

The Courage to Hide



Overview

Through this activity, students will investigate the importance of hiding places to individuals during the Holocaust, the courage and kindness demonstrated in the decision to provide hiding places, and how one act of courage and kindness can produce many more positive impacts over time.

Essential Questions

- Why was the decision to provide hiding places to individuals during the Holocaust an act of courage and kindness?
- How does having a place to hide provide a sense of security and hope?
- What can a hiding place represent to someone who is in need?
- How can a single act of courage or kindness lead to greater impacts over time?

Target Audience

Grades 6–12

Activity Duration

Two 60-minute sessions

Enduring Understandings

- Individuals exhibit courage and kindness in the decision to provide hiding places for people who are in need.
- Hiding places can provide a sense of hope for those in need.
- The courage and kindness to help one person can have a significant impact on many others over time.

Historical Background for Educators

In 1932, Adolf Hitler, leader of the nationalistic, antisemitic, and racist National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) was elected to the German Reichstag (Parliament). The Nazis soon established a single party dictatorship referred to as the Third Reich. From 1933 until 1939, the Nazi government enacted hundreds of increasingly restrictive and discriminatory laws and decrees that banned Jews from all aspects of German public life.

During World War II, the Nazis systematically targeted Jews in Nazi-occupied territories. Jews were forced to wear identifying symbols, relocate to heavily crowded ghettos, and participate

Materials

- *Name, Explain, Reframe Template*
- *Modified Testimony as Primary Source Analysis Chart* handout (4 per Student)
- *The Righteous Among the Nations WebQuest* handout
- *Hiding Places Reflection*

in forced labor. Millions of Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. The Nazis also targeted racial, political, or ideological groups deemed “inferior” or “undesirable”—Roma (Gypsies), LGBTQ+, Slavic peoples, the mentally and physically disabled, Socialists, Communists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Within several years, mass murder became the official Nazi policy (officially organized at the 1942 Wannsee Conference). By then, the Nazis had already deployed *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) to massacre Jewish communities in Poland and the Soviet Union. The Nazis also used poisonous gas, in vans and later in gas chambers at six death camps (Chelmno, Auschwitz, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka). Even when their defeat was imminent, the Nazi leadership committed resources to the destruction of Europe’s Jewish population. Prisoners were forced to evacuate in what are now known as Death Marches.

During this time, very few people had the courage to help Jews escape, and those who were willing to act were often motivated by their own opposition to Nazi antisemitism and racism. Across Europe, resistance to Nazi antisemitism and racism took many forms, including aid, rescue, and spiritual resistance by those who made conscious, courageous choices to help those in need. One common form of aid was to either provide or to assist individuals in locating a hiding place. These hiding places were locations where individuals could momentarily find refuge from the persecution of the Holocaust, often in places like cellars, secret rooms, hidden pits, and even in attics. Individuals and groups who chose to help those targeted by the Nazis did so at great risk; in most cases providing shelter to Jews or others the Nazis targeted was punishable by death. By deciding to hide others, the lives of rescuers changed drastically. From that moment on, their lives revolved around those they were trying to save. In turn, those in hiding, confined for an indefinite time to crowded hideouts, became totally dependent on their benefactors.

SOURCES

- <https://vhap.usc.edu/vhap.iwitness.appdata/historicalcontext/en/Holocaust.pdf>
- <https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/teaching-about-antisemitism/educational-modules-based-on-audio-podcasts/rescue-and-resistance>
- <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/about-the-righteous/who-are-the-righteous-among-the-nations.html>

Procedure

ASK

- Start by explaining to students that they will begin today's activity by investigating how one act of courage and kindness can cause a chain reaction of additional positive acts.
- Launch the investigation by encouraging students to think about one time in their life when someone did something exceptionally kind for them. To structure their reflection, provide students with a copy of the *Name, Explain, Reframe Template* provided in the handouts section below.
- As students work independently, rotate around the room to hear the thinking of individual students, and encourage them to reflect in a greater depth using the following questions for guidance.
 - *Why did you select this specific act of kindness rather than another? Why does this one event stick out in your mind?*
 - *Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation to the person who helped you when you were not willing to help someone else? What prevented you from helping that person? How might that help you better understand the courage and kindness this person showed you?*
 - *Did this act of kindness make you more likely to help others in need in the future? Why?*
- As students conclude their individual reflections, lead a five-minute debrief discussion by encouraging a handful of students to share their reflections for the whole class.
- After students have shared their responses, ask them to share their thoughts to the following question:
 - *How can a single act of courage or kindness lead to greater impacts over time?*
- As students respond to this question, emphasize the importance of courage in the decision to carry out these acts of kindness.

