

Lesson Plan

Subject: Holocaust Studies -- Dehumanization of Holocaust Victims

Grade Level: 9-10

Unit Length: Four lessons

Learning Objectives:

- Be able to describe specific examples of how Jewish victims were systematically dehumanized during the Holocaust.
- Be able to articulate the conditions to which victims were subjected.
- Be able to describe how survivors coped with dehumanization before and during the Holocaust.
- Be able to distinguish how different forms of historical accounts render different perceptions of events. (Oral histories of survivors vs. secondary accounts). ***

Prerequisite Learning:

- General understanding of the rise of the Nazi party in Germany.
- Understanding of Anti Semitic policies prior to 1941.
- Understanding of the ghettos, camps, and process of separating Jewish people in Nazi occupied areas.

Information to be presented:

- Selected clips from, "And I Was There" video. -- Temple Adath Israel Collection
- A brief history of events leading into the Holocaust through the lense of, "Courage to Remember the Holocaust" slides. -- Temple Adath Israel Collection
- Selected clips from Dr. Jeremy Popkin. -- Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project
- Images from the "Holocaust" slides. -- Temple Adath Israel Collection
- Images of propaganda.

Student Activities:

- In-class group work analyzing and discussing photographs and propaganda images.
- Homework -- read assigned articles/ watch assigned videos and come to class ready to discuss.

Lessons (One hour each):

Lesson 1: Rise of Nazi Anti Semitism 1933-1938

- The objective of this lesson is to present to the class a comprehensive synopsis of the Nazis' implementation of anti semitic policies beginning with their consolidation of power in 1933.
- Define Naziism by its emphasis on racial hierarchy and purification.
- Explain the idea of the Jew as the scapegoat for the problems faced by Europe post WW1.
- Establish a timeline (1933-1938) upon which milestone antisemitic events and policies can be plotted.
- **Homework due next lesson:**
 - Watch, <https://www.npr.org/2011/03/29/134956180/criminals-see-their-victims-as-less-than-human>, and take notes. Come to class with two questions on the reading.
- **Questions to prompt class discussion:**
 - What prepared the German people to willingly accept Jews as scapegoats?
 - What factors may have enticed Germans into adhering to Nazi ideology? What about those who were non-Jewish but sympathetic to Jews?
 - How would you have reacted to events as a German Jew in 1933? 1936? 1938?
 - What could have led Jews to comply to Nazi policies rather than vacate the country?

Lesson 2: Gradual Systematic Dehumanization

- The objective of this lesson is to present to the class specific and graphic ways in which the Nazi party targeted the Jews and villainized them in the public eye.
- Present the class with specific examples of propaganda and Nazi portrayals of Jews.
- Detail how racial superiority of Germans over Jews was taught in all grade levels to German students.
- Highlight the Nuremberg Laws and their immediate implications for Jews.
- Explain how each event on the 1933-1938 timeline affects the Jews' status in Germany.
- Describe the pseudo-scientific justifications for enforcing discriminatory policies against Jews. -- The alleged superiority of the Aryan race.
- **Homework due next lesson:**
 - Watch, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDFFis0j4JM> and take notes. Come to class with two questions about the video.
- **Questions to prompt class discussion:**

- What strikes you the most about the anti-Jewish propaganda?
- What do you think is the specific purpose behind the propaganda? Is the initial intent to dehumanize the Jews or to simply make the German people see them as an enemy? Is there a difference?
- What is the intention of Nazi officials in teaching students racial pseudo-science at early ages?
- How do you think the interests of Jews were represented at Nuremberg?

Lesson 3: The Culmination of Nazi Anti Semitism 1939-1945

- The objective of this lesson is to convey how increasing public dehumanization of Jews in the preceding years enabled the Nazi party to carry out innumerable atrocities leading into the 1940's.
- Describe the camps with photos and clips of survivor accounts. Point out how many camps there were and how many Jews were being sent there.
- Use survivor accounts to portray the inhumanity of their situation.
- **Questions to prompt class discussion:**
 - Now that you've seen the callous barbarism of the camps through photos and survivor accounts, do you think it was always the ultimate goal when the Nazis were originally devising propaganda? In other words, do you think the Nazis knew they had to dehumanize the Jews before they could follow through with the final solution, or do you think their status as a scapegoat would have been enough?
 - Seeing the progression of dehumanizing a substantial group of people over just five years, what can you take from this and apply to the present? What are the dangers of isolating a particular group and attributing negative qualities?
 - What is the danger of a majority with implicit influence and authority?

Lesson 4: The Jewish Resistance Dehumanization

- The objective of this lesson is to illustrate how Jews under Nazi rule coped with their dehumanized status before, during, and after the Holocaust.
- Use clips from Dr. Popkin's interview about testimonies hidden in milk cartons in the ghettos.
- Use clips from "And I Was There" to show directly how Jews viewed themselves and their situations
- Describe how German Jews reacted to anti semitism during the prewar period, and how they expected events to unfold going forward. -- For this use clips from, "And I Was There", depicting survivors saying their families expected conditions to improve.
- **Questions to prompt class discussion:**

- Why do you think many Jews in Germany felt they could simply wait-out the worst of the anti-semitism, even in the face of increasing severity?
- Try to imagine the hopelessness of burying your final testimonies in a milk carton to only potentially be found later, knowing that you won't survive to tell your own story. How would you have dealt with this?
- Did the victims of the Holocaust eventually give-in and come to accept they were less than human? What would have driven them to resist such sentiments?
- What was the feeling of Jews outside Germany who knew what was happening?
- Why do you think no one came to the aid of the Jews?