

Anne Frank: Rescuers

Summary

Discuss heroic behavior of individuals from the Holocaust.

Background for Teachers

Although there are several organizations devoted to finding and honoring those who risked their lives to rescue the victims of the Holocaust, there are no definite figures regarding the number of people who actually did. Estimates range anywhere from 50 - 500 thousand.

Intended Learning Outcomes

To recognize that heroic behavior (just like discrimination) is done by average people who remained true to their beliefs. To understand our obligations in preventing discrimination.

Instructional Procedures

See preface material from 'Anne Frank in the World, 1929 - 1945 Teacher Workbook.'

Have students read excerpts from any book recounting rescuers' stories or show the film 'The Courage to Care' (the Tennessee Holocaust Commission has several books and the video, see organizational list) to provide students with some background to the subject.

Discuss the rescuers in the story of Anne Frank. Share these quotes from the book 'Anne Frank Remembered' by Miep Gies.

'It is up to all of us ordinary people all over the world to see to it that these times do not happen again.'

'I am not a hero.'

Some emphasis may be placed on the fact that we all like to think that we would help, but that relatively few did during the Holocaust. Why weren't there more?

Non-Jews who were caught attempting to save Jews were subjected to the same fate as the Jews. Their families were also subjected to the same fate - even if they were unaware of the rescue activities. Were those who chose not to act wrong? Ask the class to think about what they would be willing to risk to stand up for their beliefs?

Have students find examples in their own communities of people who have chosen to take a stand for their beliefs and ideas, dared to risk. Examples can be from personal interviews or newspaper clippings. Share stories with the entire class.

Role-play a scene where you are called upon to take a stand for your beliefs. Examples can be set during the Holocaust years, or preferably within the realm of the student's world. Examples include: Hearing someone you know and respect saying a racial slur, seeing a physical fight at school or even having students take a stand against a school rule that she/he feels is truly unfair.

Talk with students about the concept of rescue in our own times. Brainstorm about rescues they have heard of or seen - emotional as well as physical. What are some people doing to help the people in Somalia and Bosnia. Have your students discuss what they can do. Will they be risking anything? Racism and prejudice are still common today. What would you say to someone who comes to you asking about these problems and why they still exist? How would you counsel him or her if they saw a way to help someone in need, but at risk to themselves? What do you think you might do in such a situation?

Authors

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