



LESSON PLAN: A Model for the Escalation of Hate

1 To begin this lesson, introduce students to **Esther Clifford (bio)**, **Alfred Gottschalk (bio)**, and **Ellen Brandt (bio)** and show their testimonies. Follow with a discussion using the questions below.

- What did Esther Clifford describe as the turning point for her family? Where did they want to go and how did they try to accomplish their goal?
- According to Esther, how did countries around the world respond to Jews trying to leave Germany?
- What evidence is presented in Esther’s testimony that supports the idea that the Nazis were set on destroying the economic life of Jews?
- Discuss the significance of Alfred Gottschalk’s statement “nothing Jews had done for their country made any difference.”
- How did Ellen Brandt respond to what was happening around her in Germany at the time? How does she say she changed?
- According to these testimonies, in what ways did the daily routines of German Jews change during the years 1933–1939?

2 Show students the **Pyramid of Hate** handout. Review each part of the pyramid by having students refer to the **Glossary** for the definition of each term used and by presenting examples for each section (e.g., scapegoating—blaming immigrants for lack of jobs).

3 After reviewing the model, have students consider how prejudiced attitudes might, if left unchecked, eventually lead to violence and encourage them to share examples that illustrate the progression through each part of the pyramid.

4 Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Provide each group with a piece of chart paper, markers, and sticky notes. Have each group select a recorder. Instruct the recorder to draw a large pyramid on the chart paper and divide it into the four sections, labeling each section.

5 Have group members work together to identify examples for each part of the pyramid from the visual history testimony that they have watched and from the **Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy** handout, write them on the sticky notes, and affix them to the chart paper (e.g., Jews dismissed from civil service would be placed on the “Discrimination” section). Not all events need be used, but students should be encouraged to have at least four examples for each category. Students may not agree on the placement of events and should be encouraged to share their thought processes in arriving at consensus.

6 After completing the pyramids, have groups post them around the room. Review the placement of events as a whole group, discussing how students determined what each action exemplified. After reviewing the pyramids, have a discussion using some or all of the following questions:

- Which parts of the pyramid primarily reflect acts by individuals?
- Which parts of the pyramid reflect state-sponsored acts that need government support to continue?
- Did the events on this pyramid always follow an upward progression or were there instances when the actions would represent an earlier segment of the pyramid? (e.g., violent acts followed by acts of discrimination and then back to violent acts again) What are some possible explanations for why this might have happened?
- Explain how the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* represented an escalation of anti-Jewish acts.
- What does the Pyramid of Hate model explain about Nazi anti-Jewish attitudes and policies and their development? What other factors should also be taken into account? (e.g., antisemitism)

7 Raise the issue of personal responsibility by introducing the following quotation by Reverend Martin Niemöeller, a German Protestant minister who survived Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps where he was sent because of his outspoken criticism of the Nazi government in Germany.

“In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists, and I didn’t speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn’t speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn’t speak up because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn’t speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me... and by that time there was no one left to speak up.¹”

8 Ask students to consider the role of the individual in the events that surround him or her, using Reverend Niemöeller’s words as a catalyst for the discussion.

- Why do you think Reverend Niemöeller did not “speak up” when Hitler’s government began its persecution of various groups in Germany?
- Why do you think it was difficult to oppose the government’s actions?
- At what point in the escalation of anti-Jewish policies in Nazi Germany did non-Jews have a responsibility to interrupt what they saw happening?
- What actions could they have taken?
- Do you think it is difficult for individuals to do these kinds of things? Why or why not?

¹ Multiple versions of this quotation exist as Niemöeller himself was not consistent in the wording. It is often written in poem form as well. A version of the poem, titled “They Came For,” can be found in Making Connections at the end of this unit.

- What is the cost to the individual who does not act to interrupt injustice?
- What is the harm to the victims?
- What is the harm to society as a whole?
- Thinking about the key events that you have learned about in this lesson/unit, what, in your opinion, is the power of peer pressure?

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES