

# Shoah *Yellow Candle*™

## 2012 “Ner Katan” Program Guide



*“Light A Candle, Preserve A Memory”*



Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs

## Introduction

### ***“LIGHT A FLAME, PRESERVE A MEMORY”***

The worst evil in human history ended 65 years ago, as forces of the Soviet Union’s Red Army liberated Auschwitz on January 27, 1945. Roughly two generations of humanity have passed since that time.

Even so, the Holocaust, Hashoah, is fast becoming a faint glimmer our consciousness, as survivors and eyewitnesses age and pass on. We, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation post-Shoah, must not let this tragedy be forgotten. We must pass the torch to coming generations, Dorim Habayim. We must remember. We must act.

To do this, every person must view the Shoah as if he/she were at the gates of Auschwitz. From standing at Sinai as we received the Law, to celebrating the Passover Exodus and imagining that we were slaves in Mitzrayim, Jews also bear a collective consciousness of the Shoah. Each and every one of us has been touched in some way. Each and every one of us must act on our remembrance.

To do this, a special yahrzeit “Yellow Candle” was conceived in 1980. It can be used on Yom Hashoah, but it is appropriate to light a candle on any day in the calendar. After all, the death camps and gas chambers operated non-stop, 365 days a year.

In 2011, a package of six Yellow Candles was created for individual use, or for communal observances that need six candles, one for each of the Six Million. Observances on Kristallnacht or on other important Shoah historical dates are all enabled. They can be used on Yizkor dates for personal yahrzeits as well.

***Zachor! Remember! G’dank! Thank You!***



## **Important 2011-12 (5772) Shoah Dates**

Yellow Candles are used on Yom Hashoah just after Passover. The timing is no coincidence. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising started in conjunction with the Passover remembrance of liberation from slavery, leading to the birth of the Jewish people at Sinai.

Yellow Candles can also be used on dates commemorating other historical events. Some programs focus on individual remembrance for family lost in the Shoah, or for survivors who have passed in local communities. This page gives a number of dates for 2012).

**January 27, 2012**

### **International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

In early 1945, Red Army troops had advanced into Poland. On January 27, soldiers of the Soviet Union entered and liberated the Auschwitz/Bergen-Belsen complex.

**April 18/19, 2012**

### **Yom Hashoah**

Light a Yellow Candle on Erev Yom Hashoah, the night of Wednesday April 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. Each Jewish day begins on the evening after sunset. Candle lighting normally occurs after three stars are visible in the night sky. Or consult your local Rabbi for guidance on candle lighting times in your area.

**November 9, 2012**

### **Kristallnacht (Novemberpogrom)**

The “Night of Shattered Glass” occurred on November 9, 1938. On this night, the Nazis staged pogroms all over Germany. 267 synagogues were looted or burned, 7500 Jewish businesses were destroyed and 91 Jews lost their lives. Thousands were injured, cemeteries were vandalized and over 25,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps.

### **Yahrzeit name list for other observances:**

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## History of Yom HaShoah and the Yellow Candle™

*Yom HaZikaron laShoah v'laGvura – Holocaust and Heroes' Remembrance Day* was conceived in Israel shortly after independence. On April 21 1951, Knesset voted to designate the 27<sup>th</sup> of Nisan as a day of national remembrance for victims of the Shoah, or Holocaust. Four years later, Knesset passed the Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Law on April 8, 1955. The law was subsequently amended in 1959, setting forth rules and provisions about the observance of Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed internationally on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the Hebrew calendar date that marks the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. When the actual date of Yom HaShoah falls on a Friday, the State of Israel observes Yom HaShoah on the preceding Thursday. When it falls on a Sunday (as it did in 2011), Yom HaShoah is observed on the following Monday. Thus, Yom HaShoah was observed that year on May 1-2, 2011 (28 Nisan 5771).

In 2012, the dates are April 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> (corresponding to 27 Nisan 5772).

The concept of a special *yahrzeit* candle was developed in 1980 by survivors of the Shoah, at gatherings and in their local community Men's Clubs. The candle's purpose was to provide people with a familiar and meaningful ritual to remember victims of the Shoah, with an observance in their homes. There was recognition that most victims did not have family members left to observe *yahrzeit* dates (even if the dates were known).