ANALYZE

- Next, students will analyze the importance of hiding places during the Holocaust through testimonies using the *Modified Testimony as a Primary Source Analysis Chart* handout.
 - This guide will help students understand why the decision to provide hiding places during the Holocaust was an act of immense courage and kindness, and how having a place to hide provided a sense of security and hope for the individuals sharing their story.

When viewing testimony, help strengthen the experience by:

- Providing students with the biographies of the survivors and witnesses providing testimony.
- Pausing clips to allow time for students to reflect, record thoughts, questions, and ideas.
- Encourage students to find connections to their own lives, personal experiences, or events taking place today.

- As students prepare to view the testimonies, help them understand the importance of:
 - Paying attention to the speaker's tone of voice and body language.
 - Considering the context and perspectives of the witness.
 - Focusing on the personal story of the testimony as opposed to facts and figures.
- Testimonies for Analysis:
 - [Arie Van Mansum](#) (2:58) describes how he began finding hiding places for Jewish families during the Holocaust.
 - [Esther Bem](#) (1:04) recognizes the courage and compassion of those who offered help during the Holocaust.
 - [Marcia Spies](#) (2:02) explains how a non-Jewish family risked their lives to keep her in their home.
 - [Arthur Ney](#) (2:18) describes how important a place to hide was to him and how frequently he was searching for any place to hide for any period of time.
- Upon conclusion of the testimony analysis, students will discuss the reflective prompts from the *Testimony as Primary Source Analysis* Handout and share important facts, emotions, and quotes from the testimonies that resonated with them.

APPLY

- Next, students will complete a small-group primary and secondary source analysis WebQuest activity using resources from Yad Vashem's "The Righteous Among the Nations" featured stories.
- To provide historical context for this source analysis activity, students will begin by completing a *Think, Pair, Share* activity with one partner by reading and reflecting on the *Who Are the Righteous Among the Nations? Overview* and exploring the role of antisemitism in the events of the Holocaust.

- To set up this *Think, Pair, Share* activity, instruct students to open the following online resources on their device:
 - [Yad Vashem's Who are the Righteous Among the Nations? Overview](#)
 - [Yad Vashem's Antisemitism Overview](#)
- First, encourage students to **Think** by providing each student with five to ten minutes to read and consider the importance of the *Who are the Righteous Among the Nations? Overview* and the role of antisemitism in the events experienced by Jews during the Holocaust.
- Next, encourage students to **Pair** with one partner, and **Share** their key takeaways from the *Who are the Righteous Among the Nations? Overview* and the *Antisemitism Overview*.
 - As students conclude their *Think, Pair, Share*, encourage them to share their thinking through a brief discussion with the whole class. The following questions can help structure this debrief:
 - Why was the decision to provide hiding places to individuals during the Holocaust an act of immense courage and kindness?
 - What might a hiding place represent to an individual who is in need?
 - What is antisemitism?
 - What was the role of antisemitism in the events experienced by Jews during the Holocaust?
- Conclude this discussion by transitioning into a small-group primary and secondary source analysis WebQuest activity. Begin by providing each student with one copy of the *Righteous Among the Nations WebQuest* handout, and divide your class into five or six groups
- Once the class has been divided into groups, provide each group with the name of the rescuer/aid provider they will research using the links below. Through their research, students will investigate the factors weighed by the individuals who chose to hide others during the Holocaust, reflect on the experiences and courage of those who were in hiding, and reflect on how the decision to hide others resulted long-term using the *Righteous Among the Nations WebQuest* handout.
- Once their small-group research has concluded, students will share their findings with the whole class by sharing the group's responses to the guiding questions contained in the *Righteous Among the Nations WebQuest* handout.
- As students share, direct their attention to times when their responses reflect the courage and kindness of the decision to provide hiding places, the hope that hiding places can provide for those in need, and how the courage for one act of kindness can result in more positive actions over time.

