

Reconciliation & Healing

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What, if anything, do perpetrators owe victims of their discrimination and other human rights violations?
- Can personal and/or public testimonies aid in the healing process? Why or why not?
- What role can average citizens play in helping people heal after human rights violations?

Overview

In this activity, students consider how individuals and countries can make amends for past injustices and explore the concept of reconciliation. They reflect on their own behavior and watch four eyewitness testimonies to understand how others have sought and/or found healing in the wake of genocides. Students apply what they have learned to propose a solution to a local conflict and create posters educating peers about ways to promote healing after injustices have been committed.

Target Audience

Middle School Social Studies

Activity Duration

Two 45–60 minute class periods

Enduring Understandings

- In order for people to heal after their rights have been violated, they often need the perpetrator(s) to take responsibility for their actions.
- Providing people opportunities to publicly share their experiences as the victims or perpetrators of human rights abuses can be an important part of the healing process.
- Average citizens can help victims of human rights violations heal through compassion, acknowledgement, and support.

Background Information/Links

Holocaust

In 1932, Adolf Hitler, leader of the nationalistic, antisemitic, and racist National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party), was elected to the German Reichstag (Parliament) and in January 1933, he was appointed Chancellor by President von Hindenburg.

Materials

- Computer with Internet connection and a projector
- Reconciliation resources:
 - [Truth and Reconciliation](#)
 - [Amnesty International: International Justice](#)
 - [Armenia and Turkey: From normalization to reconciliation](#)
 - [How a Nation Reconciles After Genocide Killed Nearly a Million People](#)
- If available, devices with Internet access, one per student or student pair
- Handouts, one copy per student
 - Healing after Violence and Human Rights Abuses
- Ideally, the teacher will have placed the clips in a location accessible to students prior to the lesson.

After the Nazis staged a fire at the Reichstag, Hitler manipulated Article 48 and passed the Enabling Act, which allowed him to pass laws without the approval of the Reichstag or the President. This was the beginning of the end of the Weimar Republic. The Nazis established a single party dictatorship referred to as the Third Reich. From 1933 until 1939, the Nazi government enacted hundreds of increasingly restrictive and discriminatory laws and decrees that banned Jews from all aspects of German public life.

“The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. Holocaust is a word of Greek origin meaning ‘sacrifice by fire’” (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum). During World War II, the Nazis systematically targeted Jews in Nazi occupied territories. Jews were forced to wear identifying symbols, relocate to heavily crowded ghettos, and participate in forced labor. Millions of Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. The Nazis also targeted racial, political, or ideological groups deemed “inferior” or “undesirable”—Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, Slavic peoples, the mentally and physically disabled, Socialists, Communists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Within several years, mass murder became the official Nazi policy (officially organized at the 1942 Wannsee Conference). By then, the Nazis had already deployed Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) to massacre Jewish communities in Poland and the Soviet Union. The Nazis also used poisonous gas, in vans and later in gas chambers at six death camps (Chelmno, Auschwitz, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka). Even when their defeat was imminent, the Nazi leadership committed resources to the destruction of Europe’s Jewish population. Prisoners were forced to evacuate in what are now known as Death Marches.

When the Allied troops (led by the United States, United Kingdom, and Soviet Union) defeated the Nazis, they encountered evidence of genocide: documentation, witnesses, mass graves, and concentration and death camps. Europe was in disarray; millions were displaced, and entire cities were destroyed. Displaced persons camps were established to house Jewish survivors. Many Jews continued to face antisemitism and violence, and most Jews decided to emigrate. The Nuremberg Tribunal was established and tried 22 members of the Nazi leadership for war crimes but the majority eluded justice.

The Armenian Genocide, 1915–1923

On October 29, 1914, the Ottoman Empire, led by the Young Turk government, entered the First World War on the side of the Central Powers—the German and Austro-Hungarian empires.

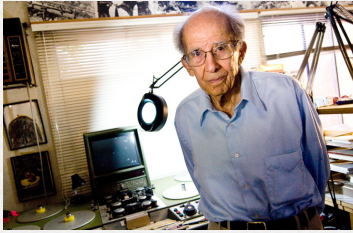


Under the cover of war, the Armenian Christians, who were viewed as ethnic and religious others by the state, were targeted by the government for total destruction. This was part of a plan to form a Turkish state and expand Ottoman territories east, beyond the Armenian Highlands. These crimes against the Armenian people are known as the Armenian Genocide.

