***“When they came for me, there was no one left to speak up.”***

**Exploring Personal and Collective Responsibility in WWII**

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| First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—  Because I was not a Socialist.  Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—  Because I was not a Trade Unionist.  Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  Because I was not a Jew.  Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.  Pastor Martin Niemöller, 1945 |

**Directions:** Read the above poem and answer the following questions on another sheet of paper using your own knowledge of Nazi Germany/WWII and your own opinions. Be prepared to share your answers.

1. Who are *“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?
4. What effect does the repetition of this phrase have on the listener?
5. What other groups did the Nazis *“come for”* before and during WWII?
6. Who is the narrator of Niemöller’s quote supposed to be?
7. What does he mean by, *“I didn’t speak up”*? What are some ways he could have *“spoken up”*?
8. What do you think Niemöller’s purpose was for writing and speaking these lines throughout his life after the war?
9. 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.
10. 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? List at least three responsibilities you feel for each level.

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| **Updating Niemöller’s Quote** |

**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 world-wide issue. Examples might be air or water pollution, racism, school bullying, or civil rights. Re-write the quote persuading your classmates to agree with your position. Be creative. You can stick with Niemöller’s structure, or use your own structure.

**Examples:** *“First they picked on the chess club members…”; “First they polluted the Great Lakes…”; “First they started racial profiling…”*

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