ACT

- To conclude, students will use the *Hiding Places Reflection* handout to reflect on how choosing to hide someone during the Holocaust was an act of courage and kindness and the sense of security and hope that those hiding places provided to those in need.

- Students will also use this reflection opportunity to consider how those acts of kindness might connect to the act of kindness they referenced in the “Ask” section above.
- Finally, students will reflect on the choices they can make today to show courage and kindness to those in their community and create a small one-page poster presentation to share key takeaways with their peers.

CONNECTIONS

Connection to Students’ Lives	Connection to Contemporary Events	Connection to the Future
Students will develop their knowledge of courage, the importance of courage to helping provide refuge for those targeted by forms of identity-based hate, and how one act of courage or kindness can cause a chain reaction of additional positive acts.	Students will analyze examples of the importance of hiding places to individuals and groups in the past to discover their own opportunities to demonstrate courage and provide “hiding places” of refuge and safety to those targeted by antisemitism and other forms of identity-based hate.	Students can use their knowledge of courage and its importance in the decision to provide refuge and safety to those in need to inform future student advocacy around opportunities to carry out acts of kindness and courage in their communities.

Clips of Testimony

Arie Van Mansum, a rescuer and aid provider, describes how he began finding hiding places for Jewish families during the Holocaust.

Esther Bem, a Jewish survivor, recognizes the courage and compassion of those who offered help during the Holocaust.

Marcia Spies, a Jewish survivor, explains how a non-Jewish family risked their lives to keep her in their home.

Arthur Ney, a Jewish survivor describes how important a place to hide was to him and how frequently he was searching for any place to hide for any period of time.

National Standards and Frameworks

C3

- D2.His.4.6–8: Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D3.1.6–8: Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

- D4.2.6–8: Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.
- D4.8.6–8: Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms and schools, and in out-of-school civic contexts.

Common Core ELA

- SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.8.2: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- SL.8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Survivor and Witness Biographies

Arie Van Mansum was born March 5th, 1920, in Utrecht, the Netherlands, to Gerrit and Neeltje van Mansum, and he had two sisters and one brother. Arie and his family moved to Maastricht when the family was six. Although most Dutch Christians were Catholic, Arie and his family were Protestant, and after the German army invaded the Netherlands in 1940 all individuals had to carry identification cards. According to Arie's church, Nazism was anti-Christian, and with the help of his church, Arie was active in resistance throughout the war, creating hiding places for Jews and counterfeiting food stamps and false identity cards. In 1943, Arie was arrested and imprisoned for his resistance activities until the Canadian Army liberated his prison in Utrecht in 1945. The following year, Arie served as a witness at war crimes trials before immigrating to Ottawa, Canada. Arie was interviewed in 1996 in Nepean, Ontario, Canada.

Esther Bem was born in the former Yugoslavia in 1930, where she grew up with two older sisters. Esther describes growing up living an upper middle-class life and her father was an engineer who was well-respected in their community. Esther's life changed dramatically after the Germans invaded and occupied the former Yugoslavia, and Esther's family along with other Jewish families lost all of their civil and human rights. In time, Esther's school was closed and additional restrictions placed on her and other Jewish individuals in her community. Esther and her family fled to northern Italy in 1943, living as refugees without any documents or money, hiding in the mountains and homes of different individuals who risked their lives to hide, feed, and shelter Esther and her family. To survive the war, Esther had to conceal her Jewish identity, change her name, and use falsified documents. Esther was interviewed in 1995 in Don Mills, Ontario, Canada.

Marcia Spies was born in Lithuania in 1929. Marcia was born to Genia and Mayer Zvi Cetilin. Marcia's mother was a clothing and fabric businesswoman and her father was an accountant, allowing Marcia to grow up in a beautiful, modern home. Marcia's parents were devout Jews, and her father contributed money to build a large synagogue beside her house. In 1940, the Russians invaded and confiscated the store and home belonging to Marcia and her family. While Marcia was away at a Zionist summer camp, her family were deported by the Russians to Siberia and the Germans subsequently invaded the town. After returning from the summer camp, Marcia lived with her aunt and uncle prior to being placed in a ghetto. Marcia's remaining family, including her aunt and uncle, were then deported from the ghetto, and throughout the remainder of the war Marcia hid with Polish families including a family with two daughters. Following the war, Marcia located and moved in with her uncle and cousin near Munich before immigrating to the United States. Marcia was interviewed in 1995 in Encino, California.

