AIM: What can we learn about (and from) the Holocaust?

I. DO NOW: Watch the video. Write down one fact you learned that you didn't know about the Holocaust.

II. SLIDE-SHOW IMAGES (History Channel): As you view the images, make note of any that you find particularly impactful.

III. PRIMARY SOURCES:

Document 1

Q1: How does Heinrich Himmler attempt to justify the 'eradication' of Jewish people in Germany?

"The Jews are the sworn enemies of the German people and must be eradicated. Every Jew that we can lay our hands on is to be destroyed now during the war, without exception. If we cannot now obliterate the biological basis of Jewry, the Jews will one day destroy the German people."

- Rudolf Hess, Commandant of Auschwitz quoting the orders he received from Heinrich Himmler

Document 2

Q2: According to Brack, why should some Jewish people be kept alive? Why does he suggest that those kept alive should be 'rendered incapable of reproduction'?

"According to my impression there are at least 2-3 million men and women well fit for work among the approximately 10 million European Jews. In consideration of the exceptional difficulties posed for us by the question of labor, I am of the opinion that these 2-3 million should in any case be taken out and kept alive. Of course, this can only be done if they are at the same time rendered incapable of reproduction."

– SS Oberfuehrer Viktor Brack in a letter to Heimlich Himmler (June 23, 1942)

Document 3

The following poem was written by Martin Niemoller, a German World War I veteran who in 1929 became a pastor and an ardent supporter of Adolf Hitler. He did not criticize the Nazi Party for putting its political opponents into concentration camps. However, in 1937, he spoke out when members of the Protestant Church were arrested. The following month Niemöller was himself arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Dachau. In 1938, a Nazi leader urged Adolf Hitler to execute Niemöller, but he was allowed to live.

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist; Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a socialist; Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist; Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew; Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Q: In your opinion, what message is the poet trying to convey?

IV. SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES: As you watch the video, take notes about the testimonies. Remember, notes are more effective when written as short phrases – complete sentences are not required.

V. REFLECTION: Please write a paragraph (at least 5 complete sentences) in response to the question in the space provided.

Q: What have you learned from the documents, images, and/or videos we worked with today? Which facts, images, and/or ideas connected with you the most? Explain.