

Speakers Kit

ZIKARON BASALON

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Thank You!

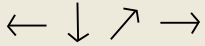


Thank you for choosing to be part of Zikaron BaSalon, a growing tradition that makes Holocaust Remembrance personal and meaningful in an intimate setting, with family, friends, and community.

Every Zikaron Basalon gathering is unique. Each gathering opens a world of memories, and knowing that your story is being shared alongside thousands of others around the world makes each act of remembrance part of a larger, living tradition.

This kit is based on the experiences of thousands of speakers who have shared their family's story through Zikaron Basalon, and is designed to support you throughout the process of preparing and sharing your own family story.

The process involves collecting and organizing a family story, preparing it to be shared meaningfully in a Zikaron BaSalon gathering, so that the memory is preserved for future generations.



The structure of Zikaron BaSalon

Zikaron BaSalon is an intimate gathering of friends and family dedicated to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and passing it on to future generations. It offers a space for meaningful reflection, connecting past and present, and considering our role in shaping the future.

There is no single "right" way to hold a Zikaron BaSalon gathering. Every gathering is a little different and shaped by the people in the room.

Zikaron BaSalon gathering is a journey through time, and includes three parts:



Past- Testimony (45 min)

The first part of the gathering focuses on a story from the time of the Holocaust.

This part includes sharing the story of someone who lived through the Holocaust, a survivor or a victim. The story you bring to the gathering helps ensure that we never forget what happened and continue to learn from its lessons.



Present- Time to share (15 min)

In the second part of the gathering, it's time to be together, to exchange thoughts, share feelings, and process the experience. This is the moment for everyone in the room to speak, reflect, and connect.

You may choose to sing together, play an instrument, light a candle, read a short text or poem, recite a prayer, or simply invite guests to share their thoughts and emotions.



Future – Conversation (30 min)

In the third part of the gathering we engage in a conversation about how we can keep the memory alive and relevant for future generations. Why is it important to remember, as individuals and as a society?



Start Here

Places to Look, People to Ask,
Stories to Find– Ways to Discover
Your Family's Holocaust Story

Talk to family members: Speak with relatives, both close and distant, and ask them to share stories, as well as photos, letters, documents, or any small detail that has been passed down through the generations.

Search existing archives: Institutions such as Yad Vashem, the Ghetto Fighters' House, the USC Shoah Foundation, and the USHMM offer recorded testimonies, documents, Pages of Testimony, victim lists, and other valuable materials. Many of these can be accessed online, and through links and tools available on our website.

Look for testimonies from members of the same community: Even if your family members didn't leave behind full documentation, someone from the same town, ghetto, or community might have been interviewed, and their account may shed light on the time and place they lived in.

Explore books and articles: You may find references in community memorial books, academic articles, family history projects, Holocaust remembrance websites, or Facebook groups of descendants from the same location.

Personal items: A passport, marriage certificate, military document, postcard, or family heirloom can be an excellent starting point. Ask: When was this written? Where was this taken? Who appears in the photo?

Write down small memories you have of the person you're speaking about: Even if the memories are partial, emotional, or unclear, they're raw material for shaping a story.

Ask for help from a specialist in the field: There are professionals and experienced individuals whose expertise is helping people research their family stories, whether it's interpreting documents, translating letters, or finding missing details.



Guiding Questions for collecting the story

The following questions are here to help you gather information and form a fuller picture of the story you want to tell. You don't need to answer every question, even a few answers can help guide your writing. To make things easier, we've also created a practical worksheet you can use. You're welcome to scan the QR code below and use it as a guide throughout the process.

Key Questions:

- What is the time period being told about?
- What feelings and messages do you wish to convey?
- What is your connection and relationship to the central figure?

Getting to Know Their World – Life Before the War

- What name were they given at birth, what were they called growing up (including nicknames), and did their name change after the war or during immigration?
- When and where were they born?
- Who were the close and extended family members in their life? How many were there, and what were their names and occupations?
- Were religion, tradition, or culture part of their everyday life? If so, how?

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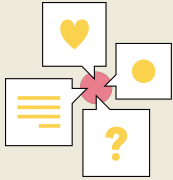
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The War Period

- Share what you know about where their family was during the war.
- Was there a song, story, or phrase that gave them strength or stayed with them during that time?
- Describe a moment when they had to make a meaningful or difficult decision.
- Were there people who supported or helped them in any way during the war?

A Message to the Participants

- Why is it important for you to share your story and pass on the memory?
- What message would you like to pass on to future generations and to those listening to your story today?
- What lessons from the Holocaust would you hope participants take with them?



Opening a Window Into a Life

You Don't Have to Know Everything

It's okay to share thoughts, feelings, or even guesses about the things you don't fully know.

If there was silence in your family around the events of the Holocaust, that silence is also a story worth sharing.

And just as importantly, share what you do know. Even partial memories or fragments of a story can carry deep meaning.

Creating Shared Understanding

Not everyone is familiar with the commonly used terms or the broader historical background of the Holocaust.

Take a moment to offer a few words of context and help your listeners understand the time and setting in which the story takes place.

