



But I Live Educational Resources

A Focus on David's Testimony

Reading Testimony: Optional Themes to Highlight

Ensure that students recognize that these events do not happen in solitude: there is a lasting impact on the people and communities involved.

What follows is a selection of topics from David's testimony, which could be highlighted during or after reading. This is a broad guide offering possible starting points for discussion.

As always, make sure to adopt a trauma-informed pedagogy for challenging subject matter.

Quotations to Consider

- “You can't forget it. Always you grind it, and it grinds you.” Emphasize lasting impacts of trauma.
- “I was born in the same place as my parents, but in a different country.” Emphasize changing borders.
- “Jews could not live in rural areas.” Emphasize loss of land, community, economy, food sources—disconnection from food sources made starvation likely.
- “In the morning, we had a home and a nice garden. We were a normal family. By that night, we owned only what we could carry on a horse cart.” Prompt students to consider what they would pack, and how much these things would weigh. Make physical: fill a wheelbarrow with a heavy weight and ask students to do one lap. Calculate how many laps David's journey to the river likely took.
- “From that moment on, we were always running downhill, and there was no way for us to stop.” Discuss agency and powerlessness.
- “‘They are killing us.’ That was the message that he left there, written with his blood.” Discuss trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- “We had children, we had parents, we had belongings. You couldn't take all the things. What do you throw away? Your children, parents, your belongings?” Discuss the key components of life, and how taking away these foundations affects victims.
- “The reality is we left her in the ditch near the road. She knew. That was the end of a life. One of the six million.” Discuss trauma, PTSD.
- “My father saw this and took the children from his arms for a while... to help him survive.” Discuss how community and acts of courage saved lives.
- “So, we had to have the courage to leave.” How do you make decisions in a life or death situation?
- “The soldier might not want to miss an opportunity to beat you.” Discuss trauma, PTSD. Remember different communities/people have different experiences with military, police, etc. and thus react differently to law enforcement.
- “They took thousands of people and sent them to a place in the middle of nowhere without any resources. In order to survive, we had to disobey their rules. You can call it resistance, you can call it survival instinct, whatever you like. Running away was resistance. Finding food was resistance. Living through the horror was resistance.” Discuss resistance, dispossession, mass migration, genocide, etc.



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- “I cannot count the number of times I was truly afraid for my life.” Discuss the physiological impacts of trauma, individual and intergenerational, PTSD.
- “I could hear... soldiers coming; I could hear them screaming and shooting in the air.” Discuss the remnants of PTSD (for instance, fireworks, loud noises etc.).
- “It was dusk when I saw them hanging.” Discuss PTSD from witnessing death, violence.
- “So we crossed over the river, to... where I was to face new challenges.” Discuss immigration, support services, etc.

Further Discussion

- David’s second grade teacher visited David at his home to say that David could no longer attend school. What are the long term effects of being denied education? David had previously been an award-winning student; how does this event impact him?
- Why was David grateful that his teacher came to his home? (Allowed David to avoid feeling ashamed in front of the class.) What about the children who did not receive this grace? Discuss the impact of shame, dehumanization.
- Discuss resistance and rescue: David’s family relied on the help of neighbours. David’s family was able to use a summer kitchen; without this shelter they may not have survived.
- Romanian soldiers: what happened to them after? Antisemitic views did not dissipate on Liberation Day. Following the Holocaust, denial was prevalent in Romania.
- Discuss the lasting impacts of starvation (physical/mental). For example, many people who suffered starvation in childhood often hoard food as adults.
- It is sometimes necessary to break rules to survive: discuss resistance or civil disobedience. Pair with discussion on the social contract/democracy—is everyone represented and if not, do they have a right/obligation to disobey?
- David speaks about wrapping his feet in barbed wire to keep the rags together—discuss long-term health impacts.
- David has a dislocated arm which never healed properly—discuss the lasting physical impacts of trauma.
- David’s family begins their journey “home”—but where to go? Discuss the desecration of community, loss of home, etc.