

My Way To Remember The Holocaust.

By Maddison

Explanation

I decided that I wanted to complete this task by choosing a unique and creative way to present My Way To Remember The Holocaust. After brainstorming a few different ideas i eventually decided on what i should do: decorating stones! I got this random idea from simply sitting in my garden on a sunny day, trying to think of something that would be special and meaningful, until i realised that i could use a material that was all around me. I found some large stones, cleaned them and borrowed some white paint that would provide a clear base for drawing. After a few hours of preparing the most ideal stones for my task and planning what i was to draw, all i had was a pile of rocks and a few paper sheets of planning. During this activity i realised that each stone was unique due to their size, texture and shape, which somehow reminded me of how each and every prisoner during the holocaust was also unique, but were all assumed to be the same and were therefore treated unfairly. I was also majorly inspired by the “Memorial To The Murdered Jews Of Europe” a unique memorial in Berlin that features columns of stone to remember the forgotten victims, and that was designed to create a feeling of entrapment and unease, which is an extremely tiny fraction of what victims would have felt.

Number one



This design features a simple yellow butterfly that can be likened to the golden **Star of David**, that Jewish prisoners were forced to wear on their uniform. However, the deeper meaning is that the yellow butterfly symbolises the 1.5 million children that perished in the Holocaust. A poem by Pavel Friedmann, a prisoner of the Terezin concentration camp, often describes the children as butterflies. This led members of a Holocaust museum in Houston to start the butterfly project, a resource that teaches the new generations about the enormous loss of innocent life. Also, in Dr Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book, **The Wheel of Life, A Memoir of Living and Dying**, she explains that during her visit to a concentration camp in Poland, she noticed hundreds of butterflies carved into the walls of the children's barracks. Once she had spoken to terminally ill people many years later that knew of this, she finally realised that the prisoners must have known that they would die, that they would "soon leave their bodies and they'd be out of this hellish place."

Number two



This design is that of a golden star, which is the religious symbol of the Jewish faith. It represents the number of approximately 6 million Jewish people that were brutally killed by the Nazis, just because of their religion. Even before the war Jewish people have been forced to wear the symbol for distinguishability, but Hitler made this a necessity once again so that soldiers could tell who was a Jew and who was not. This unfortunately meant that it was easier to control these people, which eventually allowed the Nazis to identify who was to be sent to concentration camps to be killed. A similar badge with the word "Jude" meaning "Jew" in Hebrew was worn by Jewish prisoners in the concentration camps. As well as the ability to identify Jews, wearing the badge was intended to humiliate them and to mark them out for segregation and discrimination.

Number three



This design is of a gas mask, which at first glance makes me think about how concentration camp prisoners had to work tirelessly before a majority of their lives were taken in the gas chambers. This piece of equipment may have saved their lives, but they were hated so much by the Nazis, meaning that those soldiers were taught that they had no choice but to let them die. Upon arrival at the camps, people were sorted based on their ability to work, and whoever couldn't work was to be sent to the gas chambers. The majority of people that were immediately sent to the gas chambers included the elderly, the unfit, children and physically unable people. A haunting movie performance of what the gas chambers may have been like during the holocaust can be found at the end of "The boy in the striped pyjamas.", a film that aimed to show the horror of the concentration camps through a child's eyes.

Number four



This design featuring barbed wire symbolises how trapped prisoners within the concentration camps were. They had no choice in anything that they did in the very last years of their lives. It's been revealed that the Nazis used electric fencing to help to guard the death camps, and that many prisoners were so desperate to end their suffering, that they purposely ran into the fences. The voltages were increased by the Nazis significantly, meaning that running into a fence would have been lethal. The edges of the camps, where the fences were, were constantly watched by soldiers in watchtowers. This means that not only were prisoners trapped physically, but they must've also felt trapped as they were being spied on at all times, by soldiers that tortured them daily. Rebelling or attempting to escape would get prisoners into serious, dangerous trouble that would have potentially cost them their lives. Many may have felt that obeying orders would have been their own option.

Number five



This design features an arm with a dark black tattoo. To make it easier for soldiers to record information about prisoners in camps, everybody was assigned a number that was originally sewn onto clothes. With the increasing death rates, it eventually became difficult to identify who had died, as clothes were removed from corpses, so it was decided that prisoners should be tattooed. On arrival at the Auschwitz concentration camp, prisoners would be lined up, given a uniform and then would be forced to stand still whilst they received a tattoo. A metal stamp was pushed into the arm, drawing out the prisoner's number, and then ink was rubbed into the wound, making a permanent tattoo. Not long ago, I read the bestselling book "The Tattooist of Auschwitz", by Heather Morris, which is based on the true life story of a Holocaust survivor that was given the job of tattooist. The survivor, Lale Sokolov brings the story to life when he explains his relationships in the camp, his everyday life in the camp, and the details of his job and work experiences. This story was a good reminder of how people were treated during the Holocaust, and it also includes some haunting descriptions of what Lale witnessed.

