

LESSON: Kitty Friedenbach Saks

Grade Level:

This unit was developed for secondary students. The approach and materials for this unit follow the [Age Appropriate Guidelines from the USHMM](#).

Subject:

History; English/Language Arts; Multi-disciplinary.

Rationale:

The stories of individuals during the Holocaust can help us understand various facets of history through the eyes of those who lived through it. This story helps to broaden understanding about the experience of a young Austrian girl whose story of escape and life in hiding illuminates the risks undertaken by strangers to ensure her survival.

Overview:

Key Question(s):

- Who was Kitty Friedenbach Saks? What was her experience during the Holocaust?
- Why did people step forward to save Kitty? What risks did they take and what challenges did they undergo?
- What does it mean to be honored as Righteous Among the Nations?

Educational Outcomes. At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- Define the Holocaust and related terms such as Nazi party, convent and Righteous Among the Nations.
- Identify who Kitty Friedenbach Saks was and what her journey was like during the Holocaust.
- Compare and contrast information shared in To Life: The Past is Present and in a podcast.
- Discuss the risks and challenges that faced rescuers during the Holocaust.
- Explain what it means to be honored as Righteous Among the Nations.
- Analyze why rescue was so difficult and so rare during this time period.

Teacher preparation

It's important for teachers to familiarize themselves with the [Pedagogical Principles for Teaching the Holocaust](#). We encourage teachers to familiarize themselves with background knowledge on the Holocaust by viewing this [site](#) at the USHMM and view the [Introduction to the Holocaust](#). Additional information on teaching about this topic can be learned from the full-length version of [The Path to Nazi Genocide](#).

In addition, we suggest:

- Prepare access to handout and student packet.
- Check access to related links.
- Consider having students complete the [What was the Holocaust? Activity](#).
- Identify any terms students may be unfamiliar with in the written text or the podcast.

Materials

- Kitty Friedenbach Saks' narrative in [To Life: The Past is Present](#)
- Kitty Saks Podcast: The Weight of Secrets
- [K-W-L Handout](#)
- [Handout: Righteous Among the Nations](#)

Lesson:

INTRODUCTION

1. If students have not previously discussed the Holocaust, begin with an overview of the term, Holocaust, as defined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored, persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945 across Europe and North Africa. The height of the persecution and murder occurred during World War II. By the end of the war in 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews. The Nazis believed that Germans were racially superior.

They believed Jews were a threat to the so-called German racial community. While Jews were the primary victims, the Nazis also targeted other groups for persecution and murder. The Nazis claimed that Roma, people with disabilities, some Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), and Black people were biologically inferior. The regime persecuted other groups because of politics, ideology, or behavior. These groups included Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay men, and people the Nazis called "asocials" and "professional criminals."

For younger students, or students previously familiar with this event in history, you can utilize this shortened definition:

The state-sponsored systematic murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were also targeted by the Nazis.

2. Share with students that today we will be learning about the story of Kitty Friedenbach Saks. Kitty was a young Austrian Jewish girl who survived the Holocaust as a result of being hidden in a convent. Ask students to complete a K-W-L related to the topic, "Rescue During the Holocaust." Suggest students list at least 3 things they know related to this topic and 1 thing they "Want to Learn."
3. Once students have had time to complete the "K" and "W" columns, ask students to share some of their existing understandings and desired learnings.
4. Review other key terms for Kitty's story that haven't come up during the K-W-L portion: such as convent and Righteous Among the Nations.

RESEARCH/ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

1. Explain to students that they will be assigned one of two ways to learn about Kitty - through a podcast or through a written narrative. Each group will seek to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who was Kitty Friedenbach Saks?
 - b. In 3-5 sentences, summarize Kitty's experiences during the Holocaust.
 - c. What risks and challenges faced those who aided Kitty and her family during the Holocaust?
 - d. Based on Kitty's experience, why do you think the rescue and aid of Jews was so difficult and so rare during this time period?
 - e. What were the advantages and disadvantages to learning about Kitty's story through your assigned medium?
2. Task students to first review their sources and answers to these questions as individuals; then ask them to discuss the answers to these questions with others who shared their medium (text or podcast).
3. Once this initial period of sharing is complete, place students in heterogeneous pairs or small groups to discuss their answers to the questions. Have students place particular emphasis on discussing how their two mediums varied and what the experience was like for each individual.
4. Have students share out as a whole group discussing the key questions from above and any other observations from their work.

CONCLUSION

1. Explain that Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center located in Jerusalem, Israel, is tasked with bestowing the honor of “Righteous Among the Nations,” to those individuals or groups who undertook extraordinary risk at no personal gain to attempt to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. Pass out the criteria for “Righteous Among the Nations.”
2. Ask students to reflect on the individuals who helped Kitty and her family during the Holocaust:
 - a) Which individuals who helped Kitty and her family can you identify from the source you studied?
 - b) Based on the criteria on the handout, would you recognize these individuals as “Righteous Among the Nations?” Why or why not?
 - c) What can we learn from these individuals that we can apply to their lives today?