

**“He who has a why to live can bear with almost anyhow.”**

## **THE SEARCH FOR MEANING**

What does it mean to Search for Meaning? In the coming weeks we will undertake a study that will ask us to look deeply into our humanity and come to understand events that are unthinkable. A part of this study will include the reading of *Night*, by Elie Wiesel. In this novel you will read about the unbelievable killing and atrocities that were committed during the Holocaust in Europe in the 1930's and 1940's. The people who died were Jewish, Slavic, Black, Homosexual, Gypsy; they were mothers, fathers and children; they were business people, doctors, teachers, students. What would you do? How do you find meaning in a world that seems so horrid and unjust?

### **BECOME A WITNESS.**

Elie Wiesel, the author on *Night*, believes that: “True writers want to tell the story simply because they believe they can do something with it—their lives are not fruitless and are not spent in vain. True listeners want to listen to stories to enrich their own lives and to understand them. What is happening to me happens to you. Both the listener and the reader are participants in the same story and both make it the story it is.”

What does he mean? As a writer, Elie is a Messenger and he needs you to bear Witness to the story of his experience. How did he find meaning in life through telling his own story? Can you do the same? He needs you to be a true listener and to hear his story. You need to hear his story as a way to think more deeply about your own life. Together, a different possibility can surface.

### **BECOME A WITNESS.**

To assist you in your own search for meaning, we will engage in a long inquiry that not only includes reading *Night*, but also poetry, interviews, and films that explore multiple points of view, current and past, about Humanity, Holocaust and Genocide.

Throughout our project, *The Search for Meaning*, and in reading Wiesel's *Night*:

1. You will become a witness. In the Jewish tradition, a witness is a messenger who ‘says how things are’...who speaks truth. You will be asked to think about your own role as a witness in our world: **TO WHAT ARE YOU A WITNESS AND A MESSENGER?**
2. You will become a part of the story of his experience. Although *his* is an account of what *has* happened, you will be asked to wonder: **WHAT AM I DOING NOW TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN? HOW WOULD I RESPOND IN A SIMILAR SITUATION?**
3. You will explore the role of stories and experiences as creators of identity. In doing this you will need to ask yourself: **WHO AM I? WHAT REASON DO I HAVE FOR LIVING?**
4. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you will be asked to consider the following question: **WHAT IS THE MESSAGE YOU WILL CARRY INTO YOUR OWN LIFE AND TO HUMANITY ABOUT WHO WE ARE, WHO WE MUST BE AND WHAT OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ONE ANOTHER?**

Perhaps what Moshe the Beadle says to a young Elie is true:

**“YOU WILL FIND THE TRUE ANSWERS...ONLY WITHIN YOURSELF.”**

## The Search for Meaning Interactive Project: 'TESTIMONY OF A WITNESS' SCRAPBOOK

As a way to document your response to our questions, your learnings and explorations and The Search for Meaning, you will create a SCRAPBOOK that will be your TESTIMONY AS A WITNESS.

This Scrapbook will be a physical artifact of your experience as a Witness, and will become your 'Testimony' while reading *Night* and exploring our other materials. It will be made up of your in-class and homework assignments, your reflections and responses to our study.

As we go through the process, you will be asked to include various 'artifacts' from your learning in this Scrapbook. This could include: Poetry, Responses to questions in class sessions, Journal Entries, Free-writes, Activity and Group Work, Reflections, Drawings, Images, Found items, Newspaper articles, etc...Anything related to your work during this study should go into your Scrapbook.

There will also be a regular, required element that must find its way into your scrapbook. You will need to complete a REFLECTIVE QUOTE JOURNAL for each 'section' of the book, *Night*:

---

---

### REFLECTIVE QUOTE JOURNAL REQUIREMENTS

For each section of the novel:

1. Select **THREE** passages (quotes)
2. Respond to these passages in-depth (1-2 paragraphs each)
3. Be sure to select passages that really 'jump off the page' for you and allow you to think deeply.

Here are some questions to consider when responding to each of the three passages/section:

- *If you were in his situation, what would you have done?*
- *What would have been going through your heart and your mind?*
- *What questions would you have? What answers?*
- *What does this event/choice/occurrence make you think about? How does it make you feel?*
- *What connections can you make to your life and/or our life today about this event?*
- *What about this passage stands out to you?*

---

---

As we read the novel, *Night*, we will discuss the book in 6 different "sections". Use the guide below to keep track of the sections, the completion of your Quote Responses as well as what other 'artifacts' you include in your Scrapbook for that section.

#### Section One (Pages 1-26)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Two (Pages 27-43)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Three (Pages 45-62)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Four (Pages 63-80)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Five (Pages 81-98)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Six (Pages 99-109)

- 3 Quote Responses  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Keep in mind that your final scrapbook must be organized and thoughtful. All of this work will be used to help you prepare a substantial essay assignment, as well as create your 3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition Project!!!!**