In 1915, leaders of the Young Turk government began to eliminate its Armenian population through political orders of forced deportations and mass murder. To avoid any possible resistance, more than 200 Armenian community leaders were arrested on April 24th in Constantinople (Istanbul). Most were executed soon after. In large groups, Armenians were forced out of their homes and pushed south toward the Syrian Desert. Along the way, men were separated and killed, while women and children were forced to march under extreme harsh conditions. They were forcefully starved, without shelter and protection from harassment and violence. As Armenians were removed from their towns, new laws allowed for their homes, businesses, and churches to be looted, confiscated, and/or destroyed. Most Armenians survived death as a result of forced conversion to Islam, abduction, forced adoption, or by being sold or married into Turkish, Kurdish, or Arab households. Others were saved due to aid from American and European missionary and relief organizations, while others were saved by neighbors who resisted political orders to harm Armenians.

By November 1918, Ottoman involvement in the First World War resulted in their defeat, and the victorious Allied powers partitioned and occupied the empire. Trials were held between 1919 and 1920 that found Young Turk leaders guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, most of these perpetrators escaped punishment by fleeing abroad. Soon after, a Turkish nationalist movement led by General Mustafa Kemal formed to force Allied troops out. During this period, Armenians continued to be targets of genocidal policies. By 1923, General Mustafa Kemal and his forces went on to form the modern-day Republic of Turkey.

An estimated 1.5 million Armenians, approximately two-thirds of the pre-war Armenian population living in the Ottoman Empire, were murdered between 1915 and 1923. Till today, despite overwhelming evidence, scholarly research, and survivor and witness testimony that confirm the destruction of the Armenians as a genocide, the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge its past crimes and denies the genocide at home and abroad.



The Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, 1994

Prior to German and Belgian colonialization in the late 1800s, Rwandans shared a culture, language and monarch. Intermarriage between three groups—Tutsi, Hutu and Twa—was common. Members of one group could gain or lose wealth and power and change from one group to another. Colonizers did not understand or respect this dynamic. They favored Tutsis over Hutu and Twa and created rigid ethnic categories. From that time on, ethnicity was passed from father to child. Decolonialization in the 1950s led to violence against the Tutsi. When Rwanda became an independent republic in 1962, the Hutu established a dictatorship. Ethnic division and violence forced some Tutsi into exile. In October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a militant group founded by Tutsi refugees, invaded Rwanda. The RPF demanded a safe return to Rwanda and expected a role in the country's government. Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana was forced to negotiate a peace agreement with the RPF. Hutu extremists feared they would lose power, and formed militias, called Interahamwe. These militias believed in Hutu supremacy and promoted violence against Tutsis. On the evening of April 6, 1994, a private jet carrying President Habyarimana was shot out of the sky, killing everyone on board. Immediately, extremists within

the government and the media blamed the RPF for the attack. Militias set up roadblocks around the capital city of Kigali. Their perceived enemies—Tutsi leaders and Hutu who did not believe in ethnic-based nationalism—were targeted for killing. By the morning of April 7, the genocide had begun. Violence quickly spread throughout the country. The RPF believed the violence violated the ceasefire, and they renewed their campaign against Rwandan government forces.

The Interahamwe—promising land and wealth—recruited able-bodied Hutu (both male and female) to participate in the genocide. Radio and newspapers used propaganda to incite attacks on Tutsi. Tutsi were hunted, tortured, raped, and murdered. Neighbors, friends, and family members turned on one another. Much of the killing was perpetrated with machetes and other farm tools. Tutsi sought refuge in churches, schools, and stadiums. During prior instances of mass violence, churches offered sanctuary, yet, the militias attacked them during the genocide. Schools, stadiums, and churches became the site of mass graves. Over the course of approximately 100 days, Hutu extremists murdered at least 900,000 Tutsi and Hutu moderates. The genocide in Rwanda is the fastest genocide in modern history.

Despite the presence of United Nations peacekeeping forces in Kigali before and during the genocide, there was no international intervention. The genocide ended in July 1994, when the RPF took control of the country. By that time, over 900,000 people had been murdered. Several million Rwandans, mostly Hutu, fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In refugee camps along the border, Hutu extremists continued to attack Tutsi. Perpetrators who remained in Rwanda were arrested and jailed in makeshift prisons. In 1994, the United Nations established

Teaching with Testimony

Middle School Activity | Reconciliation & Healing



the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. High-level perpetrators were put on trial. Later, a hybrid judicial system, the Gacaca Courts, were established. Over one million suspected perpetrators were tried by the Gacaca. Despite these efforts, many perpetrators have never been put on trial.

