Basic Holocaust Vocabulary

In order to talk about the Holocaust, you need to be familiar with these words
Anti-Semitism

Hatred of Jewish people.
Nazism

Adolf Hitler’s political party devoted to killing all of the Jewish people in Germany and in the world.
Swastika

The symbol of the Nazi party.
Adolf Hitler

The leader (or “Fuhrer”) of the Nazi party. His book, Mein Kampf, claims that the Germans are a superior race and that Jews, Gypsies and others are inferior.
The Final Solution

This is the name Germans gave to their plan to kill all the Jews in the world.
Symbol of the Jewish King David, used by the Nazis to identify Jews. All Jews over age 6 had to wear this star on their clothing at all times. In the concentration camps, Jews wore these stars, Gypsies wore black triangles, and Gays wore pink triangles as part of an elaborate system which divided Hitler’s enemies into groups.
Ghetto

A section of a city where Jews were forced to live. They could not leave for work or any other reason. The ghettos were overcrowded and the residents were often starving.
Gestapo

The terrifying Nazi secret police. They searched for Jews and either shipped them off to death camps or killed them on the spot.
Concentration Camps

Places where Jews and others were forced to live. They were shipped to the camps by train. When they arrived, they had to work or be killed. Many starved to death. Almost all prisoners were killed eventually.
Auschwitz

The largest concentration camp. It was located in Poland. More than 1 million people were killed there. The slogan at the entrance gate reading “Arbeit Macht Frei” or “Work will make you free” is a cruel lie.
Gas Chambers

Victims were told that they were to be washed in the showers. Instead, poisonous gas was pumped into the rooms, killing prisoners by the thousands. Their bodies were then burned in massive ovens.
Survivors

The people who were targeted by the Nazis but somehow lived through the experience. The youngest survivors are now more than 60 years old. We don’t have much more time to listen to their stories.