

SHEETS

“EDUCATION AFTER AUSCHWITZ FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AS WELL!”

Ido Abram, 2002

Why focus on the Holocaust?

Three reasons

- (1) To get to know yourself, the human race
 - (2) To warn about comparable things that are still happening
 - (3) To distance yourself from anyone who denies the Holocaust ever happened.
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“*The primary task of education should be to prevent another Auschwitz*” (Adorno).

“Erziehung nach Auschwitz” (Adorno) / Education after Auschwitz

- (1) Teaching about the Holocaust / Shoah / Final Solution
- (2) Bringing up children in general.

Five-Point Programme

Education after Auschwitz

- * Promote *empathy* and *warmth*
- * Promote *autonomy*: enhance the ability to
 - reflect
 - make one’s own decisions
 - not automatically go along with the crowd (non-conformity).

Education after Auschwitz

- * Promote *empathy* with the horrors of Auschwitz, which are the horrors of our world.

Education after Auschwitz

- * Promote *empathy* with the perpetrators, the victims, and the bystanders in the Holocaust and other forms of cruelty and aggression. All human beings experience all three of these roles at one time or another.
- * Gain insight into the mechanisms and circumstances that turn people into aggressors and murderers, insight into the *structure of annihilation*.

The teaching principles of this five-point programme are warmth, empathy and autonomy.

The programme devotes attention to *all* the actors: the perpetrators, the victims and the bystanders (the perpetrators, everyone who helped them, everyone who collaborated with the people in power, passive observers, the opposition, the active resistance, everyone who helped the victims, the victims).

How did they live before the Holocaust and what was life like for the survivors afterwards?

Attention is also focused on *positive* issues such as solidarity, resistance, and the preservation of human dignity under perilous and extreme conditions.

Comprehensive context is necessary

1. Discussing or demonstrating (solely) human cruelty sometimes activates human cruelty, and at any rate does not teach youngsters how to prevent it
 2. Excessive attention for extreme cruelty makes small-scale cruelty not seem that bad
 3. Comparing the Holocaust with other forms of prejudice, discrimination and racism
 4. Not limiting the focus to the horrors of the Holocaust
 - it does not generate sympathy for the victims
 - the horrors are not specific to the Holocaust.
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Using life stories

- before, during and after the Holocaust
 - demonstrate that everyone plays various roles in the course of a lifetime (sometimes perpetrator, sometimes victim, usually bystander)
 - sometimes more than one role at the same time (Oskar Schindler in the Holocaust)
 - youngsters are often interested in authentic life stories
 - the stories enable youngsters to identify (empathy)
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“Education after Auschwitz needs to start in early childhood” (Adorno).

Education after Auschwitz for children in the three-to-ten age group

This is “Education after Auschwitz without Auschwitz”, bringing up children and educating them without examples of extreme cruelty

Three-Point Programme

- * Promote *empathy* and *warmth*
- * Promote *autonomy*: Enhancing the ability to:
 - reflect
 - make one’s own decisions
 - not automatically go along with the crowd (non-conformity)
- * Promote *empathy* (the ability to identify with someone else and feel what they are feeling) with the perpetrators, the victims and the bystanders. Children experience all three of these roles at one time or another

The three-point programme and the five-point programme are both based upon the same teaching principles: warmth, empathy and autonomy.