Since then, the Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle Program has been adapted and expanded, subsequently becoming one of the most successful and far-reaching programs of FJMC (Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs). In 2012, now in its 31<sup>st</sup> year as an FJMC program, over 150,000 families light Yellow Candles at home to commemorate the Holocaust and to keep alive the memories of the Six Million who perished.

The program has expanded beyond FJMC to the Men of Reform Judaism (MRJ), United Synagogue (USCJ), Women's League of Conservative Judaism (WLCJ), Reconstructionist and Orthodox congregations, Jewish Community Centers, Holocaust Memorial Centers, church groups, schools, museums, military bases and others. It continues to grow as a central component of community-wide Holocaust commemoration programs that memorialize the victims of the Shoah.

The Shoah Yellow Candle is modeled after a traditional Jewish *Yahrzeit* memorial candle that burns for 26 hours during periods of mourning and on the anniversary of the death of a family member. The candle's yellow wax reminds us of the yellow arm band which Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi regime. The photo on the candle showing youngsters at a concentration camp emphasizes the importance of teaching our youth the lessons of the Holocaust and of remembering the Six Million.

## Shoah Yellow Candle™ Programming

For over three decades, the Shoah Yellow Candle™ Program has built an awareness of the Holocaust and fostered observance of Yom HaShoah through the distribution of these candles. It is a unique Holocaust program, centered on individual remembrance and the minhag (custom) of lighting candles on the anniversary of a date of death.

For so many whose entire families and communities were wiped out, the Yellow Candle was conceived to permit Yahrzeit observance by other survivors. Any Jew alive today is by definition a survivor of millennia of persecution and pogroms.

The Yellow Candle program provides the context for a broad Holocaust commemoration program wherein candles are distributed as a central component. The individual observance in a home personalizes education about the Shoah and memorialization of the six million Jews slaughtered by the Nazis and their allies.

The Yellow Candle program reaches out to unaffiliated Jews who by definition are connected to the Shoah through their ancestors and families who perished, and/or by their broader association as members of the Jewish people. Yet they have no easy way of expressing that connection. The Nazis and their allies made no distinction between affiliated and non-affiliated Jews, between halachic Jews and Jews-by-choice.

The Yellow Candle program reaches out to all peoples, encompassing a message of hope and meaning. The Nazis and their allies killed millions of non-Jews for, among other reasons, their nationalities, their physical disabilities, their sexual orientation and for simply aiding Jews. National tragedies and genocides continue today and afflict many humans. As expressed by Rabbi Harold Schulweis of Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, California, “Genocide is not private property. It is and it belongs to the public domain.”

The Yellow Candle program reaches out to the present and the future. Through the mitzvah of *Tikkun Olam* – Repairing the World – we remember the past and the victims of the Holocaust to ensure, *Never Again!*

Synagogue Men’s Clubs & Brotherhoods, community centers & churches, local schools & college Hillels are all organizations that can commemorate Kristallnacht, Yom HaShoah and other important milestone dates. The Candles can be used to organize a broad program to educate and expand the numbers of individuals and families who light Yellow Candles.

Visit <http://www.yellowcandles.org>, the web site of the Yellow Candle™ Program, to find proven programming ideas and information on how to obtain candles and supplies. Our theme is “Light a Candle, Preserve a Memory. The goal is to memorialize each person for whom no one remains to say *Kaddish* – the prayer for the dead.

## Sample Letters & Articles

*Adapt this article for use in publicizing the Shoah Yellow Candle Program in the synagogue or organizational newsletter.*

### **LIGHT A YELLOW CANDLE TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO PERISHED**

It has been over almost 70 years since the Nazi concentration camps were liberated, and the Holocaust that claimed six million Jewish lives came to an end. To ensure that the six million did not die in vain and that the Holocaust never happens again, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will join Jews and others throughout North America by participating in the FJMC Shoah Yellow Candle™ Program.

As the years pass, the memories of those who fell victim to the ultimate hate crime must not diminish. That is why we are encouraging everyone in [ORGANIZATION NAME] to light just one Yellow Candle. When each family lights a Yellow Candle, it increases the awareness of the Holocaust and perpetuate our commitment to our people.

