

Questions to Consider When Viewing Video

1. Why does Max feel that it is important for young people to learn about the Holocaust? Does he believe that the Holocaust can happen again...why or why not?
2. What did Max learn from the assignment he was given in his school?
3. What were some of the immediate events that happened in his Polish town when the Nazis took over?
4. What were some experiences that the Jews had once they were forced into a ghetto?
5. When Max and his brother were deported, they were fortunate in where they were sent. Why?
6. What were the living conditions in the first camp where Max and his brother were sent? What kind of work did Max do at this camp?
7. What incident caused Max's blindness? How was Max able to survive this incident?
8. When Max and the other prisoners were transferred from this first camp, his eyesight had deteriorated. He experienced total blindness two months later. What courageous actions saved his life at his second camp?
9. What were some of the problems for Max at the time of his liberation by American troops? How was he able to handle these problems?
10. Max talked about the courageous actions of Erich, one of his guardian angels, in saving his life. What did this show Max about some non-Jewish Germans as well as other Righteous Gentiles?

Holocaust Survivor

Max Edelman

Filmed on April 5, 2005



*"Freedom is not free.
Freedom must be protected
and defended."*

- Max Edelman

Face to Face

A Holocaust Education Program at
Congregation Shaarey Tikvah
Beachwood, Ohio

Max Edelman was born in Poland in 1922, in a small town of about 20,000 people. He was the youngest of five children in a devoutly religious family. Life was not fun for a Jewish kid. As a child, he and the other Jewish children were frequently beaten up by bullies. When they complained to police or other adults, nobody cared or did anything about it. Max describes a school incident when he received a B on a paper. The teacher admitted that if Max had not been Jewish, he would have earned a grade of A.

In September, 1939, the Nazis rolled through Max's small town in Poland. They murdered the rabbi when he refused to cooperate by desecrating the synagogue. Then they demanded an exorbitant ransom to return the rabbi's body for burial. Max's family was moved to a ghetto.

From the ghetto Max was sent to a small concentration camp with 300 other young Jews. In the concentration camp he worked in an airplane factory. Life was difficult there, with meager food and brutal treatment.

On April 8, 1944, Max was beaten senseless and left for dead. His brother and friend found him and helped him back to the barracks. Max's left eye was gone, and his right eye was injured. His friend and brother helped cover up for him, so that he could continue to work with his injured eye.

Two months later, the prisoners were moved to Flossenber, where they worked in another airplane factory.

By this time, Max was totally blind, and he had to stop working. At this time, his barracks supervisor, Erich, a non-Jewish German national and a fellow prisoner, made the decision to protect him. Erich created a hiding place in the barracks for Max, a place where the Nazi guards would not look for him.

On April 15, 1945, the Nazis evacuated Flossenber and took the prisoners on a death march. Again, Max was helped by his brother and his friend. On the fifth day of the march, Max wanted to give up. His friend convinced him to go on by reminding Max that it was Hitler's birthday and asking, "Would you give him your life as a birthday present?" On April 23, 1945, the American Army caught up with the death march and liberated the prisoners.

On his first day of freedom, sitting in a comfortable chair in a farmhouse, Max realized for the first time what it meant to be blind. Max owed his life to his brother and friend; yet, at this point, he wasn't sure if he should be grateful to them or if he should despise them for it.

After liberation, Max received training to become a physical therapist at a school for the blind in Germany. He got married, and finally, in 1951, Max and his wife, Barbara, immigrated to the United States.