NEW MEXICO HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & GELLERT CENTER FOR EDUCATION

Twenty suggested topics to discuss with students before or after visiting the museum, or to be used as ideas for writing exercises.

1. Discuss the difference between a friend and a **good** friend. How many "good" friends can any one person have? Should every person we know be considered a "friend" unless we have a valid reason to say "no"?

2. What are some reasons why you might not like someone? List the reasons. Which of these listed reasons is a valid reason?

3. One by one, let's look at what we think are the valid reasons not to consider someone a friend. For each of those, would you feel the same way toward any other person with those same qualities? Should you make some exceptions because of some good qualities a few different people in the group might have? Shouldn't we always be willing to look at the whole person and balance the good with the bad, and be fair in the process?

4. Is anyone ever all good or all bad? Discuss qualities such as honesty, loyalty, being a bully, being cruel, etc. Can people who are one thing **change** either for the good or bad? How is this important to us?

5. Should we ever write people off forever from possible friendship? Can we accept their promise to be better and not let bad things happen again?

6. How should we pick our friends? How can we be careful of our friends? Is it especially important that we be very careful in picking our **good** friends? Why? Should we be willing to forgive and forget?

7. Should we be concerned about how our friends treat other people?
   Should we speak out if we see our friends or acquaintances treating others badly?

8. What if someone happens to look like or act the same as someone you don't like, (but you later discover is really not bad as you might have thought)? Would it ever be fair to **automatically** not like them? We can avoid such mistakes by being careful and thoughtful, making sound decisions, and if necessary, seeking advice from others with more experience. Discuss whether this is really true.

9. Discuss stereotyping and whether it is wise or unfair.

10. When we make an **automatic** judgment of people based on their race, nationality, religion, gender, or any other quality with which they were born, we must necessarily include all adults, all genders, young and old, and children – even infants –all in the same group of which we are making a judgment, **without even knowing them.**

11. Discuss what is wrong with this. What should you call it? (discrimination, prejudice, hatred, ignorance, cruel . . .)

12. Can we ever really control what group other people might think we belong in?

13. What might this have to do with being "different" from the majority? Who are the "majority"? What might (will) the majority be in the year 2050? (The majority is always changing, especially if you move from place to place.)

14. If you feel it is alright to think badly about people who are different from you, can you ever have **ANY** friends? Remember, we are all different in many ways.

15. What is the difference between not caring for someone and hating them? Should you ever mistreat someone merely because you don't particularly care for them?

16. Better yet, should you ever **HATE** anyone?

17. How might this affect the way you want to treat them? Should you ever be willing to hurt anyone, no matter how much you dislike them? Discuss.

18. Discuss propaganda, stereotyping, and vilification of others, and the suffering this might cause. Examine slavery, religious intolerance, the Holocaust and other examples to show the horrible results these practices can produce.

19. What is an upstander? Give examples. What are some qualities of an upstander? (courage to speak up; risk your own welfare for the welfare of others; wisdom to make proper choices, etc) Discuss risks vs. benefits (feeling good about your actions) and making safe decisions. Seeking help when it is advisable.

20. What is happening today in our world? What can we do about it?

Please let us know whether this paper is helpful to you, and of any changes or additions you feel might be helpful to others. Thank you.

New Mexico
Holocaust Museum

EDUCATION: 20 suggestions (2022)