

Holocaust Centre of New Zealand & Zikaron BaSalon **Host Kit**

The Story of Alfred “Fred” Silberstein (1927 – 2009)

In this kit you will find:

- Testimony of Alfred “Fred” Silberstein
- Hosting Zikaron BaSalon in the classroom
- Details on the structure of the event
- Discussion ideas

Zikaron BaSalon in the Classroom

Zikaron BaSalon (Living room Remembrance in Hebrew) is an initiative that calls on us to take personal responsibility for Holocaust commemoration. Bringing Holocaust remembrance into our homes and our communities.

Every student can become an agent of change, being active in commemorating the Shoah and spreading the importance of the initiative to their family and friends.

Zikaron BaSalon is not a History class but an opportunity for a personal and intimate gathering where participants can share their personal stories, experiences, and thoughts.

Setting:

Create a different atmosphere by changing the setting. It should set a tone of intimacy and openness. Set the room in a form that allows people to see each other and connect, ideally a circle or half a circle.

Zikaron Basalon has three parts:

1 **Remember the Past:** Start by listening to personal testimony.

On our website, you will find written or recorded testimonies that you can use. We can also help connect with a Holocaust survivor or descendant. We recommend checking if one of the students or staff has a personal connection and can share their family story.

2 **Feel the Moment:** A time to share, absorb and process. Take time to pause and reflect on the story that we heard.

Following the testimony, we create a transitional stage to allow us time to process. Read a poem, play an instrument, sing a song or recite a prayer. Use our website to find resources, playlists and inspirational texts that you can use during this part.

3 **Shape the Future:** Discuss the impact of the Holocaust on our lives today and in the future.

In the last part, everyone should contribute to the conversation. Create a safe and open space for a meaningful discussion. There is no right or wrong. Many ideas for discussion are available on our website.

A few things to keep in mind when speaking to students about the Holocaust:

It is essential to choose a testimony that fits the age of the students. When inviting a speaker to your class, share in advance information about the student's age and knowledge.

Prepare the students for the specific story they will listen to.

Do not get into graphic details and horrible stories. Provide a wider context, explain what antisemitism is, and share that there was cruelty towards Jews.

You can focus on humanity, optimism, sturdiness, and mutual aid. If a Survivor is coming to the classroom, ask them to focus on these topics.



Remember

“A person lives as long as they are remembered”

The first part of the Salon focuses on the historical testimony. It offers you an opportunity to learn and connect to the stories of the Shoah.

Alfred “Fred” Silberstein was born Berlin in 1927. His father owned a haberdashery business that the Nazis eventually destroyed during the Kristallnacht pogrom on 9-10 Nov 1938. During that pogrom, Fred’s father was deported to Sachsenhausen, and when he was eventually released back to the family, he was a “broken man.”

Fred was forced to work at the infamous Wannsee Conference when the SS picked him up to be a servant. Because he was blonde-haired and blue-eyed, he was often mistaken for being an Aryan. When he was found out to be a Jew at Wannsee, he was given the chance to renounce his Judaism by Fred refused. In February 1943, at almost 16 years old, Fred was deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. His survival at selection was down to his lying about his age and being chosen as a candidate for hard labour. During his time in Auschwitz, Fred met the notorious Dr Josef Mengele, who selected him in 1944 for experimentation and torture. He was operated on without anaesthetic, injected with chemicals, and sewn back up, all for the Nazis to learn how to improve healing for Nazi soldiers injured on the battlefield. When the Nazis emptied Auschwitz, Fred was taken on an infamous death march to Nordhausen, where the Americans liberated him in 1945 at 19 years old.

Due to his experiences in the concentration camps and what he witnessed at Wannsee, Fred was a witness for the American prosecutors at the Nuremberg Trials from November 1945 to October 1946.

Before moving to New Zealand in the late 1940s, Fred discovered that his sister, Hansi Keating, had survived and was living in Frankfurt. They moved to Auckland, where Fred had his own restaurant and would speak to school and adult groups about his Holocaust experiences.

Alfred’s Story:





Feel

Play music,
sing together,
read a poem,
light a candle

In the second part of the event, we create a transitional stage to allow us time to process the testimony and create a safe and open space for a meaningful discussion.

Following Alfred's Testimony, invite your guests to express themselves and share thoughts, stories or ideas.

To further engage your participants in the experience, we suggest you invite them to bring a reading, instruments, a song, a poem or other similar contributions.

On Zikaron BaSalon website, you will find resources such as playlists with songs, complete with chords and lyrics, so that your participants can join in.

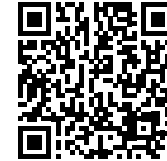
Te Aroha

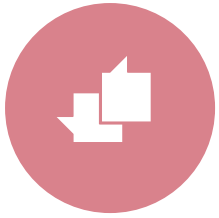
Te aroha - Love

Te whakapono - Faith

Me te rangimarie - Peace

Tatou tatou e - For us all





Shape

A facilitated discussion that focuses on the memory of the Holocaust and its significance in our lives.

In the third and final part of the event, participants are invited to have an open and stimulating discussion.

The first part of the discussion will focus on the testimony, while the second part will reflect on connections to the present day. We recommend choosing 1-2 from questions in each section, or adding questions of your own.

The testimony

- What are some of your initial reactions to this testimony?
- What was something new you learned from Alfred's specific experience? How did this knowledge compliment your existing understanding of the Holocaust?
- How do you think the Holocaust had an impact on a survivor's life?
- Was the Holocaust a human act? Are those responsible for it human beings the same as us?
- What do you think about Alfred's last statement? What is your role once you heard Alfred's testimony?

Connections to our days

- Think about the two terms: forgiving and forgetting.
- What do you think is the biggest danger for the memory of the Holocaust?
- How should we (as individuals and as a society), react to situations of hardships and trauma?
- Could another Holocaust happen? Is there one occurring right now somewhere in the world without us noticing?
- How did this testimony and the discussion connect to the world today?