



Teacher's Guide

Elie Wiesel **Great Hearts of Courage**

Grade Levels:

7-12

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

Multicultural

World History

Synopsis:

Provides a detailed account of conditions in Germany post World War I, Hitler's anti-Semitism, and the increasing influence of Hitler and the Nazi party in German politics. Traces the events of World War II with an emphasis on the plight of Jews and other "undesirables" as Hitler advanced into Poland and Russia. Elie Wiesel was only 15 when he arrived at Auschwitz but he explains why European Jews were unaware of the Final Solution while Western nations were aware but did nothing to stop the genocide. His thoughts about the horrors of the Holocaust are told against a backdrop of graphic images of human suffering as the mass extermination of the Jews continued. Later we learn how Elie slowly renewed his spirit and became a prolific writer on the Holocaust, a confidant of presidents, and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The final section follows the accomplishments of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity in its work to inspire nations, in particular the youth of nations, to address the causes of hatred and learn to celebrate life.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Explain why Hitler was able to gain control in Germany.
- Explain why many Germans supported his Final Solution.
- Describe the effects of the Holocaust on Jews who survived the death camps.
- Appreciate Elie Wiesel's definition of hatred and his contributions to world peace.

Vocabulary:

anti-Semitic, anti-Semitism, bigotry, Reichstag, martial law, Gestapo, Aryan blood, containment, Final Solution, deportation, crematoria, genocide, prolific writer, humanity

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

What was the Holocaust? When did it occur? Why did it occur? What term is used to describe the slaughter of an entire race of people?

Do any of you know people who survived the Holocaust? Perhaps you have read books about Holocaust survivors. What do they remember about their experiences? How many family members did they lose?

Can you imagine how you would feel if you were the sole survivor when most of your relatives suffered and ultimately died in a concentration camp? How would you gain the courage to go on with life?

Who is Elie Wiesel? Why is he so well known?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Why were Hitler's views about Jews received so well in post-war Germany? Why was anti-Semitism so widespread at the time?

Were Jews the only people who were exterminated during World War II? What other "undesirables" suffered as a result of Hitler's political control? What was his theory about "Aryans"?

How do you know that writing about the Holocaust didn't come easy for Elie Wiesel? Why couldn't he begin writing at first? How did he find the right words to express the horrors of his experience? What attitude kept him writing?

What do you think has been Elie Wiesel's greatest accomplishment? Do you think he would see any one event or achievement as valuable in itself? What is his aim in life?

Further Activities:

Read at least one of Elie Wiesel's books.

Visit a Holocaust museum.

Interview a Holocaust survivor or read a personal account written by a Holocaust survivor.

Investigate youth peace initiatives that are taking place anywhere in the world.

Related New Dimension Titles:

World War II, 1942-1945 Part Four: A World at War

World War II, 1942-1945 Part One: Roots of War

Theatrical Newsreels of World War II