

KNOCKING

By Joel P. Engardio & Tom Shepard

ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM:
EDUCATOR GUIDE



They are moral conservatives who stay out of politics, but they won a record number of court cases expanding freedom for everyone. They refuse blood transfusions on religious grounds, but they embrace the science behind bloodless surgery. In Nazi Germany, they could fight for Hitler or go to the concentration camps. They chose the camps. Following two families who stand firm for their controversial and misunderstood Christian faith, KNOCKING reveals how Jehovah's Witnesses have helped shape history beyond the doorstep.



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ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is an educational resource providing new documentary video content and accompanying curricular materials, lesson plans, and homework assignments, to high school and community college instructors and youth-serving community-based organizations. Video content includes up to 15 minutes excerpted from an independently produced documentary film from the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Content is grouped into subject specific segments that correspond to lesson plans and educational activities. All CLASSROOM materials are designed with key education standards in mind, and are available, along with the video content, on a DVD-ROM and online.

ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is a product of the Independent Television Service and KOED Education Network, with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Educational content was developed with guidance from PBS Teachers, the National Council of Churches, American Association of Community Colleges, 4-H, National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of English and National Association of Multicultural Education.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE & FILM

Educators can use this guide to support viewing of KNOCKING while engaging students in discussions about civil rights, First Amendment freedoms, the role of religion in medical practices and ethics, religious tolerance and personal belief systems. The film and education guide activities foster discussion about these topics within families and in the broader school community so that students, teachers and community members may gain a greater understanding and appreciation of religious beliefs and tolerance for those who differ from us.

GRADE LEVEL

9–12, College

SUBJECT AREAS

Social Studies, Language Arts, Debate, Sociology, Ethics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Current Events

ACTIVITIES

The activities in this Educator Guide are presented in the following order:

Activity 1: The Impact of Jehovah's Witnesses on Civil

Rights: This lesson examines the role of Jehovah's Witnesses in influencing Civil Rights and encourages students to learn about current civil rights issues and develop ways to become actively involved in the Civil Rights issues of today.

Activity 2: When Ideologies Collide: Medical Ethics and

Religious Beliefs: This lesson explores the issue of religion and medical ethics and how access to and the creation of new medical treatments and technology can result when religious beliefs and medical practices contradict one another.

Activity 3: Religious Tolerance in America: This lesson explores religious tolerance in America and takes students through a process designed to promote religious tolerance inside and outside the school community.

Activity 4: Standing for What You Believe: This lesson examines how Jehovah's Witnesses have stood for their beliefs historically and calls on students to examine their own belief systems and the price they would pay to uphold their own ideas and principles.

The activities target students at the high school level but can be scaffolded to accommodate college settings, as well as informal classrooms such as after-school programs, clubs and youth training programs through community-based organizations. All content aligns with national standards for social studies and English language arts. Each of the activities is designed to last two traditional class periods (90-120 minutes total); together, the four activities and film modules constitute a unit that can last one to two weeks. All activities aim to incorporate educational content and themes that can be integrated into existing content curriculum.

A Reminder to Teachers and Educators

Please remember that the activities are guidelines only. We hope that you will make the necessary adjustments to meet the needs of your academic and social environment, keeping in mind your own and your students' religious beliefs, familiarity with the issues, the needs of your school and community, your students' grade level and social awareness, and the class size and duration.

ITVS CLASSROOM VIDEO MODULES

With this Educator Guide, you can build a unit around the entire film or you can focus on one or more of the CLASSROOM video modules. Each module contains several clips and runs approximately four to eight minutes. These short modules can easily be incorporated into your classroom curricula. The KNOCKING video modules for CLASSROOM include the following chapters and suggested activity alignments:

