

# Applying Traits that Transcend to Christian Rescuers During the Holocaust

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## Basic information

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- Summary:** Students will read short vignettes about Christian rescuers and relate their stories to the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous Traits that Transcend. Students will then watch a short film (48 minutes) about rescue entitled So Many Miracles.
- Grade/Level:** 8-12
- Time Frame:** 2-3 class periods including film
- Subject(s):** Holocaust Studies
- Topic(s):** Rescue and Resistance
- Notes:** Vignettes chosen from When Light Pierced the Darkness include:  
 P. 70 Emil Jablonski, P. 71 Anonymous, P. 73 Zygnunt Rostal, P. 76 Stefa Krokowska, P. 133 Roman Sadowski
- Movie: So Many Miracles (available from the National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University) - it is a a very sweet movie that students will enjoy.

## Standards and key concepts

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### Standards:

#### MA- Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

- **Subject:** History and Social Sciences
  - **Level World history I I:** The rise of the nation state to the present
    - **Area:** Learning Standards
      - **Concept :** THE GREAT WARS, 1914–1945
        - **Skill/ Standard WHII.26 :** Describe the background, course, and consequences of the Holocaust, including its roots in the long tradition of Christian anti-Semitism, 19th century ideas about race and nation, and Nazi dehumanization of the Jews. (H)

### Understandings:

While there were no 'typical' rescuers, rescuers did exhibit well-known traits.

All humans have the potential to be rescuers or perpetrators. Positive attributes need to be cultivated and nourished.

Rescuers are not just heroes, they are role models for the present.

The rescuers were not monolithic. They had flaws as well as positive

attributes

(These understandings come from The Jewish Foundation of the Righteous Poster Set)

- Essential Questions:** What are the traits that allowed Christians to become rescuers?
- How do these traits manifest themselves in the stories of the rescuers?
- How can these traits be strengthened in my own life?

**Knowledge and Skills:** Students should be able to define all of the character traits presented in the poster set. Students should be able to identify risk factors involved in helping/rescuing Jews.

## **Performance tasks and assessment**

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**Performance Task:** Students will work in groups of 3-4. Each group will be assigned a reading from When Light Pierced the Darkness by Nechama Tec. In groups students will discuss the reading and decide which of the character traits applies to the rescuer. Each group will briefly summarize their vignette for the class.

**Performance Prompt:** How were these individuals able to rescue? What allowed them to rescue? What choices did they make?

**Assessment/Rubrics:** No formal assessment. Students do periodic self-assessments of classroom performance.

## **Learning experiences and resources**

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- Sequence of Activities:**
- 1) As a class we will list the risk factors inherent in rescue in Poland after 1939.
  - 2) We will review and define the 8 traits presented on the posters
  - 3) Students will be divided into groups of 3-4 students.
  - 3) Students will be assigned readings from When Light Pierced the Darkness by Nechama Tec.
  - 4) In groups, students will reach a consensus on the most important one or two attributes that the rescuer possessed that allowed him or her to rescue.

5) The students will present their ideas and summary of the story to the class as a whole.

6) The lesson will be followed up with the viewing of the movie Small Miracles.

**Differentiated  
Instruction:**

**Resources:**

- Materials and resources:  
See Notes