

Lesson 25: *The Courage to Care*

2 Class Periods

Language Skills: **Listening**
 Summarizing
 Reflecting
 Discussing

Purpose:

My rationale for showing this film has more to do with my affective objectives for the unit than for my reading objectives. Consider the following words from Chaim Ginott, the author of *Between Parent and Child*:

Dear Teacher:

I am a survivor of a concentration camp.

My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers,

Children poisoned by educated physicians,

Infants killed by trained nurses

Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates,

So I am suspicious of education

My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

I can teach the reading objectives of my curriculum with many types and topics of literature. I choose to use Holocaust literature because of its potential to open my students' hearts – to foster a larger sense of compassion for humanity. The film *The Courage to Care* is about people who possessed a sense of empathy and who acted on the content of their character. I hope that, by showing this film, my students may become more inclined to act with greater compassion.

Background Reading:

I would advise you to read the pages 156-157 “Rescue” and 159-160 “Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: A City of Refuge” in *The World Must Know*. These sections will give you helpful background information to share with your students. It is important to note that although “thousands of individuals risked their own lives to help Jews,” these thousands represent a very small percentage of Europeans affected by the Holocaust. The vast majority of people chose to remain silent and not interfere with the Nazis plans for their victims.

It would also be wise to read the information created by ADL that accompanies the film itself. I have included photocopies of this information just in case the printed guides are not attached to the film you obtain for use.

Materials Needed:

VHS or DVD of *The Courage to Care*

One copy for each student of the handout “*The Courage to Care: Notes and Reflection*”

Process:

Give each student a handout and explain that they are to use it to take notes during the film. Tell them that three of the people listed helped save Jewish lives during the Holocaust: Irene, Marion, and Magda. Odette and Emanuel are Jews whose lives were saved. Ask the students to make brief notes about each person’s story as they watch the film. Caution them that they will need to listen very carefully. All of the people featured are not native speakers of English, and some speak with accents. (NOTE: The people are not identified by name at the start of the film; they are identified by place. It would be helpful for the teacher to identify the subjects by name as each story begins.)

The film is narrated by Elie Wiesel, the author of Night. Mr. Wiesel makes important observations about rescuers. Instruct students to listen very carefully for these comments and record them in the first section on the back side of the note sheet. Mr. Wiesel’s voice is the very first you will hear in the film. After that, it is easy to identify.

You may find it necessary to stop frequently to allow students to catch up on their notes and to answer questions. The film is only about 29 minutes long, but I was not able to finish it in one class period because of the need to pause for clarification after each vignette.

The second question on the back side of the note sheet can be answered with information given in the film. The students will need to make connections between what each person says and then summarize what is similar about each person’s observations.

The last two questions on the note sheet are intended to promote personal reflection and class discussion. Students will need to have time during class or outside of class to complete these reflections before sharing their thoughts in class.

One last note, it is difficult to say what each of us would have done if we had been in the same situations as the people in the film. There were costly reprisals against anyone who was caught helping Jews. One thing I like about the film is how it shows that helping could be something as high-risk as hiding a family. But it also could be as relatively low-risk as vouching for a kid who didn’t have his papers. In the narration, Wiesel says that helping could even mean giving someone a bit of bread. In both *Four Perfect Pebbles* and in *One Survivor Remembers*, the protagonists share incidents where they were helped – the Blumenthals by a guard who gave them an apple and Gerda by Frau Kugler. These incidents helped victims maintain hope that there was some human kindness in a world gone mad.

The Courage to Care:
Notes and Reflection

Name _____

Hour _____ Date _____

This film is about people who helped save Jewish lives during the Holocaust and about Jews whose lives were saved. Make notes about the stories of each of the people featured in the film.

Odette Meyers – Paris, France

Irene Opdyke - Poland

Marion Van Binsbergen Pritchard – Amsterdam, Holland

Emanuel Tanay – Cracow, Poland

Magda Trocmé – Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France

The film is narrated by Elie Wiesel, the author of *Night*. Mr. Wiesel is Hungarian Jew who survived Auschwitz and a death march. What comments does Mr. Wiesel make about the rescuers and why they chose to act as they did?

What reasons do the rescuers in the film give for helping Jews?

Why do you think the film is titled *The Courage to Care*?

Share your thoughts and feelings about the following quote:

“Courage is never alone, for it has fear as its ever-present companion. The greater the fear, the more courageous the action that defies it.”

- Sholomo Breznitz

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Notes and Reflections

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Hour _____ Date _____

This film is about people who helped save Jewish lives during the Holocaust and about Jews whose lives were saved. Make notes about the stories of each of the people featured in the film.

Odette Meyers – Paris, France

- 7 years old when 13,000 Jewish women and children were rounded-up in Paris for deportation to Birkenau (Auschwitz II)
- Mother was active in resistance; Father was a POW
- Saved by the concierge of the apartment and her husband. She woke Odette and her mother at 5 a.m. and hid them in a closet in her own apartment. She then lied to the Nazis about their whereabouts.
- Mr. Henry took Odette by the hand and led her past the Nazis on the street to safety.

Irene Opdyke - Poland

- Worked for the Nazis serving meals & doing laundry. Asked by the Major to be his housekeeper. This request coincided with the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto.
 - Irene saw an opportunity to hide 12 Jews in the cellar of the Major's home.
 - She was caught by the Major and pleaded for the lives of the people
- NOTE: Irene's book *In My Hands* tells this story more completely. She agreed to become the Major's mistress in exchange for the lives of the 12 Jews.

Marion Van Binsbergen Pritchard – Amsterdam, Holland

- Witnessed the liquidation of a Jewish orphanage. Two women who tried to intervene were picked up and taken away with the children. Marion just watched. Her conscience was bothered by her inaction, so she vowed to help.
- She hid a Jewish man and his 3 children in a country home. Was caught by a Dutch policeman who collaborated with the Nazis. She killed him rather than risk his betrayal of the family in her care.

Emanuel Tanay – Cracow, Poland

- Parents arranged to hide him in a monastery, but he was denounced. Hid in an organ rather than sleeping in his room; therefore, he escaped capture the night the Nazis came to arrest him.
- On his own at age 14. Helped by a village elder when he was searched by the Nazis and found to have to ID papers. The elder vouched for him and paid the fine for not having the papers.

Magda Trocmé – Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France

- Husband was a Protestant minister. Set an example for the village to harbor Jews.
- Cousin Daniel was deported along with the Jews he was trying to protect when a boarding home/school was inspected.

The film is narrated by Elie Wiesel, the author of *Night*. Mr. Wiesel is Hungarian Jew who survived Auschwitz and a death march. What comments does Mr. Wiesel make about the rescuers and why they chose to act as they did?

- It was a natural thing to save people – to remain human
- The victims died not only because of the killers, but because others stood by and did nothing.
- “There is always a second in which the moral choice is made.”

What reasons do the rescuers in the film give for helping Jews?

- They had a deep-seated conviction that they had to do it.
- They were not making choices on reflection. They simply had to do it because that’s the kind of people they were.
- “Are you thinking that we are all brothers or not.” – Magda Trocmé
- “We all have memories of times when we should have done something a didn’t. And it gets in the way during the rest of your life.” - Marion Pritchard

Why do you think the film is titled *The Courage to Care*?

Share your thoughts and feelings about the following quote:

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