

Holocaust Remembrance Day, pt. 1

How do we talk about mature, difficult subjects with the children? What is the constructivist, Reggio approach to this type of learning? How do we keep these conversations developmentally appropriate and not over-share information the children are not yet ready for? We teachers asked ourselves these questions in preparation for יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day).

We let the children's knowledge lead the way. In this way, we co-construct our knowledge of the day, the tradition of the siren, and any bits of history the children may know. Ideally, no information is shared that the children aren't yet "ready for" as it is all information they (or a peer) is already aware of and is explained from a 5-6 year old's perspective. Each small piece of knowledge is a puzzle that helps form our picture of the topic.

Here are some moments from our morning meeting conversation before the siren.

Danielle: What day is today? What's different about today?

Maya Motil: צפירה (siren)

Other children echo Maya.

Adam: No. יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day)

Teacher Danielle: What's יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day)?

Danny T: יום הצפירה (The day of the siren)

Danny G: There's 3 sirens... But I forgot the third one. One is for all the people that go'd through something hard or died and two you think of all the חיילים (soldiers) that wanted to do ארץ ישראל (the country of Israel) and died

Shahar: It's yesterday the ערב (night) and today יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and Wednesday the next week יום הזיכרון (Memorial Day)

Maya Amitai: אזה עוד צפירות אתם מכירים? (What other sirens do you know?)

(Nina: Of a car) של אוטו

The children making beeping sounds of a car.

הילי: סירנה! ... אזעקה כשישראל רב עם מדינה אחרת

(!Hili: Siren! The loud sound when Israel fights with another country)

מיה א: מתי עוד יש רעש חזק כמו סירנה?

(Teacher Maya: When else is there a loud sound like the siren?)

שחר: סירנה מכבים אש

(Shahar: A fire truck siren)

We give the children the choice to stay in the classroom "where the siren won't be so loud" or to go on a short walk to Rothschild where they can see what happens in the city when the siren goes off. The children share their knowledge of what will happen.

Matan: We'll see people driving and then opening their doors and then standing ... yes my brother said that people that drive don't just drive drive drive drive keep going, they open their door their car and stand up.

Teacher Maya Amitai explains that all the adults will stand and be quiet. She explains that the children don't have to stand, but that they should try to be quiet and not laugh too much. If they want, they can hold the hand of a ganenet or a friend, or they can cover their ears with their hands if it's too loud.

The conversation continues and we wonder if the siren will be heard all over Tel Aviv, all over the world? Omer wonders if it will sound even in the desert? Ori asks if the desert animals will stop and stand for the siren, even the camels and the lizards? We end our morning meeting there, but the conversations around the siren and history of the day continue.

Look for pt. 2 to hear about the children's reflections after the siren is heard.

Holocaust Remembrance Day pt. 2: After the Siren



The small group of children return from Rotschild after hearing the siren and watching what happened. Their reflections give us insight into their newly constructed knowledge of the יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day). They come back with big eyes and bodies full of excitement. It is obvious it was a powerful experience for them.

Here is a video from Rotschild during the siren (taken very discreetly), with some reflections audio placed on top. [WATCH](#)

Gal: I didn't think much about my grandpa... mostly about people and cars that stopped.

Gai: The siren sounded like a car beep!

Matan: It was not loud. It sounded like an airplane about to crash.

Nina: I was thinking about mommy's grandpa and

she's already dead.

Ronit: What did it sound like?

Nina: The siren sounded like the ambulance.

Maya Motil: I thought about my mom's grandpa and my dad's. They died in the same way. They were in a different city. They came to Israel because it was the perfect place to die. One day they went to sleep and didn't wake up.

Adam: I thought about my saba and safta raba.

Ronit: Who are they?

Adam: I think they died from the נאצים They ran from the נאצים

Danielle: What was it like? What did you see?

Liam: Everybody do this (freezes his body) -- FREEZE!

What conversations do you have about יום השואה (Holocaust Remembrance Day) at home? We will be happy to hear about the children's reflections at home from today!