- 1. Understanding the religion and politics of Jehovah's Witnesses: (8:45)** This clip documents the record number of U.S. Supreme Court cases fought and won by Jehovah's Witnesses, which have expanded freedoms for all Americans. Historical footage and Holocaust scholars reveal the courageous dissent of Witnesses in Nazi Germany. The clip introduces a contemporary Witness family, 23-year-old Seth Thomas and his parents as they go knocking in suburban Texas. (FOCUS: Activities 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- 2. Bloodless Transfusions (3:56)** This clip follows the Thomas family as they struggle to obtain a bloodless liver transplant for their son Seth. It examines the complexities of medical decision-making as family and physicians try to follow religious beliefs and save a young man's life. Medical ethicists reflect on the Witness's role in obtaining advancements in treatment that may benefit many people. (FOCUS: Activities 2 and 4)

Get the CLASSROOM Video Modules:

CLASSROOM video modules are available on streaming video format at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom>.

A DVD with the CLASSROOM video modules and Educator Guide is available to classroom and community educators by contacting ITVS COMMUNITY at outreach@itvs.org. DVD quantities are limited.

ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM KNOCKING RESOURCES

- Educator Guide
- ITVS Community Cinema Discussion Guide
<http://www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking/>
- KNOCKING Study Guide
<http://www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking/>
- PBS KNOCKING Website
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking>

GET THE KNOCKING DVD:

Educational copies of KNOCKING are available from: KNOCKING Documentary Project at <http://www.newday.com/films/knocking.html>

The KNOCKING DVD for educators includes 3 additional hours of extras including the KNOCKING DVD Lecture Series:

“Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Courts”

Ray Vasvari, American Civil Liberties Union

Lecture Segments on DVD

- V1: Legal Legacy
- V2: Post 9/11: Jehovah’s Witness Relevancy
- V3: The Landmark Cases
- V4: Voltaire Notion
- V5: Knocking and Litigating

“Jehovah’s Witnesses and Medicine”

Dr. Arthur Caplan, University of Pennsylvania

Lecture Segments on DVD

- C1: Saying No to Blood
- C2: Jehovah’s Witnesses + AIDS = Bloodless Surgery
- C3: Ethical Dilemmas
- C4: Bloodless Mavericks vs. Transfusion Conservatives
- C5: Children and Bloodless Surgery
- C6: Medical Legacy

“Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Holocaust”

Rabbi Michael Berenbaum, University of Judaism

Lecture Segments on DVD

- B1: Rare Martyrs
- B2: The Nazi Deal
- B3: Why We Suffer
- B4: Peculiar Pacifism
- B5: Christians Who Resisted
- B6: When a Jew Converts
- B7: Knocking: Anti-Semitic?
- B8: Co-existing Religions
- B9: Why Dissent Matters

“Jehovah’s Witnesses and Nazi Germany”

Professor Christine E. King, Staffordshire University

Lecture Segments on DVD

- K1: German Beginnings
- K2: Unlike Other Christians
- K3: A Threat to Nazis
- K4: 1933 Letter to Hitler
- K5: Speaking Out
- K6: A Unique Choice
- K7: Purple Triangles
- K8: Special Treatment?
- K9: Historical Lessons



WEBSITES

- American Cancer Society Alternatives to Blood Transfusions
www.cancer.org/docroot/ETO/content/ETO_1_4X_Alternatives_To_Blood_Transfusion.asp?sitearea=ETO
- Bloodless.com
www.bloodless.com
- First Amendment Center: The Establishment Clause
www.fac.org/rel_liberty/establishment/index.aspx
- KNOCKING Study Guide
www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking
- KNOCKING film website
www.knocking.org
- Network for the Advancement of Transfusion Alternatives
www.nataonline.com
- Noblood.com
www.noblood.com
- PBS companion website
www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking
- Red Gold: The Epic Story of Blood
www.pbs.org/wnet/redgold
- Religious Liberty Archive with State and Federal case law related to religion
www.churchstatelaw.com
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators
- University of Minnesota Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies
www.chgs.umn.edu/Visual___Artistic_Resources/Johannes_Steyer/Jehovah_s_Witnesses_in_Germany/JehovahsWitnessesInGermany.pdf
- U.S. Supreme Court web site: Summary of Stratton Case
www.oyez.org/oyez/resource/case/1498

A Reminder to Teachers and Educators

As always, be sure to check these URLs to see if they are still live, if the content is appropriate for your students and classroom, and if they can be accessed at your school. In the event that your school or workplace blocks any of these URLs, you'll need to access the Web elsewhere and print out any materials you need for your classroom.

BOOKS

- Beckford, James A. *The Trumpet of Prophecy. A Sociological Study of Jehovah's Witnesses*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975.
- Chryssides, George D. *Exploring New Religions*. London: Cassell, 1999.
- Ellis, Richard J. *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance*. Kansas City: University Press of Kansas, 2000.
- Hesse, Hans. Ed. *Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses During the Nazi Regime 1933-1945*. Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2000.
- Holden, Andrew. *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Irons, Peter. *The Courage of Their Convictions*. New York: The Free Press, 1988.
- Kaplan, William. *State and Salvation—The Jehovah's Witnesses and Their Fight for Civil Rights*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.
- King, Christine E. *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982.
- Liebster, Max. *Crucible of Terror: Survival Through the Nazi Storm*. New Orleans: Grammaton Press, 2003.
- Liebster, Simone Arnold. *Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe*. New Orleans: Grammaton Press, 2000. Original and Abridged editions.
- Peters, Shawn. F. *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution*. Kansas City: University Press of Kansas, 2000.
- Rammerstorfer, Bernhard. *Unbroken Will: The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Man*. New Orleans: Grammaton Press, 2004.
- Stevens, Leonard A. *Salute! The Case of The Bible vs. The Flag*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1973.

ABOUT THE FILM

The documentary film **KNOCKING** puts a face on a religion that many Americans are unfamiliar with and have biases toward. Filmmaker Joel P. Engardio, whose mother is a Jehovah's Witness, uses his film to teach viewers about Jehovah's Witnesses, to dispel myths about the religion, and most importantly to get viewers involved in "a discussion about religious and personal freedoms in this country that is framed in terms other than 'us versus them.'"

Engardio shares the stories of two families, the Thomas's and the Kempler's.* While Joseph Kempler recalls the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps and the role the Jehovah's Witnesses played in his life and the lives of others, Seth Thomas and his family share their struggle to obtain a life-saving liver transplant while still upholding their religious beliefs about the use of blood products and the ethical and medical issues that arise as a result.

As viewers watch the film, they are asked to think about the role of Jehovah's Witnesses as Civil Rights activists, to focus on and learn about religious tolerance in America, to understand the complexities and rights surrounding religious freedoms in the administration of medical care and to consider the ability of the individual to stand up for personal beliefs, regardless of the circumstance or outcome. As viewers meet the Thomas and Kempler families, they see first hand what the filmmaker means when he says, "...we all have to be given the freedom to live our lives as we see fit—as long as we respect each other's right to live differently and do no harm."

**The ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM Educator Guide and Video Modules introduce students to the Thomas family.*

Activity 1

The Impact of Jehovah's Witnesses on Civil Rights
(90-120 minutes + assignments)



“Their door-to-door message may be annoying but their uncompromising faith hasn’t hurt our freedom. In some surprising ways, it’s actually helped define it.”

Joel P. Engardio, filmmaker

Activity 1

The Impact of Jehovah's Witnesses on Civil Rights (90-120 minutes + assignments)

Objectives:

Students will:

- learn about the role of Jehovah's Witnesses in influencing Civil Rights
- examine the Civil Rights Movement as a Constitutional issue
- utilize critical viewing and note-taking skills
- utilize brainstorming skills to access prior knowledge and as part of class discussion and project activities
- participate in class discussion, research and presentations related to current Civil Rights issues
- create and share projects designed to increase awareness about the Civil Rights issues of today

Skills:

Discussion, viewing and interpreting media, mind mapping and group brainstorming, pair and share activities, researching, planning a take-action activity, and oral presentation

Materials:

Board/overhead, student and teacher handouts (provided with guide), **Module 1**, access to Internet and library resources, assorted art supplies and/or desktop publishing software

When we think of the Civil Rights Movement in America, we think of Dr. Martin Luther King, the Montgomery Bus Boycott and sit-ins seeking rights for African Americans that are guaranteed to all citizens by the U.S. Constitution. In educational settings, teaching about Civil Rights has often been framed around issues of race. The film KNOCKING provides an opportunity to learn about a group that has often been overlooked for its role in the expansion of liberties for all Americans. By following their convictions, Jehovah's Witnesses have used the legal system to uphold the promises of the Constitution and expand First Amendment freedoms for all of us. This lesson examines the role of Jehovah's Witnesses in influencing Civil Rights and encourages students to learn about current issues and to develop ways to become actively involved in the Civil Rights issues of today.

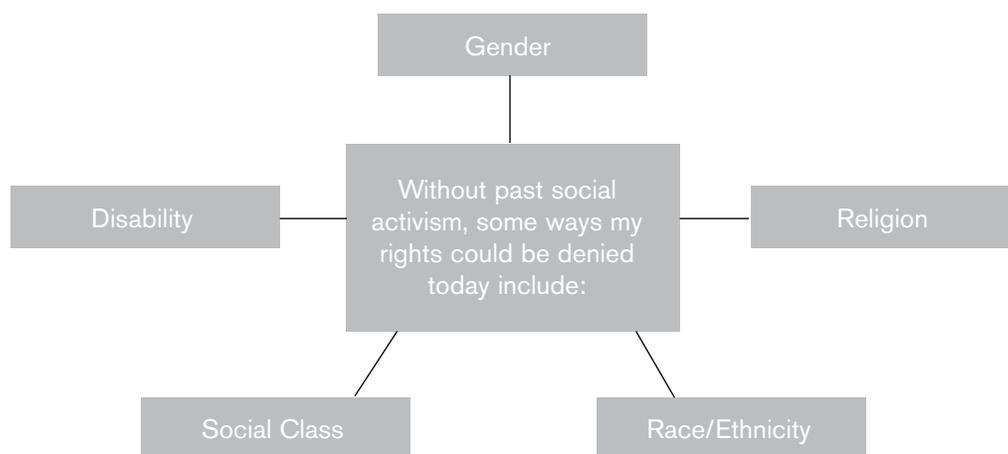
Part One: Exploring the History of Civil Rights in America

1. On the board/overhead, write the words "Civil Rights in America." As a class, have students brainstorm ideas related to this topic and record this list on the board/overhead.
2. Facilitate a short discussion using questions such as:
 - What are Civil Rights?
 - Give some examples of ways that citizens' Civil Rights have been violated in the past.
 - Name the people or groups that come to mind when you think of Civil Rights in America.
 - What are some of the historically significant events or court cases you associate with Civil Rights?
 - Give some examples of the ways your Civil Rights are protected in the school setting.
 - In what ways are you allowed to exercise your Civil Rights in school?

3. Introduce **KNOCKING Module 1** to students by explaining that you want them to understand that many of the civil rights we now take for granted were won at great cost by many individuals and organizations through-out our history. Explain that in this film we will learn about one group who played a pivotal role in the expansion of liberties.
NOTE: A large amount of background information can be found in the **KNOCKING Study Guide** available at: www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking/. Additional information can also be found in the Lecture Series “Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Courts” available in the **KNOCKING DVD**.
4. Distribute **Student Handout A: Viewing Guide** and read over the directions with students. Direct students to complete the guide as they view **KNOCKING Module 1** available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom>.
5. Facilitate a short discussion of the Viewing Guide, encouraging students to reference specific information from **Module 1**. Use **Teacher Handout A: Supplemental Materials** for **Activity One** to provide additional talking points for the discussion.
NOTE: The **KNOCKING Film Quotes** are referenced in this step and could be distributed to students for use during discussion.
6. Take the classroom discussion to a broader level by directing students to take a moment and think about the following question:
 - What if all of the Americans who have fought for civil liberties over the past 70 years had chosen to remain a part of the status quo and had **NOT** take action as a way of gaining their rights; how would your life be different as a result of their inaction?
7. Using a graphic organizer such as a mind map (sample below), record student responses to the question above.

NOTE: You provide content in center box. Have students brainstorm the content for boxes connected with arrow and provide specific examples on diagonal lines extending from each box.

Sample Mind Map:



Part 2: Today's Civil Rights Issues

8. Distribute a copy of **Student Handout B: Take Action: Today's Civil Rights Issues** to each student. Direct students to pair up, and assign each pair one of the topics from the issues list. Provide 2-3 minutes for each pair to list all of the issues they can think of for their assigned topic. Call on a representative from each group to share the ideas they recorded for their assigned topic. Encourage students to write these ideas in the corresponding section of the handout.
9. Discuss how people today can become involved in Civil Rights issues using traditional means, as well as advances in communications and technology.
10. Read and discuss the Project Description from the **Student Handout B: Take Action: Today's Civil Rights Issues**. Provide students with classroom time to research their topics. Encourage students to be creative in their plan for raising awareness about the issue they have researched.
11. Provide students with an appropriate opportunity to share their Take Action projects with schoolmates and the community.

Extension Option

1. Using **Student Handout B: Take Action: Today's Civil Rights Issues**, help students to select an organization(s) to research that was instrumental in extending civil rights. Help students pick a one or two-decade time frame to study. In their research, have students identify strategies and tactics used by the group(s) in their advocacy effort. Students should produce a timeline of advances and setbacks. As students present their research to the group, encourage the class to compare and contrast the advocacy strategies for different issues and time periods.

Activity 2

When Ideologies Collide: Medical Ethics and Religious Beliefs
(90-120 minutes + assignments)



“Witnesses and doctors have been at odds ever since blood transfusions became common in the 1950’s.”

Joel P. Engardio, filmmaker

Activity 2

When Ideologies Collide: Medical Ethics and Religious Beliefs (90-120 minutes + assignments)

Objectives:

Students will:

- learn about how religious beliefs and medical ethics sometimes clash, posing problems for patients in need of certain medical treatments
- utilize critical reading and viewing skills
- utilize brainstorming skills
- participate in class discussions and debates
- utilize persuasive speaking skills and demonstrate the ability to form and support opinions
- conduct research and use it to formulate a piece of persuasive writing

Skills:

Stating and supporting opinions in class discussion, critical reading and viewing, research, persuasive writing techniques.

Materials:

Board/overhead, student and teacher handouts (provided with guide), **Module 1**, access to Internet and library resources, assorted art supplies and/or desktop publishing software.

For most people, religious beliefs are not usually a matter of life-and-death or a path to medical invention. However, for Jehovah's Witnesses, following the tenets of their religion sometimes does become a life-and-death situation that places patients at odds with their doctors or, in some cases, results in the development of new medical techniques that help physicians successfully treat patients. This lesson explores the issue of religion and medical ethics and how access to and the creation of new medical treatments and technology can result when religious beliefs and medical practices contradict one another.

Classroom Preparation:

1. Read each statement below and direct students to stand near the sign that most closely represents their point of view about the statement. Select volunteers to give reasons for their opinions.
 - A patient's right to refuse treatment should take precedence over a doctor's pledge to preserve life in whatever way possible.
 - If I were faced with a life-and-death situation that required me to violate my religious beliefs, I would choose life rather than adhering to the established religious standards.
 - Parents should have the right to refuse medical treatment for their children, even when their decision puts the life of the child at risk.
 - Advances in life-saving or life-giving medical technologies should not be hindered or adversely affected by religious groups that are opposed to the research and/or procedures being developed.
 - Medical professionals should be required to provide necessary procedures, treatments, and medications, regardless of their personal religious beliefs.

2. After all statements have been discussed, have students take their seats and explain to them that the statements they discussed are issues that Jehovah's Witnesses and other religions, along with the medical community, have been grappling with for many years.
To give students more insight about Jehovah's Witnesses and their beliefs, distribute or share copies of "The Film" available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking/film.html> and "Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood" available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking/blood.html>. Take time to read over this information as a class so that students get a very basic understanding of the Jehovah's Witnesses and their stand on blood issues. Additional information can also be found in the Lecture Series "Jehovah's Witnesses and Medicine" available on the KNOCKING DVD.
3. Introduce the KNOCKING **Module 2** available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom>, by explaining to students that they will be seeing the story of Seth Thomas and learning about the obstacles and decisions he, his family and the medical community faced because of Seth's medical crisis. All these parties had to address many of the issues discussed in the opening activity in the lesson.
4. View KNOCKING **Module 2**.
5. Facilitate a class discussion/debate about topics from the film clip and article.
This could include questions such as:
 - If you had been in a position similar to Seth's, what decisions would you have made about your treatment? Why?
 - In Seth's story, he cannot be placed on the organ donor list because his surgery is considered experimental. Do you believe this is fair? Why or why not?
 - In the film, Joel P. Engardio reports, "USC will perform Seth's surgery to meet the religious needs of Jehovah's Witnesses. In turn, the hospital gets to test out new technology on them. The aim is to limit blood loss to the point where most transfusions are unnecessary. USC thinks bloodless surgery should be the new standard for everyone. The threat of HIV and other viruses in the blood supply has given doctors an incentive to work with Witness patients."

From this quote we learned that Seth's family finally found a hospital and physicians willing to treat them with a risky, experimental therapy which meets the standards of their religion. Do you think it is ethical for the hospital to do this? Explain your answer.

- Filmmaker Joel P. Engardio makes the following statement in the film: "Witnesses and doctors have been at odds ever since blood transfusions became common in the 1950s. Witnesses asked for alternative treatments. The medical establishment refused, often forcing blood on Jehovah's Witnesses against their will. Witnesses felt they had a right to determine their own medical care. Doctors felt a religion had no right to let its members die."

Based on this statement, your opinions and what you have seen and learned from the film, how should medical professionals balance their commitment to save lives with their obligation to respect a patient's autonomy and belief system?

- Do you think doctors should have the right to administer blood products to minor children who are Jehovah's Witnesses and whose families are against the use of these products? Why?
- In what ways have Jehovah's Witnesses changed the type of medical care available to all people because of their refusal of blood products? Give specific examples.

NOTE: The **KNOCKING Film Quotes** are referenced in this step and could be distributed to students for use during discussion.

6. Close this part of the activity by asking students to think about the opinions they shared in Step 1 and to discuss briefly how their opinions have changed, if at all, based upon what they learned from the film and related activities..
7. Broaden the discussion of medical ethics and religious beliefs by presenting students with case studies and more questions for discussion. To find additional information about related topics, see **Teacher Handout A: Supplemental Materials** for **Activity Two**. Topics could include:
- Some medical professionals and faith-based health organizations determine which medical treatments they will provide based on their religious beliefs. For example, a pharmacist may refuse to fill prescriptions for specific medications, or a religiously owned hospital will not offer abortion, contraception or sterilization procedures. Some states allow this legally; others require compliance to treatment standards determined by medical organizations. Most states do not have laws regulating refusal to treat. **What is your opinion about this? Should medical professionals of all types be allowed to choose which treatments they provide based on their religious beliefs? Should treatment options vary for patients depending on the facility or staff they have? Why?**
 - There are cases where parents or family members refuse a recommended medical treatment for minor children or incapacitated family members because it is against their religion. Often these situations pose difficult choices about whether life-sustaining treatments are either provided or withdrawn. **Do you think people should have the right to deny medical treatment for others based on their religious beliefs, even if failure to get treatment may result in loss of life for the person who needs it?**
 - The use of stem cells to treat disease is a topic of hot debate. Religious groups are often at the center of this debate. Some faith groups advocate in legislatures and courts to prevent this type of research. **What do you think about stem cell research? What should the relationship be between religious doctrines and public funding of medical research and advancement?**

Close the discussion by reflecting on the Seth Thomas story where new life-saving medical treatment was achieved while honoring the families' religious beliefs, and consider whether this kind of resolution can be achieved in some of the conflicts discussed above.

