

National Days of Remembrance

ORGANIZING A COMMEMORATION

Ceremony Template for Faith Communities

A basic template for a Days of Remembrance commemoration suitable for a faith or interfaith setting is offered here. The structure and order may be adapted to fit specific circumstances, and faith leaders might wish to incorporate prayers or other liturgical elements from their traditions. The resources lead to appropriate materials found in this planning guide or lead to online materials on the Museum’s website. Please view the short video “Organizing a Commemoration” first. It was designed to give a rationale as well as ideas, suggestions, and possible formats for a Days of Remembrance commemoration. More ideas and resources for faith communities are available at the Museum’s Church Relations web page (www.ushmm.org/research/center/church).

 Indicates PDF resources on this disc.

Suggested program element	Rationale	Resources
Opening music	Music can help set the tone and framework for an observance. The three musical selections described on this CD could be used before, during, or following a commemoration.	Planning guide:  “Musical Selections”
	More information about music created and performed during the Holocaust can be found on the Museum’s website.	Web: Visit Music of the Holocaust online exhibition
Invocation		
Opening remarks	Setting the appropriate tone and framework for a Days of Remembrance ceremony is important. The short video “Why We Remember the Holocaust” may be used for this purpose, or an individual may open with remarks based on this year’s Days of Remembrance theme.	Planning guide: “Why We Remember” video <i>(preview version on CD)</i>  Annual theme essay
Reading of the official state or city Days of Remembrance proclamation	The reading of an official proclamation from a mayor or governor may be included in a Days of Remembrance commemoration. A request, along with the sample proclamation, should be sent to the mayor’s or governor’s office several weeks before the observance. Inviting the mayor or governor to the commemoration is also appropriate.	Web: View sample proclamations for mayors and governors

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Candle-lighting ceremony	The lighting of candles is often part of a Days of Remembrance ceremony. Local dignitaries, survivors and their families, rescuers, or liberators are often chosen to light the candles. During the candle lighting, a short poem or literary selection may be read, music may be played, or both may be done.	Planning guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ “Selected Readings” ▢ “Musical Selections”
Musical interlude	See “Opening music”	
Keynote address or homily	The main remarks at a Holocaust commemoration can take many forms, depending on time available and type of audience. It could be delivered by a Holocaust survivor, liberator, or rescuer; a political dignitary; or a religious leader. Other possible options are creating programs that interview Holocaust survivors or showing films or other multimedia presentations about the Holocaust and this year’s Days of Remembrance theme.	Planning guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual theme video <i>(preview version on CD)</i> ▢ “Guidelines for Hosting a Holocaust Survivor” ▢ “Sample Questions for Interviewing Holocaust Survivors” “One Survivor Remembers” video <i>(excerpted preview version on CD)</i>
Readings	Reading selections for a Days of Remembrance commemoration take a variety of forms, depending on the audience, location, and type of observance being held. Readings may be distributed to the audience or read aloud by an individual. A candle might be lit immediately after or during the reading.	Planning guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ “Selected Readings”
Benediction		
Closing music	See “Opening music”	
Other resources	Providing additional resources helps educate people about the Holocaust and provides context. Historical overview articles might be distributed or made available for people to read. Personal histories of individuals from the Holocaust might also be distributed or incorporated into a ceremony. Posters, PowerPoint displays, and animated maps are available on this CD for presentation or display.	Planning guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Materials to Use” tab lists all print and multimedia resources available on this CD