There's a real challenge in trying to capture the entire life of a person, a family, a community, within 45 minutes.

The Holocaust and World War II took place over several years and were preceded by full, vibrant lives across generations. Afterward came rebuilding, renewal, and the struggle to move forward.

It's important to understand from the outset: you won't be able to tell everything.

The goal is to select meaningful moments, ones that hold emotional weight, a message, or a question— moments that open a window into the story and create a connection with those listening.

How to Structure Your Story

Opening – Creating a Hook (Approx. 5 min)

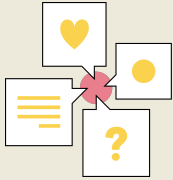
Think about how you'd like to begin your story in a way that draws the listeners in. You can start with an open question, a quote, or a personal reflection that invites emotional connection.

At this stage, incorporate an introduction about yourself and your relationship to the person whose story you're sharing, and share what telling this story means to you.

Framing the Story (Approx. 5 min)

Before writing the main events of the story, take a moment to frame it by describing the person (or people) you're focusing on. *Who were they before the war? Where and when did they live? What kind of life did they have in terms of family, community, work, or culture?*

Try to paint a brief, human picture of their world, not a full historical background, but just enough to give a sense of place, time, and atmosphere.



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The Heart of the Story (Approx. 20 min)

Choose the main events or moments you want to focus on. These can be memories that were passed down to you, significant dilemmas, relationships, or turning points that shaped the person's life. There's more than one way to shape a meaningful and coherent story. You can choose to tell it chronologically, build it around a central theme like courage, friendship, or Jewish identity, or focus on a few key memories.

As you structure the story, think about the emotions and values you want to bring forward through these moments.

Turning Point (Approx. 10 min)

This is where the central thread of the story begins to resolve.

This could be the end of the war, a moment of liberation, reunion, or any experience that marks a transition or resolution. This is where the personal journey starts moving toward closure or a new beginning.

Ending the Story (Approx. 5 min)

Think about how you want to bring your story to a close. You might want to return to the quote, thought, or question you opened with and offer a reflection that connects back to it. This helps you create a sense of completion and meaning.

Message and Insights

Consider what personal message or insight you'd like to share through the story.

When sharing your family story, you have the opportunity to inspire change and impact the people around you through the story you choose to tell.

This message can be your reflection, a hopeful look toward a better future, a worldview, or a meaningful quote from the character you chose to talk about.



Supporting Tools

Using visual and physical materials can enrich the experience and help your audience truly connect with the person you're speaking about and feel their story.

Presentation

Keep it as visual as possible and light on text. (If you're using slides, make sure the space has the equipment needed in advance.)

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

Share any photos you have—whether from the survivor's personal or family album, images of them as a child or an adult, or historical photos that help illustrate the story. You can also include images of the places mentioned to help paint a fuller picture of the time and setting.

Objects

Items such as letters, documents, or personal belongings can help make the story more tangible and real.

Music or Song

You're welcome to sing or play a piece of music connected to the story or family history.

Recipe

You can bring a dish that was part of your family's tradition or simply share the recipe—it's another way to keep memory alive through culture and the senses.



Public speaking tips

Zikaron BaSalon is an intimate and warm gathering, not a big stage or formal event. In such a setting, a few public speaking tips can help you feel more confident and keep your audience engaged.

Take a breath

This could be an emotional moment. Before you begin, take a deep breath, and don't forget to breathe throughout. Give yourself small pauses to take in some air or a sip of water. It's okay to take your time.

Open body language

Feel free to sit comfortably among the others. It's perfectly fine to hold notes or supporting materials—whatever helps you feel grounded. Keeping an open and relaxed posture will help create a warm, inviting atmosphere and make it easier for others to connect with your story.

Clear voice

Speak clearly and loudly so everyone can hear you. A confident voice helps your message reach the group and invites them to listen.

Eye contact

Try to keep eye contact with the audience. Looking people in the eye helps create a connection and can also help you feel more at ease.

Appearance

Wear something that feels comfortable and lets you move freely. Avoid clothing that draws too much attention, you want people to focus on your message, not your outfit.

Sharing your for the First Time?

Practice by telling your story to your close circles. This can help you focus, ensure that your story is clear, and that the message you wish to convey comes through the way you intended.



Keep the Tradition Alive— Ways to Take Part

Host Zikaron BaSalon Yourself

You don't need to wait for an invitation, hosting your own gathering with friends or family is a powerful way to take part. By creating space for memory and conversation, you help shape and carry on the tradition.

Become a Speaker at Zikaron BaSalon

When you speak at Zikaron BaSalon gathering, you become a messenger of memory. Through your story, you invite others to join the tradition, take part in remembrance, and feel personally connected to it.

Thank you for choosing to share your family's story and for being part of the Zikaron BaSalon tradition.

Your choice to share your family story is meaningful and important. As descendants of Holocaust Survivors, we have the privilege and responsibility to listen, explore, collect, and share our families' stories. Every story we share helps keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and ensures that the stories of the survivors and victims are remembered.

For contact and questions: edut@zikaronbasalon.com



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