



Teachers' Notes

Holocaust Unit

Choices

Before the Lesson Begins

- Print out Resources A, B & C
- Print out copies of FYFT Pledge Cards
- Arrange the classroom in a layout that facilitates debate

Resources not provided

- Pens
- Paper

Lesson Overview

The focus of this lesson is the idea that we should recognise that we should take responsibility for our own actions, especially when the choices we make/ actions we take affect others.

Introduction

Discussion Guidance

1. People's choices can affect both the individual and others.
2. People made choices during the Holocaust, both good and/or bad, and they have – or should take - a responsibility for the choices that they made.

Section 1: Bad Choices

Activity Guidance

NB: You may explain to the class that you will be exploring two opposing case studies of individuals and their choices and in the first case study they will be re-enacting a trial. The purpose of this activity is to allow students to explore the idea of taking responsibility for a choice and what 'taking responsibility means in practice.

Resource List

NB: These resources are drawn from real life case notes used in the trial.

- Resource B - Judge
- Resource C - Prosecution
- Resource D - Defence

Preparation

- Explain to all groups that the role of the Judges is to listen to the evidence presented by the other two groups, and to make the final decision.
- Before the case begins, allow the Prosecution & Defence time to build their case from their limited resource case notes. The Judges will be given more comprehensive case-notes including all the information the Prosecution & Defence will be drawing from.
- Whilst the Prosecution & Defence groups build their case, the Judges will read and discuss their notes amongst their group, quietly.

NB: During the case:

- Ensure that all classmates - especially the judges - are listening and the Prosecution & Defence are engaging maturely. Ensure 'good practise' between the two sides (i.e. no shouting, swearing, offensive behaviour).
- When announcing their decision, ensure the judges give legitimate reasons for their decision. 'Because I didn't like him.' For example, is not a legitimate reason.

NB: During Class Discussions challenge the pupils to defend their opinions to both yourself and other classmates and encourage controlled debate between pupils.

Section 2: Good Choices

NB: This clip is an interview with Mirosława Gruszczyńska; a Righteous Among the Nations. With the help of her family, she saved the lives of Jewish People during the war. Righteous Among the Nations is an award given by Yad Vashem in Israel to honour non-Jewish people who saved the lives of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Discussion Guidance

1. The Righteous Among Nations did have a choice.
2. This question is to allow students personal processing time to consider what they have seen.

Section 3: Good Choices VS Bad Choices

Discussion Guidance

NB: These are big questions on morality, visit groups throughout to assist them during discussion. If you wish, use these examples to help the students grasp the concept that people can be at once good & bad. The purpose of this is to show students that morality is not black and white.

Good or bad?

- Hitler and the Nazi party are considered inherently bad – but Hitler was famously a vegetarian and him and his fellow Nazi inner circle (Goering, Himmler) were famous conservationists. Hitler and his cronies both campaigned against and passed laws to combat animal cruelty and hunting within Germany. In 1934, they even hosted an international conference on animal protection in Berlin.
- Mahatma Gandhi is a famously respected peacekeeper, but he believed and wrote at length defending the unfair caste system which existed in India in his lifetime.

'The caste system is a natural order of society...I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the caste system' - Ghandi

This system decided a person's profession and status within society by the accident of their birth and the colour of their skin. He did, however, change his views on this in his later life, after meeting intelligent members of the lowest rung of the caste system. (See this academic paper for more information.)

- Martin Luther King is hailed as a hero, but it has been revealed in testimonies of his closest friends that he was guilty of extra-marital affairs, which were monitored by FBI surveillance.

Section 4: Our Choices

Discussion Guidance

1. Most crucially, their/our choices.
2. This question is to allow students to be introspective about their own behavior.
3. Yes, as they have both positive and negative effects on ourselves & others. We should consider these outcomes/effects to help us make choices.
4. You may allow students to share their stories with the class.
5. Personal benefit & benefit of others.