



LESSON PLAN: Rescuers and Aid Providers

1 Write the word “altruism” on the board. Have students brainstorm the meaning of the term and record their responses. Help students consider the following key elements of altruism if they are not offered during the brainstorming session:

- directed toward helping another or others
- involves a high degree of risk or sacrifice to the helper
- no external reward
- voluntary action

2 Introduce students to **Arie Van Mansum (bio)** and **Leslie Banos (bio)** and then show their testimonies. Follow with a discussion using the questions below.

- How does Arie Van Mansum say he became involved in helping to hide Jews?
- To what does Arie attribute his willingness to help Jews during the Holocaust?
- How does Leslie Banos say he got involved in the resistance movement?
- What specific things did Leslie and his family do to help people?
- To what does Leslie attribute his willingness to help Jews during the Holocaust?
- What risks did Arie and Leslie face once they decided to provide aid?
- Do Arie’s and Leslie’s actions fit the description of “altruism”? Explain your response.

3 On the board or on chart paper, draw a circle and put a “V” in the middle for “victim.” Ask students to identify victims of the Holocaust. Draw a larger circle around the first circle and put a “P” for “perpetrator.” Have students identify perpetrators during the Holocaust. Draw a third larger circle that intersects the first two and put a “B” for “bystander.” Ask students to identify bystanders during the Holocaust. Have students study the diagram and discuss what happens to a bystander when he or she makes the decision to no longer be a bystander but to help the victim (i.e., he or she now also becomes a victim as in the case of Arie Van Mansum).

4 Ask students if deciding to take this risk of becoming a victim yourself is an example of altruism. Allow time for them to share their thinking and also discuss the following questions:

- What are some possible reasons why people were altruistic during the Holocaust? (e.g., religious beliefs, personal experience, upbringing)

- Why do you think most people remained indifferent to what was going on around them? (e.g., fear, not seeing others as part of them)

5 Distribute the **Those Who Dared to Rescue** handout. As students read the handout, have them prepare a graphic organizer or make a list of the various forms of rescue by which non-Jews saved the lives of Jews during the Holocaust.

6 Have a large-group discussion reviewing the forms of rescue discussed in the handout. Have students brainstorm the qualities that would motivate people to help others at the risk of their own lives and possibly the lives of their families and friends. Use some or all of the questions below to guide the discussion.

- Why would someone agree to hide another?
- What could be the possible motivation for doing so?
- Think about the terms “help” and “rescue.” How, if at all, are these terms different?
- In the context of the Holocaust, how do you understand the difference between these two terms? Can you think of a specific time when help was needed rather than rescue, and of times when Jews needed to be rescued?
- What are the possible risks in trying to help someone?
- What are the possible risks in trying to rescue someone?
- What are some of the basic human needs that must have been provided by a rescuer to a victim?
- Would you characterize those individuals who helped Jews as heroes? Why or why not?
- Would you characterize those who rescued Jews as heroes? Why or why not?

7 Distribute the **Anne Frank’s Legacy**¹ handout, and read together as a class. Continue the earlier discussion about rescuers, using some or all of the questions below.

- How did you feel reading Miep Gies’s speech?
- What reasons did Miep give for helping to hide the Frank family?
- Would you characterize Miep as an altruistic person? Why or why not?
- What does the word “empathy” mean? How is “empathy” different from “sympathy”? [Optional: Have students look up the definitions of “empathy” and “sympathy” in a dictionary and share their findings.]

¹ Encourage students to visit the Anne Frank website (annefrank.org) for an online tour of the Secret Annex and additional information about the people who hid there and the people who helped them for more than two years.

- What life experiences prior to meeting the Frank family prepared Miep to empathize with the Frank family's situation?
- How many people were involved in hiding the Frank family?
- Miep does not see herself as a hero; she says that those in hiding were the heroes. Do you agree with this? Explain your thinking.
- In paragraph three, Miep talks about "blaming the victim" for his or her own troubles. What does it mean to "blame the victim"? What are some contemporary examples of blaming the victim? (e.g., a woman out alone is "asking" to be raped, tourists on vacation "throwing a lot of money around" are "asking" to have their wallets or purses stolen).
- In the description given to us by Miep of the morning ritual, she describes the Jews standing silent. What does victimizing a person do to his or her self-image? Why was Miep upset?
- Discuss Miep's statement, "Many children are told to mind their own business only. When those children become adults, they might look the other way if people ask for help."
- Do you think that parents and other significant adults (e.g., teachers, religious leaders) have a responsibility to teach children to act when they see injustice? What are some ways that adults might model this behavior?
- How does the Holocaust continue to serve as an example of the price of apathy and indifference to individuals and society?
- In addition to apathy, what else might have influenced the behavior and decisions of bystanders during the Holocaust?

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES