk. Invite people to add their fingerprints or handprints to the tree as leaves, using green ink or paint.

A fingerprint can be viewed like a signature. Adding your fingerprint or handprint to the tree is agreeing with the message.

Initials can be added to identify people, or names written alongside the leaves.

Everyone adding to a single tree is a way of saying we are all together, we are connected.

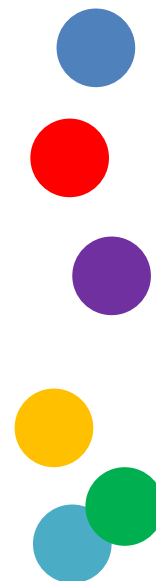


## Activity three: Say it with circles

**This is a very accessible activity with lots of options to adapt it for different requirements. It would be particularly suitable for making placards or large signs.**

Turn your message into an artwork made out of coloured dots. There are lots of options:

- Use a hole punch to cut small circles out of different colours of paper, glue coloured dots onto a page to make a beautiful pattern. Cut out bold letters to stick over your pattern to spell out your message. Hole punches with big lever handles will be suitable for students with limited movement.
- Cut colourful circles using a hole punch, write a message in glue on the page and then sprinkle your circles over the page.
- Make different sized circles of different colours – You could draw them, print circle marks using a balloon or sliced vegetables (for example a carrot cut in half), cut out circles from different colours and textures of paper or card. What can the circles represent? Faces? Speech bubbles? Experiment with how to share your message.



## Activity four: Don't stand by

**This is an accessible and sensory activity that can help produce an artwork for a broader global message about all of our responsibilities to make the world a safer and fairer place for all.**

The **Sensory Statement** for HMD is about not standing by, so you could create art works by making footprints to display at your sensory statement performance.

You can have a lot of wonderful sensory experiences creating footprints, such as:

- Adding paint to boards of different textures and then stepping onto them to get paint on the feet and then step onto paper to transfer both pattern and footprint onto the paper.
- Making footprints on different materials: for example corrugated card and bubble wrap.
- Using different colours of footprints to spell out words.



To create a message in your footprint images you have several options. You could pre-cut the letters of a message and paint footprints onto them. You could use masking tape to write a message on a large sheet of paper and then make footprints all over the paper. Once the paint has dried, peel off the masking tape to reveal a message.

Make footprints on large sheets of paper or card and then cut letters out from them.

For participants with visual impairments consider adding different scents to the paint that you use so that they can experience its multi-coloured nature through different means.

## Spread the message far and wide

Display the images you create publicly.

**To enable more people to see them you could:**

- Find a public space in your town that will display your images
- Share your work with your local authority at their HMD commemoration
- Invite your local paper to come and take a photo of your display
- Upload a photo of your work to social media (if you do this be sure to tag HMDT!)
- If you have made placards you could organise a march or event to share your message with other people

## Get others involved

Our craft activities are very easy to access. You could take your artwork to other venues or invite visitors to your setting to contribute a foot print or fingerprint to your image. Sharing in a craft activity is a good way of getting to know and understand others in your community.

## Take the learning further

You may also be interested in the Sensory Statement for HMD. You can find this and more resources such as assemblies, easy to read life stories and teaching materials at [hmd.org.uk/schools](http://hmd.org.uk/schools).

**Let us know about your activity** by emailing [education@hmd.org.uk](mailto:education@hmd.org.uk).



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## Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: [hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk)  
Discover resources for educators and other materials for your activities: [hmd.org.uk/resources](http://hmd.org.uk/resources)

[hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk)  
[enquiries@hmd.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmd.org.uk)  
020 7785 7029

 [@hmd\\_uk](https://twitter.com/hmd_uk)  
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*Learning from genocide - for a better future*

# The Veseli Family

## Easy to read life story



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The Veselis and the Mandils at the Veseli home.  
Photograph from Yad Vashem.

### Key words

**Muslim:** People who follow the religion of Islam.

**Albania:** A small country north of Greece.

**World War Two:** A large war fought in Europe from 1939 – 1945.

**Jewish:** People who follow the religion of Judaism.

**Nazi Party:** The group who were in power in Germany from 1933 – 1945, led by Adolf Hitler.

**Resistance fighters:** People who disagree with what the people in power are doing, and try to stop them.

**The Holocaust:** The attempt by the Nazis to kill all the Jews in Europe.

Vesel and Fatima Veseli and their four children were a **Muslim** family from **Albania**. They lived in a small village in the mountains.

One of the sons was called Refik. When he was 17 his parents sent him to the capital city, Tirana, to learn to be a photographer. At the same time a war was happening across Europe called **World War Two**.

One day a new man came to work in the photography shop with Refik. His name was Moshe Mandil, and he was **Jewish**. He had come to Tirana with his family from another country in Europe called Yugoslavia.

Moshe had to leave his home because his country was attacked by German soldiers. Germany was led by the **Nazi Party**. They wanted to get rid of all the Jewish people in Europe.

One year after Moshe arrived, Germany took control of Albania, and lots of Nazi soldiers came to Tirana looking for Jewish people. The Nazis knew there were only 200 Jewish people living in Albania. However 1,000 more Jewish people, including the Mandil family, had secretly gone there to find safety.

Refik realised his new friend was in trouble. He went home and asked his parents if the Mandil family could hide with them in the village. Straight away they said yes.

Vesel came to get the Mandil family with some donkeys. They didn't want to be caught by the soldiers, so they travelled on the donkeys at night, and hid in caves during the day. Finally they arrived at the village.

A little while later, Refik's brother Xhemal (*pronounced Jeh-Mahl*) brought another Jewish family who also needed to hide. Hiding two families was difficult, but the Veselis said yes again. None of their neighbours knew that the Jewish families were there.

In 1944 there was a battle in the village between some Albanian **resistance fighters** and the Nazi soldiers. The Albanians won, and the soldiers left the village. The Mandil family were so happy!

They left the Veseli's house for the first time in a year, and went to the town square. The neighbours were shocked, asking who these people were. Moshe said proudly, 'We are Jews!'

But the Nazis attacked the village again, and all the Jews had to hide. That night the soldiers went from door to door, searching.

Both Jewish families hid in the Veseli's house, and they all stayed silent in the dark. The Nazis thought the house was empty, and didn't search it. They were safe.

Everyone hiding in the house survived the war, thanks to the Veselis and their neighbours. The Mandils went back to Yugoslavia, and Refik went with them to keep training in photography. The Veseli and Mandil families were friends for the rest of their lives, and the Veseli family received a special award for helping the Jewish families.

The Nazis tried to kill all the Jewish people in Europe. This is known as **the Holocaust**. By the end of the war, the Nazis had killed six million Jews. Many Jews who went to Albania were saved by Albanian people. This is because of their strong Muslim belief that it was the right thing to do.