Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Joseph and Myra Brandman Virtual Holocaust Memorial Museum

A Visitor’s Guide v.2

Date of 1st Visit: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggestions for your visit:**

1. In this museum, you will find two main galleries: the historiography of the Holocaust and the exhibits on the events of Holocaust. Spend some time in each.
2. Within the exhibits, you will encounter a few things. First, you will see a background on the time period or event. Then, you will encounter the story of two young Jews who experienced the Holocaust: Myra and Joe Brandman. Their stories in each exhibit will roughly correspond to the time period of the larger event. Thirdly, you will find a series of primary source artifacts ranging from photographs to diary entries to video compilations. Lastly, you will find some links for further knowledge.
3. Everybody goes through museums at different paces. One important strategy to get the most out of a museum is to not try to see everything, but to look deeply at whatever you encounter. Don’t rush through a photograph, a story, or a video.
4. Everything about the Holocaust is important but all in different ways. Find what seems interesting to you and spend the most amount of time there.
5. A visit to a Holocaust museum should lead to more knowledge and more feeling. It is okay to feel and it is okay to cry.

**Historiography of the Holocaust**

Historiography is the conversation historians have about an event, including questions about its meaning, importance, and causes. The main question historians have asked about the Holocaust is crucial: what caused the Holocaust?

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| Historian’s Name | Intentionalist, Functionalist or Other | Main argument | An important quotation |
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**Jewish Life Before the Holocaust**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the exhibit:**

* What differences and diversity existed between the Jewish communities in Europe? What similarities held them together?
* Where did most Jews live before WWII? How might that have influenced where and how the Holocaust would eventually take place?
* To what extent were Jews assimilated into the countries in which they lived? To what extent were they "apart?"
* What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

**Guide: After reading the exhibit introduction, look into Joseph and Myra’s story**

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| **Notes from Joseph’s Story** | **Notes from Myra’s story** |
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**Now, make sure to look deeply at at least three artifacts in this exhibit**

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| **Artifact Title** | **Notes from artifact (details, key information, questions or insights)**  |
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**Weimar Republic**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Weimar exhibit:**

* + What characteristics best describe life in the Weimar Republic?
	+ What were some economic, political, and social problems during the Weimar Republic? What role did WWI play in creating some of these problems?
	+ How might life during the Weimar Republic in Germany help explain the later victory of the Nazi Party?

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**Nazi Party Rise to Power**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Nazi Party's Rise to Power exhibit:**

* + The Nazi Party gained power through a democratic election. While it did not gain a majority of seats, it gained a plurality. What explains why many ordinary Germans chose to vote for the Nazi Party?
	+ What elements of the Nazi Party Platform may have appealed to voters who did NOT hate Jews?
	+ What elements of the Nazi Party Platform may have appealed to voters who DID hate Jews?
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**Early Nazi Rule**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Early Nazi Rule exhibit:**

* + How did life change in Germany soon after the Nazi victory?
	+ What were some of the earliest persecutions of Jews? What messages were they meant to sent to Germans and Jews?
	+ What strategies did Hitler and the Nazis use to consolidate their power?
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

**Guide: After reading the exhibit introduction, look into Joseph and Myra’s story**

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**Kristallnacht**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Kristallnacht exhibit:**

* + Why has Kristallnacht been seen as a turning point in the Holocaust?
	+ Alfons Heck, a former Hitler Youth member, maintained that after Kristallnacht no one could pretend that they did not know what was happening to the Jews. What did he mean?
	+ What was the message of Kristallnacht to the Jewish community of Germany?
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**War**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the War exhibit:**

* + In what ways were the Holocaust and World War II interconnected?
	+ Why was World War II a necessary event for the Holocaust to have happened?
	+ What is the historical debate over the beginnings of the plan for "extermination?"
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**Choices**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Choices exhibit:**

* + What choices did non-Jews have during the Holocaust?
	+ Why did some non-Jews choose to rescue Jews? What were some of the ways they did so?
	+ What options did Jews have to resist? What were some ways that Jews did resist? In what ways were they effective?
	+ Should we think of those who resisted as ordinary or extraordinary people? Why does that matter?
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**The Destruction**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Destruction exhibit:**

* One of the goals of Holocaust education is to learn to empathize with others. What are you *feeling* as you visit this exhibit?
* One of the other goals of Holocaust education is to try to understand why this happened? From everything you've learned, what do you think caused the Holocaust?
* What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**Children in the Holocaust**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Children in the Holocaust exhibit:**

* + What must have been incredibly painful about the decision of Jewish parents to send their children on the kindertransport?
	+ Were German children who joined the Hitler Youth perpetrators or victims?
	+ What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**United States and the Holocaust**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the United States and the Holocaust exhibit:**

* What did the United States government and the American people know during the Holocaust?
* What options did the U.S. government have to help Jews? Why did the U.S. not do more?
* What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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**Anti-Semitism Today**

**Here are some specific questions you may want to think about as you peruse the Anti-Semitism today exhibit:**

* To what extent does Anti-Semitism still exist today?
* How does Anti-Semitism manifest itself in our world and our country today?
* What actions can and should we take to combat Anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, discrimination, and prejudice?
* What questions does this raise for you about the Holocaust?

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