

Procedures
Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida

**The Holocaust
Museum**
& EDUCATION CENTER
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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Visiting the Holocaust Museum and/or Box Car can be a difficult and emotional time for many people. Our programs are designed to help you understand the history of the Holocaust and its impact on us today. We encourage questions and discussion as much as possible, but we also ask that you respect your fellow classmates, as well as the memory of the people affected by this tragedy, by keeping your comments relevant.

(Please) Dos and Don'ts of the Boxcar

- DO take students into the boxcar, although no more than 15 at a time.
- DO reinforce the behavioral expectation of showing respect for what this symbolizes.
- DO encourage students to reflect on the artifact itself and its place in history.
- DON'T take food, gum, candy, or drink into the boxcar.
- DON'T wear high heels inside the boxcar.
- DON'T bring anything inside the boxcar; writing/reflection activities to take place outside the boxcar.
- Don't stray from the group
- Don't interrupt the person speaking
- Don't tell jokes or make rude comments
- Don't have cell phone or other electronic devices unless approved by a teacher for the lesson

Boxcar Transportation & Education Project purpose

To increase exposure of students and community members to the history and lessons of the Holocaust by taking history to them through our iconic artifact, an authentic boxcar.

Teaching the Holocaust

Although teaching the Holocaust is mandatory in the state of Florida, many teachers may wonder how to effectively share this topic with students. We recommend the following from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Educator Resource page (<http://www.ushmm.org/educators>)

1. Why Teach About the Holocaust? (<http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/why-teach-about-the-holocaust>)

Each teacher should think about *why* they want to teach the topic and what they hope their students will gain. To this end, teachers should create a **rationale statement** that will guide them in how to structure their study of the Holocaust. In planning this statement, teachers should consider the following:

- Why should students learn this history?
- What are the most significant lessons students should learn from a study of the Holocaust?
- Why is a particular reading, image, document, or film an appropriate medium for conveying the lessons about the Holocaust that you wish to teach?

Once a rationale statement has been decided upon, creating and choosing appropriate learning activities becomes easier.

2. What Should you Teach (<http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/new-to-teaching-the-holocaust>)

- Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust
- Age Appropriateness

The USHMM also defines **14 Methodological Considerations** that all teachers should read and use as a guide in creating their lessons. You can view all 14 at

www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/guidelines/. Based on these considerations, the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida asks that teachers focus on the following when using the museum and/or boxcar as a teaching tool:

1. **Strive for precision of language:** define the Holocaust, the Holocaust is complex and there are not simple answers to your students' questions. They should know that not all victims of the Holocaust were sent to concentration camps, not all rode in box cars, not all Germans were Nazis, etc.
2. **Contextualize the history you are teaching:** do not teach that it was inevitable, portray all four categories of participants (victims, perpetrators, rescuers, bystanders) as human, make sure students have the necessary background information before visiting the museum or boxcar and are prepared for what they will see and learn.
3. **Be sensitive to appropriate written and audiovisual content:** avoid comparisons of pain, be aware of the age level and maturity of your students and choose content appropriately. Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson.
4. **Select appropriate learning activities:** do not romanticize history, translate statistics into people and highlight individuals, remember your rationale and choose activities that will encourage critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the Holocaust. Activities that trivialize this history, such as word games and puzzles, should not be used. Avoid simulation activities and "experiments." Although these activities may engage the students, they may forget the lesson, or worse, feel that they understand what it was like during the Holocaust. To this end, *please do not try to put many students in the box car so they "know what it was like."* Students will have an opportunity to see the interior of

the box car, but that should be in conjunction with the reading of a first person narrative or presentation of a survivor, not as a simulation.

5. **Reinforce the objectives of your lesson:** always conclude the teaching of the Holocaust with a time for reflection and discussion. Students should have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings and they reflect on what they have gained as a result of their study of the Holocaust.