



LESSON PLAN: Righteous Among the Nations

1 To begin this lesson, introduce students to **Renee Scott (bio)**, show her clip of testimony, and discuss the following questions:

- What does Renee Scott say she did to help rescue Jews?
- How many false papers does Renee estimate were made each week at the Chamber of Commerce?
- Why was what Renee did so dangerous?

2 Give students an introduction to the phrase “Righteous Among the Nations.” Explain that in 1953, the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority Law, which created Yad Vashem (yadvashem.org). Yad Vashem received the mandate to identify and recognize non-Jews who had risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews in countries that had been under Nazi rule or that had collaborated with the German regime. The historical account of the Holocaust would not be complete without the amazing stories of the “Righteous Among the Nations.”

3 Tell students that a committee of judges discusses each and every person who is a candidate for becoming a “Righteous Among the Nations.” Ask students to think about what the main criteria for receiving this designation might be and list their answers on the board or chart paper. Distribute the **Yad Vashem Criteria for “Righteous Among the Nations”** handout and review together.

4 After reviewing the handout, allow time for students to share their observations about the material. If needed, use guiding questions like those below.

- Do you agree with the “Righteous Among the Nations” criteria? Why or why not?
- Is there something else that you expected to see in the criteria? If so, what?
- Did you think that the overall number of individuals identified as “Righteous Among the Nations” would be higher? Why or why not?
- Are you surprised by any of the information listed on the chart of “Righteous Among the Nations” by country? If so, what surprises you or what question/s does the information raise for you?

5 Distribute the **Rescue in Denmark** handout. Direct the class to turn to the first page of the handout, and choose a volunteer to begin reading out loud. When the reader has finished reading the first paragraph, pause and ask the group:

- How was the situation for Danish Jews different from Jews in other German-occupied

countries until 1943?

After reading the second, third, and fourth paragraphs, pause and ask the group:

- What event propelled the underground in Denmark to go into action?
- What made Helsingor (Elsinore) an ideal place for Jews to go if they wanted to escape Nazi-occupied territory?

After reading the fifth and sixth paragraphs, ask the group:

- Why might Ronne and Kior have been interested in helping the Jews?
- What reasons might they have had besides humanitarian ones?

After reading the seventh, eighth, and ninth paragraphs, ask the group:

- How did the underground keep the Jewish children from crying on the boats to Sweden?
- How many trips did the Elsinore Sewing Club take to Sweden?
- In addition to Jews, who else did the Elsinore Sewing Club rescue?
- What risks did the people who were involved with this “club” take when they agreed to help rescue Jews?
- How is the story of the rescue in Denmark unique?
- What kind of cultural and political systems should a nation create in order to be able to participate/organize such a moral action?

6 Close with a general discussion about why students think that some individuals and groups decided not to accept the bystander role during the Holocaust. Encourage them to reflect on ways that they and others that they know do and do not accept the role of bystanders in their school and communities.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES