

USC Shoah Foundation

The Institute for Visual History and Education

TALK AND TAKE ACTION:

PARENTS' & CAREGIVERS' GUIDE TO COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM

nickelodeonTM

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**ZERO TOLERANCE
FOR ANTISEMITISM**

Nickelodeon's Talk and Take Action: Parents' & Caregivers' Guide to Countering Antisemitism

Antisemitism, the judgment and unfair treatment of Jews, comes from a hatred of Jewish people, what they believe, their traditions, culture, and heritage. Antisemitism is an unkind, upsetting, and scary thing for someone to experience and it can happen in many ways, including with hateful or untrue words and comments, bullying, physical aggression, and vandalism. Today, antisemitic incidents are on the rise in America and across the world.

This guide, focused on countering antisemitism, has been written in partnership with USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education, a foundation that offers multimedia learning opportunities based on the personal accounts of witnesses to genocide, with its Stronger Than Hate initiative and award-winning IWitness website. The Institute's mission is to develop empathy, understanding, and respect through testimony. It is designed to provide parents and caregivers with the tools, tips, and language needed to talk with their children about the discrimination and hate directed at the Jewish community in the United States.

We recognize having conversations focused on discrimination and hate can be challenging at any age. We hope this guide will help parents and caregivers feel supported as they navigate these tough topics with their kids.

Finally, we want our families to leave these conversations empowered to make change. This guide provides simple, but significant, action steps families can take together to create a more inclusive world.

TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

When preparing to talk about difficult or potentially triggering topics such as discrimination and violence, with children, it is important to frame discussions in ways that will maximize their opportunities to learn while at the same time ensuring they won't leave the conversation confused, afraid, or traumatized. These guides include descriptions of discriminatory acts and persecution, which can be challenging for all of us to read and talk about. Here are tips you can use to support conversations with kids about tough topics.

1. Check in with yourself first. Take stock of your own feelings and perceptions related to the information included in these guides. Be aware of emotions that you may have when talking about these topics and acknowledge your own biases. If your family has been personally impacted by discrimination or hate, it may be difficult to revisit those painful experiences. Consider sharing your thoughts with another trusted adult before engaging with your own children.

2. Review the guides. Being here, reading this, means you care and your willingness to learn the skills needed to hold these conversations with your kids sends a powerful message. These topics are challenging and you may need help navigating them. If that's the case, take time to look through the Talk and Take Action Guides. Each guide will provide you with an introduction to its topic, a historical and contemporary context for why these conversations need to take place, and how you, as a family, can take action. For Jewish families, you may already be having these conversations at home. Focus on the information that you feel is most meaningful and relevant to your child and your conversation's focus.

3. Lay the foundation. Before diving into tough topics like discrimination, bias, and hate, it's important to lay the foundation for a safe and secure dialogue. Begin by letting kids know what you'd like to talk about and make sure they know no question is off limits. Speak calmly and clearly, and use reassuring words and gestures. It might also be helpful to have general, more informal conversations about fairness and equality before approaching these topics. Talk with your child about your family values, how you cultivate kindness, and what you admire about those who are caring, compassionate, and equitable.

4. Prepare to be transparent. Talking honestly and openly about difficult topics with children models positive behaviors that foster open lines of communication, build trust, and strengthen bonds. Let kids know that these kinds of conversations are difficult, even for adults. Acknowledging this difficulty tells kids that even though a topic may be uncomfortable, it is important to talk about. As you are tackling tough topics at home, you shouldn't attempt or expect to cover everything in a single conversation. These kinds of conversations will be ongoing. Aim to keep them age appropriate and accessible.

5. Gauge what they know. Kids gain information implicitly, or informally, through what they see, hear, and experience. Asking children what they already know about a topic is a great starting point for conversation. Expand on what they bring up to deepen their understanding and fill in their knowledge gaps. Children often notice and absorb much more than we expect.

6. Lean in and listen. In a world full of distractions, now is the time to give children your undivided attention. Encourage them to ask questions, and let them know you'll do your best to answer them. Pay attention to the questions they ask and any emotional responses that may be evoked by the information being presented. This means not only listening to their words, but looking at their body language for cues about how they are feeling. When your child shows signs they are feeling uneasy, sad, or scared, reassure them that they are safe and cared for.

7. Learn with them. Answer children's questions as clearly and honestly as you can, using kid-friendly language and definitions. Don't feel obligated to answer right away. Slow down, take a pause, and repeat the question. This ensures that you don't answer right away just for the sake of answering and providing information that is incorrect. And, if you don't know the answer to a question, that's OK! Saying "I don't know" creates an opportunity for you to learn together. If you are caught off guard by a difficult question and are unsure of how to respond in the moment, try one of these:

- *"That's a really big question! Let's explore it together."*
- *"That's a great question. Let's find out more together."*

8. Consider and validate their feelings. *"It's not right that people are being mean to Jewish people!"* Validate their feelings and explain that being upset about this means this is something important that we need to pay attention to. Allowing them to express how they feel lets them know that it's OK to feel emotions such as sadness or anger. Some children may be more likely to suppress their emotions due to learned gender, social, or cultural roles.

9. Help them frame the situation. Providing kids with context is useful when helping them make sense of acts of hate or violence. If they ask why someone would direct hate at someone based on their religion or culture, you could say, "Some people wrongly believe that certain religious practices or cultural groups are better than others. They may have gotten these wrong ideas from stereotypes we see and hear in the media. Without the correct information, they sometimes commit acts of violence against other people and think it's OK based on their beliefs."

10. Empower them to make a difference. Tackling tough topics can sometimes leave us feeling sad, angry, or hopeless. While these feelings are valid, we can use them to engage in meaningful actions to fight hate and discrimination. For example, learning about and standing in solidarity with others or volunteering time to a cause can make a big difference. If you need support, each guide includes a list of actions you, as a family, can take to leave the conversation feeling empowered and prepared to build a more just and compassionate world.

An Important Note About This Guide: While this guide on countering antisemitism includes brief mentions of the [Holocaust](#) (the murder of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators), it does not provide context, in-depth history, descriptions, or graphic images. The atrocities of the Holocaust are difficult for adults to comprehend and discuss, and many parents may choose to wait until their children are older to talk about it.

If now is the appropriate time to have a conversation with your children about the Holocaust or World War II, you may want to begin by asking them what they know. As your child talks, listen for misinformation, misconceptions, and any underlying fears or concerns. There are children's books written for different ages included in the [Resources section](#) of this guide, which you can use to correct misinformation.

ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM AND ITS ROOT CAUSE

Anti-Judaism

Prejudice against Jews because of their religious beliefs and practices. Opposition to Judaism by people who hold different religious beliefs and view Jewish beliefs and practices as inferior.

Antisemitism

The judgment and unfair treatment of Jews. Antisemitism comes from a hatred of Jewish people, what they believe, their traditions, culture, and heritage.

Bias

A tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of or against a particular thing or group of people. Some people might be biased against a certain race, ethnicity, culture, or religion because they have been told negative things about that group.

Conspiracy Theory

A belief that a group of people are secretly trying to harm someone or have caused a harmful or tragic event. Conspiracy theories often are false, twist the truth, and are not supported by evidence.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity, like their race, gender, ability, religion, or culture. Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

Stereotype

A widely held and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group. Racial, religious, and cultural stereotypes are harmful, shape interactions between people, impact policy, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

There are over 7 million Jews in the United States. However, not all Jewish people celebrate the Jewish religion. Jewish people can identify with the culture, heritage, and tradition linked with Judaism without following the religious teachings. While **anti-Judaism** is prejudice against Jews because of their religious beliefs, **antisemitism** comes from a hatred for all Jewish people, what they believe, and their traditions, culture, and heritage.

Antisemitism has deep roots in history, which is why it is often referred to as “the longest hatred.” It dates back to ancient times and stems from Jewish peoples’ dedication to their religion, beliefs, and culture, and their refusal to conform to the way others lived and what others believed in. There were times when Jewish people were denied citizenship, unable to own land, obtain loans, and even live in certain neighborhoods. During the 1900s, antisemites argued that Jewishness wasn’t a religion or a culture but a race. They used this argument to convince others that non-Jewish white people were superior to, or better than, Jews. The false belief that there was a Jewish race, separate from the white race, later became the basis for the [Holocaust](#).

Over centuries, many negative **stereotypes** and **conspiracy theories** about Jews developed, grew, and spread all over the world. Because of this, Jews have faced **bias**, blame, **discrimination**, and violence for hundreds of years. Following World War II, the horrors of the Holocaust and the cruelty of the [Nazi Party](#) created a universal sense of shame around antisemitism. People who were once openly antisemitic in their actions knew their views would no longer be welcomed or accepted by others. However, the public shame associated with being antisemitic did not make the hate go away. Instead, it shifted and changed over time to be less direct, outward, and observable.

Today, antisemitism can be seen in people’s passing comments and jokes, in stereotypes on shows and throughout media, and in the displaying of commonly known hate symbols, which are used to intimidate and make Jewish people feel afraid. Regardless of how antisemitism appears, the root cause is the same. Antisemitism, like all forms of hatred, comes from fear of those we see as different from ourselves, the false ideas a person has about another person or a group of people, and a lack of understanding about that person’s or group of peoples’ experiences and perspectives. This is why it is important to get to know others who are different from us and learn about their experiences. We often find we have more in common with people than we think.

ANTISEMITISM TODAY AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE ACTION

White Supremacy

The false belief that white people, Christianity, and Western cultural practices are better than all other races, religions, and cultural practices. White supremacy has created norms, policies, and even laws that benefit white people and overlook or harm people of color, people of Jewish and Muslim faith, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.

Antisemitism is not just a thing of the past. Today, many **white supremacy** groups believe in conspiracy theories that blame not only Jews, but also African Americans, immigrants, and even the federal government for what goes wrong in the world. These conspiracy theories spread untrue thoughts and ideas about others, which lead to more biases and ultimately, more hate.

According to the FBI, Jews continue to be the most attacked religious group in the United States. This data shows that a Jewish person is at least three times more likely to experience a hate crime than a member of any other religious group. In 2021, 40% of Jewish Americans reported hearing antisemitic comments, insults, or threats within the last 12 months. That's almost half of the Jewish American population!

Often, antisemitism is based on stereotypes and biases people learn from the environment they grew up in, the people they interact with, and through the media. A lot of times people use the internet to share thoughts and comments they know wouldn't be accepted in everyday conversation and to connect to others who share the same views. In 2018 alone, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) counted a total of 4.2 million antisemitic messages shared across Twitter. When seemingly small acts of hate, like a tweet, are seen as normal or labeled "not a big deal," it tells people taking part in that hate that their actions are allowed. This means they'll be more likely to do it again, or feel it is acceptable to engage in other, larger acts of hate like verbal abuse or physical attacks.

Antisemitism doesn't just hurt Jewish people. A lot of the time, it is a sign of a bigger issue. Many people who are antisemitic also share the same hatred for other groups of people who are different from themselves, like Black people, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and LGBTQ+ people. The good news is that if we speak up and let others know even the smallest acts of hate are not welcome, we can stop it from growing and spreading. That is why it is important to raise awareness around antisemitism, amplify our voices, and stand firm against any form of hatred.

Parent/Caring Adult Tips

- With a critical eye, practice examining the media and the news together. This could mean taking a few minutes to reflect on a story's purpose, calling out any exaggerated or dramatic language, or checking the facts of the story with a trusted internet source.
- Even when you come across points of view you do not agree with, discuss challenging topics with your children in a respectful way.

HISTORY OF ACTIVISM AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

Activism

The actions people take to change policies, laws, or rules that are unfair or unjust.

In the United States, there is a long and powerful history of **activism** against antisemitism. People engage in activism when they want to bring about political or social change. Below are just a few of the many examples of Jewish activism.



1927: Sapiro v. Ford

Aaron Sapiro, a Jewish-American activist, filed a lawsuit against Henry Ford and his newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, claiming the newspaper published comments that were insulting and wrong about Judaism (a religion practiced by Jewish people). Although the case ended in a mistrial, Louis Marshall, a leading Jewish-American lawyer, convinced Ford to make a public apology for his antisemitism. This case helped establish the belief that hate speech is harmful and those who used it can be held responsible.



1880s: Emma Lazarus

Emma Lazarus was a well-known Jewish American writer and activist. She spoke out publicly against the treatment of Jews in Europe and the growing antisemitism she saw in the United States. In 1882, Lazarus published one of the first literary works to explore the struggles of Jewish Americans. She is most famous for her poem documenting the immigration experience, "The New Colossus," which is engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty. Her most notable line reads: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."



1934: Hank Greenberg refuses to play baseball on Yom Kippur

Hank Greenberg, a first baseman for the Detroit Tigers, attracted national attention when he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur, Judaism's most sacred day of the year.

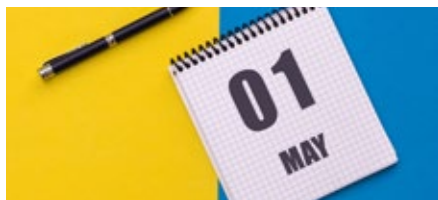
1945: Bess Myerson

Bess Myerson was the first Jewish woman to be crowned Miss America. The pageant's director encouraged her to change her name to "Beth Merrick," so it sounded less Jewish, and more "English" or "American." Wanting to represent her Jewish American identity proudly, she refused. After winning the crown, she experienced many antisemitic acts and was disappointed to find many of the opportunities usually associated with winning the crown, like speaking engagements and sponsorships, limited.



1960s: The Civil Rights Movement

Answering the call from the Black community, Jewish Americans—including rabbis, scholars and teachers of Judaism—joined the Civil Rights Movement. Many American Jews helped to form and fund organizations promoting civil rights and joined in marches and protests.



2003: Jewish American Heritage Month

In April 2006, President George W. Bush declared May Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). It is run annually by a group of organizations, and celebrates American Jews' achievements and contributions to the United States.

1950s: ADL mounts the Crack the Quota Campaign

To fight anti-Jewish discrimination in employment, housing, and college and university admissions, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) launched its "Crack the Quota" campaign. Quotas, which were common at many well-known universities, were a way of limiting, or capping, the number of Jewish people they would accept. The campaign was part of the ADL's mission to fight hate against Jewish people and to seek justice and fair treatment for all.



1993: "Not in Our Town" Movement

After a white supremacist group in Billings, Montana, threw a brick through a Jewish child's bedroom window, where an image of a menorah hung, a local newspaper began "Not in Our Town." This campaign asked residents—Jews and non-Jews alike—to place images of menorahs in their own windows. A large portion of the community participated, uniting against antisemitism.

2018: “No Place for Hate” Response to Tree of Life Synagogue Attack

After the Tree of Life Synagogue attack in Pittsburgh—the most violent assault on the Jewish community in American history—local businesses began displaying “No Place for Hate” signs in their windows. The Pittsburgh Steelers logo was recreated with a Jewish star, highlighting community support against antisemitism.

2020: Uptick in Hate Crimes Toward Jewish Americans

The FBI reports that more than 60% of all hate crimes against any religious group in the United States are directed toward Jewish Americans. In response to the rise of these hate crimes, the Department of Justice met with local and national Jewish organizations across the country to talk about the increase in attacks and how to prevent them. From these discussions, the Department decided they needed to prioritize investigating antisemitic crimes and prosecute those who commit them on a federal level, rather than a local one.



2019: The Department of Justice Summit on Combating Antisemitism

Speakers at the Department of Justice Summit on Combating Antisemitism talked about the increase in antisemitic events on college campuses, ways to fight antisemitic comments while respecting the First Amendment (freedom of speech), and looked closely at the Justice Department’s progress in bringing cases for crimes committed against Jewish people to trial.

2021: Preventing Antisemitic Hate Crimes Act

Members of Capitol Hill introduced the Preventing Antisemitic Hate Crimes Act. If passed into law, this act will make sure anti-Jewish hate crimes are reviewed speedily by the Department of Justice and are reported to Congress regularly. The Department will also provide state and local law enforcement across the country with support in preventing and responding to these types of crimes.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

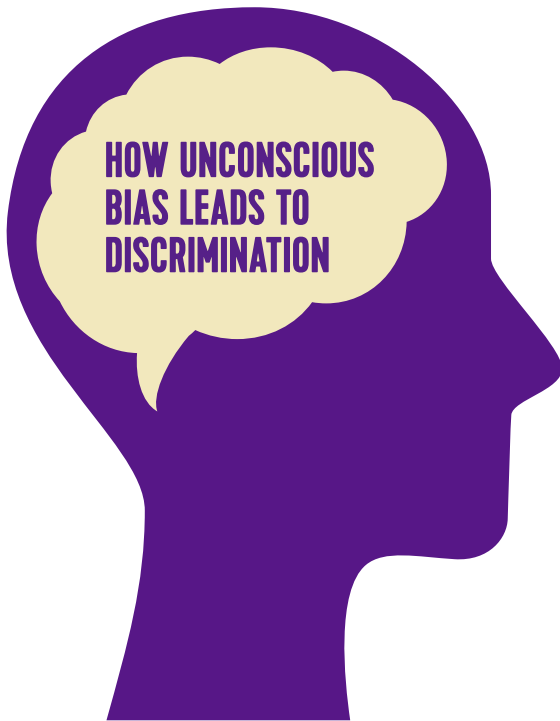
In many of these examples, there was a person, or a group of people, who knew something wasn’t right. Some were Jewish people protecting and standing up for their families and communities, others were non-Jewish people standing in solidarity with the Jewish community, and some included Jewish and non-Jewish people working together to spark change in policies, laws, and systems. Regardless of their culture and faith, to stand up to the unfairness they heard, saw or experienced, these activists took brave and meaningful actions that let others know antisemitism was not OK.

- Why do you think activism is an important part of making change?
- Can you think of an issue in your school or community that needs solving?
Whose help do you need to solve it?
- How do you think these activists felt? Why do you think they stood up and fought back?
What tools would they have needed?
- If you are Jewish, did you know about this history of activism? How does it make you feel?
What other Jewish activists do you know that are not listed here?

TAKING ACTION! DISCUSSION GUIDES

How can we counter antisemitism today? Below are three major actions you and your family can take to become an Upstander, which is defined as a person who speaks up or acts in support of an individual or cause. With each action below, you'll find questions to guide thoughtful discussion and reflection on how to take action against anti-Jewish hate.

STOPPING THE STEREOTYPE CYCLE



STEREOTYPE

Widely held, preconceived, and oversimplified image or idea about a person, group, or thing. Over time, stereotypes can become unconscious biases.



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

An automatic association or attitude about race or gender, for example. Operates beyond our control and awareness. Informs our perception of a person or social group. Can influence our decision making and behavior toward the target of the bias. Is a powerful predictor of our behavior.



PREJUDGING

An attitude about a person or group of people that is based on a belief or stereotype.



BEHAVIOR

Based on preconceptions and unchecked assumptions. Can create in-groups and out-groups by favoring one group over another.



DISCRIMINATION

An ACTION that follows prejudicial attitudes. Denial of opportunity or unequal treatment regarding selection, promotion, etc.

CAREGIVER REFLECTION

What is a Jewish stereotype you see or hear most often in books, movies, and conversation? If you're part of the Jewish community, how does it make you feel? What have you done to navigate these feelings? If you are not part of the Jewish community, how do you think people in the Jewish community feel about these stereotypes?

Stereotypes are thoughts or ideas about a person or a group of people that are broad, untrue, and don't take a person's or groups' individuality, or differences, into account. These stereotypes seep into our everyday thinking, and create automatic or unconscious thoughts or biases for or against groups of people. When left unchecked, these unconscious biases can lead us to prejudge a person just because they belong to a particular group, culture, or religion. These prejudgments can influence the decisions we make about a person or group without even knowing them and they can impact our behavior. The actions that we take based on these biases and prejudgments can lead to acts of discrimination. This is a cycle that begins with a simple stereotype. Here are some things we can do to stop this cycle:

- Listen for stereotypes and disrespectful language in your conversations with others.
- Look for and call out stereotypes and disrespectful language in books, on shows, and in the media.
- Be aware of your own thinking, and ask yourself where your ideas about other people come from.
- Learn about other people before making judgments about them.
- Parents and caregivers, be aware that you are constantly modeling behaviors for your children—your actions can serve as a powerful tool to combat bias.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Have you ever had a prejudgmental thought or idea about someone? How did that thought change after you got to know them?
- Has someone ever had a prejudgmental thought or idea about you? How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think it is important to understand the perspectives of other people's cultures and backgrounds? What can you do in your own life to learn about and support others' thoughts and ideas?

CAREGIVER REFLECTION

Identify a moment where you unfairly prejudged someone. Where did that judgment come from? At that moment, did you realize you were making a prejudgment? If so, how did you respond? Did your thinking shift or change? If it didn't, what might you try to shift your thinking when future judgments occur?

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH OTHERS

Bystander

A person who is present when a harmful event or bullying is taking place or who knows about it happening without participating in it.

Solidarity

Showing your support for and taking action against those being treated unfairly.

Upstander

A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

What do you do when you see or hear something that is not right, fair or kind? Some people may turn the other way, pretend they didn't see or hear it or keep to themselves. These behaviors are bystander behaviors. A **bystander** is a person who sees or hears a problem knows it is happening, but doesn't do anything to change it or make it better. Someone may be a bystander because they are scared or aren't sure what to say. An **Upstander**, on the other hand, is someone who speaks up when they see or hear a problem and tries to make it right through their words and actions.

In 1993, a child in Billings, Montana, experienced an act of antisemitism when he hung a picture of a menorah in his window to celebrate the Jewish holiday Hanukkah. Someone saw the picture of the menorah and threw a brick through the child's window as a way to show their hate for the Jewish religion.

In response to this antisemitic act, the local newspaper began "Not in Our Town." This campaign asked the town's residents—both Jewish and non-Jewish people—to place pictures of menorahs in their own windows to show support for the Jewish community. Over 10,000 people participated. This large number of people coming together showed that even small acts can have a big impact. These people were **Upstanders** and, through their actions, united in **solidarity** with the Jewish community against antisemitism to demonstrate that Jewish hate is not welcome in their town.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do you think the child felt after someone threw a brick through his window? What would you do or say to make him feel better?
- Why do you think the person threw the brick through the child's window?
- If this happened in your community, what could you do to be an Upstander? How could you encourage members of your community to be Upstanders, too?
- Is there an issue or a problem you've seen your community come together to solve?
- What else would you like to know about Jewish traditions and customs? If you and your family are Jewish, how would you want those around you to show they care about your traditions or customs? Are there ways to share these traditions with others?

CAREGIVER REFLECTION

When parents and caregivers model how to show solidarity to children, young people can see themselves as helpers. Think about the last time you showed solidarity toward others. Reflect on how you felt and the impact of your actions on others. What would you like your children to do if they witness hate or harmful acts? What would you tell them to encourage them to act in solidarity?

ACTION STEPS FOR FAMILIES TO COUNTER ANTISEMITISM

Being an Upstander is an important way to show your solidarity to those who are being treated unfairly. By speaking up and acting against antisemitism, we let those who spread hate know that their actions are not OK. Another way is to support and celebrate diversity by recognizing and respecting differences between people's perspectives, cultures, and beliefs. Taking the time to learn about other people's histories, traditions, celebrations and positive contributions is a valuable step to countering hate.

Here are several ways you can support and champion diversity:

- Commit to learning more about antisemitism as well as other forms of hate that exist using the links and suggestions found in the Resources section of this guide.
- Speak up against hate speech that targets people based on their religion, race, culture, or beliefs.
- Visit a Jewish history museum or cultural site to learn about Jewish peoples' experiences.
- Learn about holidays and religious celebrations that are different from your own traditions.
- Take note when the Jewish holidays occur on the calendar and be mindful of them when scheduling events. Also be mindful of holidays that other religious communities celebrate, such as Ramadan in the Muslim community and Diwali in the Hindu community.
- Participate in interfaith events in your community where people from different religious faiths celebrate together.
- Point out and talk about unfair stereotypes that may be portrayed in the media.
- If you and your family are Jewish, spark a conversation with another family and together share some of your favorite cultural traditions.

CAREGIVER REFLECTION

What are some ways you already work to champion diversity in your family? Based on your reading of this guide, what else would you like to do to celebrate diversity in your community?

REVIEW, REFLECT, AND REIMAGINE:

FAMILY REFLECTION JOURNAL

As a family, review and reflect on your conversation about stopping antisemitism, using the prompts and activities below. Brainstorm the things you can say and do to be an Upstander, learn more about Jewish religion, traditions and culture, and create signs of hope to counter hate.

UPSTANDER BRAINSTORM

Practice amplifying your voice to speak out against antisemitism. Imagine a situation where you see a person being picked on or talked down to just because they are Jewish. What would you say and do to be an Upstander?

Here are a few phrases that may be helpful to say in those kinds of situations:

- "That's not OK. Please stop it."
- "Your words are unkind and can hurt people, even if you don't mean it."
- "That doesn't sound true. It didn't feel good to hear you say that."

Write a few Upstander phrases of your own:



REASONS TO CELEBRATE

Jewish culture and religion celebrates values that are important to being a good friend, neighbor, and Upstander. Many holidays and traditions encourage ideas like being welcoming, showing kindness, feeling connected, and expressing thanks. Choose one of the traditional activities below to do as a family and spread the joy!

SUKKOT (soo-KOWT)

Sukkot, a Jewish festival of giving thanks, reminds families to be thankful for each other, their friends, and their food and shelter. It also honors the gathering of the harvest. It is celebrated by building a sukkah (soo-KAH), or shelter, outside in nature using all-natural materials like tree branches or leaves. A sukkah represents the kind of shelters built by Jewish people over 2000 years ago as they traveled through the desert to Israel. Have you ever built a sukkah to celebrate Sukkot? According to tradition, you should eat your meals and snacks in the Sukkot for seven days or, at the very least, use it to spend time talking with your friends and family or reading a book. (*The House on the Roof*, by David Adler, and *Shanghai Sukkah*, by Heidi Smyth Hyde, are great options!)



Gather some materials, find an open space, and build your own sukkah! If you don't have enough outdoor space or it isn't safe to build outside, you can build a mini-sukkah model together inside using any materials you have around the house. Some things to remember about your sukkah: It must be made using all-natural materials, it should have an opening at the top (so you can see the stars), and two openings at the sides to welcome friends and visitors. Sketch it out on blank paper, then get building!

