

Life in a Concentration Camp

Summary

To understand better what it was like in a concentration camp, and to give them an opportunity to practice putting themselves in the prisoners' position, the students will write a postcard to their mother and father from Auschwitz. They will not be given much space and an economy of words will be necessary. The students will be given numbers and they will be required to sign the postcard with their assigned number, since the Nazis no longer regard them as having names.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 60 minutes each

Life Skills

Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

-Victor Frankl's A Man's Search for Meaning -Postcards -pens/pencils

Student Prior Knowledge

-empathy -imagination

Intended Learning Outcomes

Oftentimes it is difficult to place oneself in the position of those who have suffered in history. No student, nor teacher, can understand what it was fully like to be in a concentration camp but an attempt can be made to place oneself in the prisoners' position. The objective of this lesson is to use a postcard home, to family, as a way for the students to describe concentration camp conditions, their feelings, treatment by the guards, and their hopes.

Instructional Procedures

Anticipatory Set: A passage from Victor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning will be read to the class describing concentration camp conditions and his thoughts and feelings while in a concentration camp. This will give the students a feel for everyday life in the camps as well as one prisoner's thoughts and feelings. Communication of the Objective: The students will then be told what the writing assignment is for the lesson. The teacher will express the hope that each student will attempt to place him or herself into the shoes of a Jew in a concentration camp and write an honest, sincere letter to parents. Input/Modeling: To synthesize what they have learned from Frankl's passage, and to give them an opportunity to practice putting themselves into the prisoners' position, the students will write a postcard to their mother and father from Auschwitz. They will not be given much space and an economy of words will be necessary. The students will be given numbers and they will be required to sign the postcard with their assigned number, since the Nazis no longer regard them as having names. They will include descriptions of concentration camp conditions, their feelings, treatment by the guards, visuals, and their hopes and despairs. This will be an in class writing assignment, as no more than fifteen minutes is needed for the assignment. Check for Understanding: The students will be asked whether any of them would like to share what they have written in the postcard. If none volunteer, the teacher will choose three or four students to share theirs. Closure: Ask the students how they felt as they wrote the postcards. We will have a discussion about the activity and the students will be allowed to share any new insights or feelings they discovered about the Holocaust because of this lesson.

Assessment Plan

Assessment of this lesson will focus on whether the students followed the instructions, their participation and effort, and whether they included concrete descriptions of camp conditions, activities, and their feelings as prisoners.

Bibliography

A Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl

Authors

[Michael Nemelka](#)