Sources:

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- <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/armenian-genocide>
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- Armenian National Institute, <https://www.armenian-genocide.org/>
- Brown, Sara E. *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Rescuers and Perpetrators*. Routledge, 2019.
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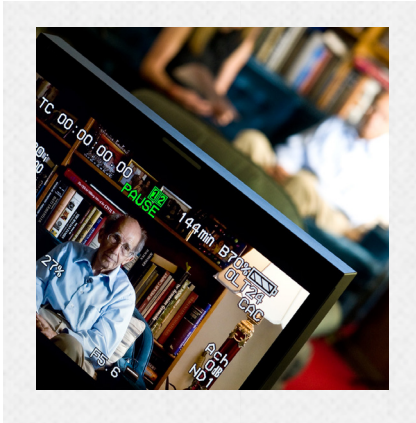
Procedure

Ask

- 1 The teacher will ask students to think about a time that they wronged a friend or family member and what they did to make amends. Students will be given several minutes to free write in their journals.
- 2 The teacher will call on volunteers to share their ideas. As students are sharing, s/he will write down ways of making amends that are highlighted in student stories.
- 3 The teacher will ask students to look at the list s/he has created and solicit additional ways that people can make amends for injustices they have perpetrated. Answers may include admitting what you did wrong, saying sorry, being especially nice, helpful, or generous and repaying the person for lost or damaged property.

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Middle School Activity | Reconciliation & Healing



Analyze

- 4 The teacher will introduce the term “reconciliation” and ask if students know what the term means. Working with students, s/he will write a class definition for the term. The teacher will ask students whether they believe reconciliation is a sufficient way to deal with past human rights abuses and why or why not.
- 5 The teacher will explain that many individuals and nations have made efforts at reconciliation after conflicts such as mass atrocities and genocides. These include Armenia and Rwanda.
- 6 The teacher will explain that students will watch four eyewitness testimonies from survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide. He/she will provide a brief description of these events to provide context for students.
- 7 Students will view clips of four eyewitness testimonies focusing on healing from past abuses.
- 8 Students will complete a graphic organizer that helps them understand the nature of the human rights abuses that occurred and what the witness believes can or should be done to help individuals and countries heal and move forward.
- 9 The teacher will lead a class discussion to highlight the variety of ways that individuals have made reparations and healed after conflicts.

Apply

- 10 The teacher will direct students to think about what they’ve just learned about promoting healing after injustices have been committed.
- 11 Working in groups of four, students will brainstorm a range of conflicts in their school or broader community as well as possible positive responses they can use to resolve these conflicts.
- 12 Each group will decide which conflict to focus on and which of their possible responses they feel would be most effective and share it with the full class.

Act

- 13 The teacher will explain that students will share their research findings in the form of posters to hang around the school.

Teaching with Testimony

Middle School Activity | Reconciliation & Healing



Each poster will include a summary of the conflict and highlight a possible response that could help the community come together and move forward. At the bottom of the poster, students should include a quote or statement to inspire their peers to take responsibility for their actions and make amends as needed.

- 14 In pairs (half of each group of four), students will collaborate on their posters and then present them to the class.
- 15 Students will hang their posters around the school and/or community to share what they've learned and influence others in their community to take positive action.
- 16 If possible, students can also share what they've learned during a school-wide meeting.

Connections

Connection to Student Lives	Connection to Contemporary Events	Connection to the Future
Students will begin by considering how they have made amends after they have wronged someone.	Students will connect responses to injustice during various genocides and possible responses to modern social injustices.	Students will develop their own sense of what amends are suitable for wrongs committed, which will guide their future actions.

Clips of Testimony

■ Malka Baran

Malka Baran remembers working with children in a displaced persons camp and notes that it was this work that helped her resume a normal life after the Holocaust.

■ George Haig

George Haig talks about Turkish denial regarding the Armenian genocide and the need for the Turks to apologize in order for there to be reconciliation.

■ Diane Uwera

Diane Uwera talks about her feelings about the efforts at reconciliation made by the government after the Rwandan Tutsi genocide.

■ Edouard Bamporiki

Edouard Bamporiki talks about the shame and guilt he felt after his fellow Hutus murdered Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide and how he believes that reconciliation may be achieved.