HORA (hohr-uh)

The hora is a dance done at traditional Jewish weddings and other festive celebrations to express joy and celebrate community. It involves several people making a circle by linking arms or holding each other's shoulders and moving their feet in a "grapevine" motion. Gather your family and friends, check out a video on YouTube to learn the steps and hear the tune, and get moving! If you already know the steps, make sure to lead the way!

HACHNASAT ORCHIM (hach-nah-SAHT or-CHEEM)

Hachnasat orchim means, quite simply, welcoming guests. It is the Jewish value of making guests feel welcome, comfortable, and accepted. Through this value, children learn how to be good hosts. The idea goes beyond just welcoming visitors into your home; you can practice hachnasat orchim in your school, neighborhood, and larger community. Next time you meet someone new in town, introduce yourself, invite them over for a visit, and get to know them! How do you make your guests feel welcome? What else can you add to the list?

- Greet guests at the front door.
- Share your toys and games and take turns.
- Write and send thank you notes.
- Be mindful of guests’ dietary restrictions.
- _____
- _____
- _____

SIGNS OF HOPE TO COUNTER HATE

Think back to the story about the “Not in Our Town” movement. Create a sign or poster to put in your window that shows your solidarity with the Jewish community and other groups experiencing hate. Think about including positive messages and symbols of love, acceptance, and hope. Encourage a neighbor or friend to do the same!

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Anti-Judaism

Prejudice against Jews because of their religious beliefs and practices. Opposition to Judaism by people who hold different religious beliefs and view Jewish beliefs and practices as inferior.

Antisemite

A person who is hostile toward Jews, judges them, and treats them unfairly because of their religion or culture.

Antisemitism

Judgment and unfair treatment of Jews. Antisemitism can come from hatred of Jews' religious beliefs, their traditions, history and culture, and the inaccurate idea that Jews are their own separate race.

Bias

A tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of or against a particular thing or group of people. Some people might be biased against a certain race, ethnicity, culture, or religion because they have been told negative things about that group.

Bullying

When a person or a group of people makes someone feel hurt, afraid, or embarrassed on purpose or over and over again.

Bystander

A person who is present at an event or who knows about it happening without participating in it.

Conspiracy Theory

A belief that a group of people are secretly trying to harm someone or have caused a harmful or tragic event. Conspiracy theories often are false, twist the truth, and are not supported by evidence.

Dehumanization

A strategy used to change the way a person or group of people are viewed by others by making the person or group of people seem less human and more like animals or objects.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity, like their race, gender, ability, religion, or culture. Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

Hate Speech

Speech intended to offend, threaten, or insult an individual or group based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or other traits.

Holocaust*

The murder of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were also targeted by the Nazis.

Judaism

The religion practiced by Jewish people. It celebrates one God and follows religious teachings from the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew bible.

Nazi Party*

The Nazi party gained political power in Germany after World War I. The party's leader, Adolf Hitler, was a forceful dictator who hated Jewish people. The Nazi party passed laws that made it very difficult for Jews to take part in daily life.

Prejudice

Prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without enough knowledge or information. Prejudicial thinking is often based on stereotypes.

Racism

The belief that one race is better than another—and having the power to create systems (e.g., educational system, legal system, etc.) that support that belief.

Scapegoat

Blaming a person or group of people for something based on that person or group's identity when, in reality, the person or group is not responsible. The person or group being blamed is the "scapegoat." Scapegoating is used to shift peoples' negative feelings, like anger and hostility, onto the person or group of people being blamed.

Stereotype

A widely held and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group. Racial, religious, and cultural stereotypes are harmful, shape interactions between people, impact policy, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

Swastika* The swastika is an ancient symbol meaning good fortune and well-being, used in many different cultures for over 5,000 years, including in India, China, Africa, Europe, and Native America. It is still considered a sacred symbol in some religions. The symbol was stolen and used by the Nazis, and the meaning of the symbol changed. The swastika has been adopted by supremacist groups as a symbol of hate and to make people fearful.

Synagogue

A building or place of meeting for worship and religious instruction in the Jewish faith.

Upstander

A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

White Supremacist

A person or group of people who believe white people, Christianity, and Western cultural practices are better than all other races, religions and cultures. They think that anyone who is different from them is less than them — including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and Jews. While most Jewish people are seen as white, white supremacists believe a conspiracy theory that they are part of a plan to take down white people.

White Supremacy

The norms, laws, treatment, power, access, and opportunities that benefit white people and/or Western cultural practices at the expense of people of color and marginalized communities. It is rooted in the false belief that white people and dominant Western cultural norms are superior.

