Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ H\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

First they came for the Communists,

and I didn't object - For I wasn't a Communist;

Then they came for the Socialists,

and I didn't object - For I wasn't a Socialist;

Then they came for the labor leaders, and I

didn't object - For I wasn't a labor leader;

Then they came for the Jews,

and I didn't object - For I wasn't a Jew;

Then they came for me -

And there was no one left to object.\_\_

Martin Niemöller, German Protestant Pastor, 1892-1984

1. Who are the “they” that Niemöller writes about, as in, “first they came for …”?
2. What does it mean when he says, “came for”?
3. Why does he repeat the phrase, “Then they came for …” several times? What effect does the repetition of this phrase have on the listener?
4. What other groups did the Nazis “come for” before and during World War II? Would you or your family have been among those that the Nazis “came for” if you had lived in Germany during WWII? Why or why not?
5. What can you say about the narrator or speaker of Niemöller’s poem? How do you know this?
6. What does he mean by, “I didn’t object”? What are some ways he could have “objected”?
7. What major topics does this poem deal with?
8. What is the theme or message of this poem? Tip: Use the list of topics to help you identify the theme.
9. What do you think Niemöller’s purpose was for writing and speaking these lines throughout his life after the war?
10. Do you think that everyone in Germany was partly responsible for the Nazi’s rise to power, or that only those active in the Nazi Party were responsible? Explain your answer.
11. How much responsibility do you feel for what takes place around you: in your family, in your school, in your city, in your country, and in the world?

* In my family, I feel responsible for…
* At school, I feel responsible for…
* In my city, I feel responsible for…
* In my country, I feel responsible for…
* In the world, I feel responsible for….

**Homework Assignment**

**Updating Niemöller’s Quote**

**DUE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Directions**

Now that you have read and thought about Martin Niemöller’s quote, it’s your turn to make a plea for personal and collective responsibility in our world today.

Think about a societal issue you care about. It can be a local issue or a worldwide issue. Examples might be air or water pollution, racism, school bullying, or civil rights. Re-write the quotation persuading your classmates to agree with your position. Be creative. You can stick with Niemöller’s structure, or use your own structure. Make sure to proof read.

**Examples:**

“First they picked on the chess club members…”

“First they polluted the Great Lakes…”

“First they started racial profiling…”

* 1. Neatly write or type your poem on a **blank** sheet of paper.
* 2. Add colorful drawings, computer graphics and/or magazine clippings around your poem **connected to the topics and theme your poem addresses**. Make it attractive. This will be displayed.
* 3. Around your poem, write the major **topics** your poem deals with (racism, cruelty, indifference, identity, transformation, responsibility, etc.)
* 4. Write the theme or message you are trying to convey somewhere above or below your poem. Move beyond statements like “It is wrong to …” or general statements like “Stand up for what you believe in.” Think about the consequences both to the individual and society if your audience does not listen and live by your message.