Survivor and Witness Biographies



STUDENT HANDOUT

Malka Baran (née Klin), daughter of Izak and Bella, was born on January 30, 1927, in Warsaw, Poland. In 1928, the family moved to Czestochowa, Poland, where Izak had a small printer's shop and her younger brother, Heniek, was born. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and within days, Czestochowa was occupied. After the passage of anti-Jewish decrees, Malka's school was closed, Jews were forced to wear armbands, and Izak's printing machinery was confiscated. The Klin family were then forced to become laborers. The family was forced into the Czestochowa ghetto in 1941. In 1943, ghetto liquidation began; Malka's mother was deported to Treblinka, an extermination camp, where she was murdered. Malka, Izak, and Heniek were forced into a smaller ghetto, where they were sent to work as forced laborers. After Izak and Heniek were executed, and Malka was deported to the Tschenstochau labor camp. Malka worked in a munitions factory until January 1945, when she was liberated by Soviet Armed Forces. Malka worked a series of jobs for the Soviet Armed Forces until the war ended in May 1945; she later went to the Wegscheid displaced persons' camp in Austria. At Wegscheid, Malka worked with children. While there, met Morris Baran, who would become her husband. They settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Malka earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood studies and a master's degree in special education. At the time of her interview, she and Morris had two daughters and six grandchildren. This interview was conducted on January 6, 1997, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

George Haig was born George Chamichian in 1901 in the city of Gaziantep, Turkey previously known as Aintab in the Ottoman Empire. His parents were Armenian. He was exiled to Syria in 1915 and became an interpreter for the British Army Colonel T.E. Lawrence, who led irregular forces against the Turks in World War I. Mr. Haig moved to the United States in 1920, attended Boston University and served in the U.S. Army. He went back to the Middle East in the 1930s and was a journalist and military adviser to Arab forces in Palestine. When he returned to the U.S., he settled in New England where he worked as an art dealer, a rug merchant and a radio broadcaster. During World War II, Mr. Haig went into the Army again and served with military intelligence and the Office of Strategic Services in the U.S. and Europe.

He achieved the rank of colonel before retiring from the Army Reserves in 1956. Col. Haig moved to the Washington, DC metro area in the 1950s and was business manager of the Columbia Preparatory School in Washington until retiring in 1961. Col.

Diane Uwera, was born on December 7, 1988, in Butare, Rwanda, to a Tutsi family. At age 5, when the Genocide against the Tutsi began in Rwanda and Tutsis were targeted for mass murder, she and her family were forced to hide in a nearby school. On the third night at the school, she was separated from her family and later discovered that many of the people who were also taking refuge in the school had been murdered, including her sister. A lady who lived nearby and knew her family rescued and hid her. When the conflict ended, the same woman took her to an orphanage. Over the next two months, she lived in two different orphanages before being relocated to a third orphanage in Burundi; there, she was found by her cousin. Diane returned to Rwanda and went to live with her aunt in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. She lived with her aunt until she was 17 and then she relocated to the United States to live with another aunt. The interview with Diane took place on December 6, 2010, in Houston, Texas.

Edouard Bamporiki, son of Fabien and Josephine, was born on December 24, 1983, in Kirambo, a small village in Western Rwanda. Edouard is an award-winning filmmaker, actor, and poet. As a young Rwandan artist, he received national and international attention for his stories of hope, unity, and reconciliation. His feature debut in Lee Isaac Chung's film, *Munyurangabo*, yielded him a Best Actor nomination at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2008, he wrote, directed, produced, and starred in *Long Coat*, which won first prize in African Film at the Focus Future Film Festival in New York. In 2011, he was featured in the film *Kinyarwanda*. His films also include *Rwanda: Take Two* (2010) and *Umutoma* (2015). In 2013, Bamporiki ran for and won a seat in Rwanda's parliament, becoming its youngest member. He is also part of an organization called Youth Connekt that works to spread the message of reconciliation and unity to Rwandan youth. This interview was conducted on December 20, 2014, in Kigali, Rwanda.

Healing after Human Rights Abuses



STUDENT HANDOUT

Witness	What was the nature of the human rights abuse the individual suffered and/or witnessed?	What does the witness believe can or should be done to help her/his nation heal from these abuses?
Malka Baran		
George Haig		
Diane Uwera		
Edouard Bamporiki		

National Standards

College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

D2.Civ.7.6-8 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school and community settings.

D2.Civ.10.6-8 Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D4.2.6-8 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

D4.4.6-8 Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

D4.7.6-8 Assess their individual and collective capabilities to take action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

D4.8.6-8 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms and schools, and in out-of-school civic contexts.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

RI.8.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

SL.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.