*Your kids may not be ready to learn about these topics, and these definitions are provided for background knowledge. Please adapt for their needs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Key Terms and Definitions

- [Echoes & Reflections: Audio Glossary](#)

IWitness—USC Shoah Foundation

- [Dr. Ruth](#): Discover clips of testimony, contextualizing resources, and other inspiring stories from the beloved Dr. Ruth including *Crocodile, You're Beautiful!*, *Roller-Coaster Grandma: The Amazing Story of Dr. Ruth* and her short, animated film, *Ruth: A Little Girl's Big Journey*.
Other animated stories at IWITNESS: [Lala, The Tattooed Torah](#)
- [Focal Point: Antisemitism](#): Discover USC Shoah Foundation resources for countering antisemitism.
- [The Willesden Project](#): Explore curated learning materials and activities to support teaching of *The Children of Willesden Lane* books, the Kindertransport, and other related themes.

Family Conversations

- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network Talking to Kids About Hate Crimes and Antisemitism](#)
- [ADL Talking to Young Children About Bias and Prejudice](#)

Taking Action Against Antisemitism

- [ADL Confronting Anti-Semitism Myths...Facts...](#)
- [Combating Hatred & Intolerance Tolerance #BeginsWithMe](#)
- [Learning for Justice Dealing with Dilemmas: Upstanders, Bystanders and Whistle-Blowers](#)
- [Not in Our Town, Billings, Montana](#): The short excerpt from the film *Not In Our Town* shows how ordinary citizens in Billings, Montana, joined together to stand up to hate when their neighbors were under attack by white supremacists.
- [Stop Bullying](#)
- [The Irena Sendler Project | Megan Felt | TEDxOverlandPark](#)
- [Words to Action: Empower Students to Take Action Against Antisemitism](#)

Learn More About Antisemitism and the Holocaust

- Explore more at [Echoes and Reflections](#), a site designed to empower middle and high school educators with dynamic classroom materials and professional development.
- [Nazi Racism: An Overview](#)
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum—Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)
- Explore the [U.S. Holocaust Museum's *Some Were Neighbors: Collaborators and Complicity*](#) online to learn more about the roles played by ordinary people in the Holocaust.

RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S READING LIST

RECOMMENDED CHILDREN'S BOOKS ADDRESSING JEWISH CULTURE AND IDENTITY, ANTISEMITISM, HISTORY, AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

Ages 4-8

I Love Jewish Faces, by Debra Darvick

Hold on To Your Music,
by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Shanghai Sukkah, by Heidi Smith Hyde

The Runaway Latkes, by Leslie Kimmelman

The Jewish Child's First Book of Why,
by Alfred J. Kolatch

Purim Superhero, by Elizabeth Kushner

Light the Lights! A Story About Celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas,
by Margaret Moorman

Hanukkah Moon, by Gosia Mosz

Benjamin and the Word,
by Daniel A. Olivas

The Lilly Cupboard: A Story of the Holocaust,
by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim

Mrs. Katz and Tush, by Patricia Polacco

The Keeping Quilt: 25th Anniversary Edition,
by Patricia Polacco

Chik Chak Shabbat, by Mara Rockliff

Day of Delight: A Jewish Sabbath in Ethiopia,
by Maxine Rose Schur

People, by Peter Spier

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat, by Simms Taback

Ages 8-12

Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust,
by Eve Bunting

Molly's Pilgrim, by Barbara Cohen

The Children of Willesden Lane: A True Story of Hope and Survival During World War II,
(middle school)
by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Lisa of Willesden Lane: A True Story of Music and Survival During World War II,
(upper elementary)
by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Refugee, by Alan Gratz

Elan Son of Two Peoples, by Heidi Smith Hyde

I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark,
by Debbie Levy

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry

The Storyteller's Beads, by Jane Kurtz

Kristallnacht, The Night of Broken Glass: Igniting the Nazi War Against Jews,
by Stephanie Fitzgerald

Shoshana and the Native Rose, by Robin K. Levinson

As Good as Anybody: Martin Luther King and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom, by Richard Michelson

Freedom, by Richard Michelson

Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat,
by Nancy Patz

The Butterfly, by Patricia Polacco

The Journey, by Francesca Sanna

Stealing Home, by Ellen Schwartz

Milkweed, by Jerry Spinelli

Irena's Jars of Secrets, by Marcia Vaughan

Roller-Coaster Grandma: The Amazing Story of Dr. Ruth, by Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer and Pierre A. Lehu

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