8. Encourage students to learn more about issues related to religion and medical ethics issues by choosing one of the following activities:
- Research a recent court case based upon a medical/religious dispute. Learn about what the medical professionals want vs. what the patient(s) and/or their family(ies) want, and what the court determined. Learn the facts of the case and then create a persuasive essay or letter to the editor stating your opinion about the case.
- OR
- Conduct research about bloodless surgery, blood substitutes, or new techniques that have evolved in medicine as a result of varying religious beliefs and the medical community's commitment to treating these patients in the best way possible. Learn specific information about one of these topics and create an informational brochure or multimedia presentation (such as PowerPoint) that describes what you learned and could be used to teach others about this medical option.
- OR
- Based on the classroom activities, select a medical ethics issue involving religious beliefs. Conduct research or interview medical and religious experts to learn more about how each group feels about the issue you are profiling. Summarize what you learned about the opinions of both groups involved in the conflict by writing a feature article that presents both sides of the issue and gets readers interested in this ethical dilemma.
9. When students have completed their projects, provide an opportunity for them to post and share their work with others.

Activity 3

Religious Tolerance in America
(90-120 minutes + assignments)



“The Witnesses were scorned as unpatriotic. They wouldn’t pledge loyalty to a man-made symbol, calling into question what it means to be an American”

Joel P. Engardio, filmmaker

Activity 3

Religious Tolerance in America (90-120 minutes + assignments)

Objectives:

Students will:

- learn to define religious tolerance and its characteristics and to identify examples of behaviors that are tolerant and intolerant
- learn about how religious groups, particularly Jehovah's Witnesses, have historically suffered religious persecution in the U.S.
- formulate opinions and support them with reasons, facts or examples
- share opinions as part of class discussion activities
- utilize critical viewing and notetaking skills
- utilize brainstorming skills
- conduct a survey and tabulate the results accurately
- use persuasive writing techniques to communicate opinions to a specified audience
- utilize project planning skills
- complete an oral presentation showcasing an original project

Skills:

Stating and supporting opinions in class discussion, critical viewing, notetaking, brainstorming, data collection and compilation, persuasive writing, project planning, oral presentation.

Materials:

Board/overhead, student and teacher handouts (provided with guide), **Module 1**, assorted art supplies, desktop publishing software (optional).

America is known as a “melting pot” with our population made up of people of many nationalities, races and religions. This lesson explores what religious tolerance looks like in America and compares and contrasts it with policies and social norms in other countries. It also takes students through a process designed to promote religious tolerance in and out of the school community.

1. Introduce students to the topic of the lesson by using questions such as:

- Do you think people make assumptions about others based on their religious preference? Why? Can you give any examples?
- What is religious tolerance?
- What does religious tolerance look like? Sound like? Feel like?
- Is religious tolerance important? Why?
- Do you think people in America exemplify religious tolerance in general? Why or why not?

2. Ask students to think about a time when they or someone they know made an assumption about an individual or group of people based upon their religion. Direct student to write 3-4 sentences that describe this situation. Provide 3-4 minutes for this activity. Direct students to put this piece of writing aside for use later in the lesson.