Arthur Ney was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1930. Arthur grew up in Warsaw, living with his parents, sister, and extended family in a primarily Jewish neighborhood. During the war, he was imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto where he would sneak in and out of the ghetto to trade items for food. Arthur managed to escape the ghetto before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, and survived the war by concealing his Jewish identity and pretending to be a Catholic until liberation. Although Arthur's aunt and uncle survived the war, Arthur later learned that his immediate family were all killed. After the war, Arthur immigrated to Canada in 1948 as a war orphan. Arthur was interviewed in 2014 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The [USC Shoah Foundation](#), [Lionsgate](#) and [Kingdom Story Company](#) partner to educate young people about the courage to choose kindness in connection with the film *White Bird*.

Name, Explain, Reframe Template



STUDENT HANDOUT

Directions: Using the guiding questions in the template below, provide a detailed description of a time when you experienced an act of kindness and evaluate the impact of that act of kindness in your life.

Name

What was a time in your life when someone did something exceptionally kind for you?

Explain

What specific actions did the person take during this act of kindness?

Reframe

Why does this action stick out in your mind as being so kind?

What do you believe this person sacrificed to do that act of kindness?

How might their act of kindness have required courage?

How did their act of kindness impact you and your willingness to show kindness to others in your life?

Modified Testimony as Primary Source Analysis Chart



STUDENT HANDOUT

Bio: Interviewee Name: _____ Experience Group: _____

Birth Date and Place: _____

Additional Relevant Info: _____

Directions: As you watch the clip of testimony, write facts that are presented in the left column. Use the right column to note emotions the interviewee demonstrates.

Facts: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How <i>List the topic, dates, event details, location (city, region, country), and names/groups.</i>	Emotions: What emotions did you notice? <i>Notice facial and body expressions, tone of voice, pauses, and word choice.</i>

Reflection Prompts

(After viewing the testimony clip)

What event is this person recalling? How do they feel about the event?

What was the importance of a hiding place in this person's story?

How do the choices made by this individual during the events they are describing demonstrate courage?

The Righteous Among the Nations WebQuest



Directions: Use the website link provided by your teacher to learn more about the experience of aid providers and those they chose to hide during the Holocaust. Use the questions below to guide your reading and provide responses to each of the prompts below.

Guiding Questions	Your Response
<p>1. Who are the individuals/families described on your assigned webpage?</p> <p>Who are the aid providers?</p> <p>Who are those being helped?</p>	
<p>2. Why did the individuals/families decide to provide aid and/or a hiding place to those in need during this time?</p>	
<p>3. What were the factors that were considered by the individuals/families who chose to aid or hide others in your excerpt?</p>	
<p>4. What were the experiences of those who were in hiding as described in your excerpt? How did those in hiding exhibit immense courage?</p>	
<p>Reflect/Predict: How might the choices of kindness and courage exhibited by those in your excerpt inspire future acts of courage and kindness in others?</p>	

Hiding Places Reflection



STUDENT HANDOUT

Directions: Using the prompts below, reflect on the importance of courage and kindness in the decision to provide “hiding places” to those in need.

1. How was the decision to provide hiding places to individuals or groups during the Holocaust an act of immense courage and kindness?

2. How can hiding places provide a sense of security and hope to those in need?

3. How do the great actions of courage and kindness from individuals or groups during the Holocaust relate to the act of kindness you referenced during the *Name, Explain, Reframe* activity today?

4. What are the personal characteristics displayed by those whose stories you studied today? What actions do they take to demonstrate courage and kindness?

a. What choices can you make to cultivate these personal characteristics in your own life today?

b. What are the challenges that you might encounter in trying to integrate these personal characteristics into your life?

Poster Presentation: After concluding your reflection above, flip this paper over and create a one-page poster presentation to synthesize your learning from this activity. On your poster, share examples for each of the following:

- Why was the decision to provide hiding places to individuals during the Holocaust an act of immense courage and kindness?
- How does having a place to hide provide a sense of security and hope?
- What can a hiding place represent to someone who is in need?
- How can a single act of courage or kindness lead to greater impacts over time?