The memory is important because the number of Holocaust survivors is diminishing with each passing day. As we lose this precious link, those who deny the Holocaust ever happened gain strength. Sadly, 20% of all high school students lack any knowledge of the Holocaust. Shockingly, only 25% of young Jewish leaders say that the Shoah is important in their Jewish self-identity.

The Yellow Candle is a highly visible symbol for keeping the flame alive. Its color recalls the badges Jews were forced to wear in Nazi-occupied Europe; its flame inspires hope that we can yet make our world a tolerant place to live. [ADD DETAILS ABOUT HOW CANDLES CAN BE OBTAINED LOCALLY]

**Sample Rabbi Letter (for Yom Hashoah)**

Rabbi (*rabbi's name*)

Dear fellow congregants:

I write to you to ask for your personal support for the *Shoah Yellow Candle Program* undertaken each year by our congregation's Men's Club.

The time has come for the commemoration of the Holocaust to be observed in a formal and annual fashion in the Jewish community, throughout the local community, and in the home.

The 27<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, Yom Hashoah, was long ago established as a day for this purpose and over the last three decades this day has taken on increasing importance for the Jewish people. This is as it should be.

The Yellow Candle is a fitting and beautiful way to remember the Six Million in each of our homes. Please take the time to remember, light the candle and come join us for our Yom HaShoah activities.

Sincerely,  
(*Rabbi's name*)

Poem

*"Who Am I To Speak Of A Time?"*

*Who am I to speak of a time  
of families crushed, of crimes of mankind,  
of children in hiding and living in fear,  
of mothers trying to hide all their tears,  
of fathers praying to an empty heaven,  
of people dying again and again?*

*Who am I to know what it was like  
to be persecuted by day and trapped by the night,  
to be surrounded by a world turned upside down,  
to be starved and tortured and beaten to the ground,  
to witness a nation of hate marching past,  
to see all their dreams broken and shattered like glass?*

*Who am I to mention their suffering and pain,  
the ghettos, the camps, life and death inhumane?  
I wasn't even born, I wasn't even there,  
it happened long ago, it could never happen here.*

*Who am I to know what God had in mind  
when the virtues of man were buried alive,  
when good lost to evil and hope turned to despair,  
when hell upon earth seemed everywhere?*

*Who am I to let their memories be forgotten,  
to say and do nothing as if it never happened,  
to forsake the loss of our Jewish family,  
to live in a world of complacency?*

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**THE BLESSING OF THE YELLOW CANDLE**

*We light this yellow candle to rekindle God's flame,  
to shine His light upon the world once again,  
to sanctify the memories of the millions of souls,  
to honor their prayers and all their lost goals.*

*We bless their existence by being alive  
to light this yellow candle as proof we survived.*

*Ron Adler*

# Meditation

*Recite the following, as the Yellow Candle is lit.*

As I light this Yellow Candle, I vow never to forget the lives of the Jewish men, women, and children who are symbolized by this flame. They were tortured and brutalized by human beings who acted like beasts; their lives were taken in cruelty. May we be inspired to learn more about our six million brothers and sisters as individuals and as communities, to recall their memory throughout the year, so that they will not suffer a double death. May we recall not only the terror of their deaths, but also the splendor of their lives. May the memory of their lives inspire us to hallow our own lives and to live meaningful Jewish lives so that we may help to insure that part of who they were shall endure always.

- Rabbi Jules Harlow

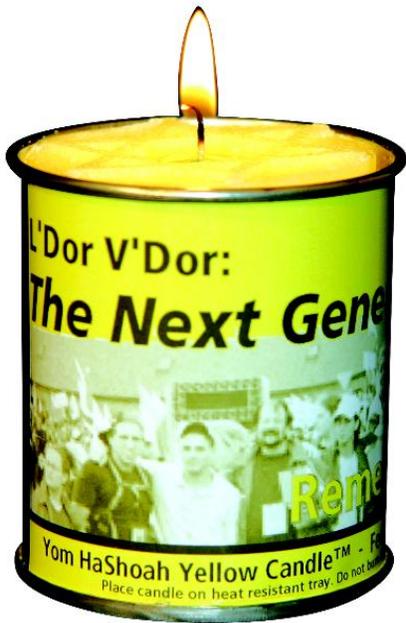


**fjmc**

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<http://www.yellowcandles.org>