Number six



This design features a pair of simple brown shoes, that reminds me of how life was changed for prisoners when they were taken to camps. Piles with thousands of shoes that once belonged to prisoners can be seen behind huge glass walls in the Auschwitz museum. Artificial limbs, clothes, suitcases and other previous belongings that were confiscated are also on display. Visitors of the camp in present day cannot take photographs of a shocking pile of human hair, which was shaven off of heads to avoid the spread of disease. The hoarding of possessions proves the scale of killing carried out by the Nazis, and is a reminder of the suffering and death of the object owners. Many objects of higher value such as jewellery and golden tooth fillings were found to be stolen by the Nazis, which altogether totals to an estimated £1.1 billion. These belongings are only a small fraction of what the Nazis stole from people during the holocaust.

Number seven



This rock features the German sign that reads “arbeit macht frei”, which translates to “work will set you free.” The sign is well known for appearing at Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps. The phrase appears in the novel by Lorenz Diefenbach, where it was originally speaking about how gamblers and criminals could find forgiveness through hard labour. The sign at Auschwitz was made by professional blacksmiths amongst the groups of prisoners, and an upside down letter “B” that appears on the sign was interpreted as an act of defiance by the prisoners that made it. The signs were clearly displayed above the entrance so that all soldiers and prisoners could see it, eventually leading to them knowing that the only way to be freed was through death. The sign in Auschwitz was stolen in 2009 and was later recovered, but was found in 3 broken pieces. The original recovered sign is displayed in the Auschwitz museum and a replica stands in its original place.

Number eight



This design features a train, which is driving down a train track. I decided to draw this because it's a reminder of how the prisoners were transported to concentration camps, where their lives changed forever. Trains were originally used to transport people to the ghettos, but this was stopped when more Jewish people began to be sent away. Large groups of people were packed into carriages with hardly any room to move, on the journey that sometimes took a few weeks. There was no extra space to sit or kneel down, and was only one bucket in the corner of a carriage. Once that bucket became too full, it would spill, leaving the carriage extremely smelly, often with no windows to let out bad air. The journey was lethal for some as many died from suffocation, dehydration, starvation and exhaustion. There was little food to share around. For the great majority of these passengers, the train journeys were a one way trip to the end of their lives.

Number nine



This design features a sad-looking person wearing a blue and white striped uniform. This drawing was inspired by some holocaust survival sketches, that depict memories of people in the concentration camps. Also, many photographs/ other drawings show malnourished prisoners, who obviously haven't had enough to eat and are beyond hungry. During my research, i also came across many pictures and documents that mention the Nazi human experimentation, which is where "doctors" carried out cruel experiments on twins, children, mothers and babies. These included various injections, freezing and operations, which would go on to help the Nazis and the German army. If people didn't die during the experiments, they'd be killed or would be left with severe lifelong deformities and disabilities. These experiments involved thousands of people and is a significant example of how the Nazis seriously tortured the innocent.

Number ten



This design features the bold words: “Never Again”. They remind us that it’s so important that nothing like this can happen again, as that time in history was a real life example of how cruel and horrible some humans can be. This phrase has often been used in memorials and remembrance days for the holocaust, to spread the word about how this should NEVER happen again. Also recently, a few anti-semitic acts have occurred, and holocaust survivors and their families fear that the holocaust will be forgotten, so are trying to educate younger generations about why that racism and discrimination isn't acceptable under any circumstances. Fortunately, all year around, people are beginning to spread the conversation. The 27th of January is “The International Day Of Commemoration In Memory Of The Victims Of The Holocaust”, where many people share their stories and to honour the unfortunate lives that were lost.

What I'll Take Away From This Project



From this topic, i've learnt that I can be quite creative with anything around me, and that a good idea (once developed) can turn into something i can really learn from.

This project has been quite rewarding for me, as i've managed to sit and think about how lucky i am to live in a time where the world can work together to ensure that this doesn't happen again. I really enjoyed working on this project as i could sit and relax, with family talking to me in the background, and it allowed me to think about how precious life really is, especially as the Holocaust is such a serious and emotional topic.