3. Distribute or share a copy of the document called “The Film” available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking/film.html>. Explain to students that Jehovah’s Witnesses are one of the religious groups that many people have made assumptions about in the past. Explain to students that they will be seeing a video clip from the film KNOCKING as a means for learning more about religious tolerance as well as finding out about the facts surrounding the religion.
4. On a sheet of paper have students draw a line down the middle and label one column “tolerant” and the other “intolerant.” Explain that the film is about Jehovah’s Witnesses, and that students should use the note sheet to record specific things they see in the film that could be considered examples of religious tolerance or intolerance. Direct students to pay special attention to the closing remarks made by Dr. Michael Berenbaum.
5. View KNOCKING **Module 1** and give students 1-2 minutes after viewing to finish recording their examples.
6. As a class, discuss the examples of religious tolerance and intolerance recorded from the film. Next, distribute or share information from the “Myths and Realities” content about Jehovah’s Witnesses available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking/myths.html>. Discuss why many not familiar with Jehovah’s Witnesses might display attitudes that are less than tolerant because of the myths associated with the religion.
7. Using the quotes below from the film, expand the discussion about religious tolerance using questions such as:
 - In what ways does one’s increased knowledge change the presumptions we make?
 - Seth’s grandmother, Delores Rasmussen, and his mother, Audrey Thomas, even seem to have a divide between them stemming from differences of opinion related to religion. If families can’t even agree about religion, how can we expect society in general to exhibit religious tolerance? Discuss your ideas.

Dolores Rasmussen says: “God, I hate to use the word ‘cult.’ I don’t like the word ‘cult’, but that’s kind of the way it is. It’s not just a religion; it’s a way of life. The Jehovah’s Witnesses cut out the family. They-- It- it’s like a carving. They carve a niche that they fit in but, unless you become part of the niche, you’re out.”

Audrey Thomas says: “I wish my mother would embrace the fact that we are doing something that works for us. Not that we’re doing it against her.”

NOTE: The **KNOCKING Film Quotes** are referenced in this step and could be distributed to students for use during discussion.

8. Using the quote below from Dr. Michael Barenbaum as a basis, talk about how religious conflicts have impacted world history. Consider the meanings and connotations of the term “fundamentalism” and how the word is used in public discourse. Ask students to cite examples of current conflicts caused by disputes related to religion. A list of current conflicts can be found at http://www.religioustolerance.org/curr_war.htm. Discuss how people’s inability to be tolerant of varied religious beliefs has impacted the world.

Dr. Michael Barenbaum states: “Jehovah’s Witnesses are fundamentalists who have an uncompromising faith. The largest question in our world today is whether people of uncompromising faith are going to destroy the other or embrace the other, whether people of uncompromising faith are going to see it is imperative to act out with violence toward the other or to act out with decency and dignity toward the other. So the question of our world may not be whether we’re going to have fundamentalism or whether fundamentalism is bad, but what type of fundamentalist we’re going to have.”

NOTE: The **KNOCKING Film Quotes** are referenced in this step and could be distributed to students for use during discussion.

9. Close the discussion by asking students to think about how U.S. policies and social norms support or discourage religious tolerance. Compare and contrast U.S. policies with those in other countries.

OPTION: Invite a panel of guest speakers representing various religious groups into the classroom for a panel discussion. Use the informal student survey questions, as well as the ideas discussed in steps 7 and 8 above. Encourage students to interact with panel members to learn more about how religious intolerance impacts people in your community, in the U.S. and globally. Invite panelists' opinions about whether or not the U.S. sets a good example for religious tolerance, and have panel members discuss with students what they can do to be more tolerant of people who have religious beliefs that differ from their own.

NOTE: See **Teacher Handout B: Guidelines for Convening a Community Forum** for ideas about possible forum participants.

10. Distribute the **Student Handout C: Promoting Religious Tolerance Project Guide** and review the guidelines as a class. When all students have completed the **Finding the Facts: Class Activity**, collect the survey results and tabulate them. Provide students with an overall report about the survey results before they begin the **Finding Your Focus** portion of the project.

NOTE: See **Teacher Handout A: Supplemental Materials Activity Three References** for ideas about possible survey questions that could be included.

11. When projects have been completed, provide all students 3-5 minutes to present their projects to the class. Encourage students to promote religious tolerance using the ideas generated in their project. Perhaps offer extra credit to those students who execute their plan and follow up with a report about its effectiveness, or if time permits, vote on the best idea for promoting religious tolerance and use class time to complete the project as a group.

Extension Activities:

1. Using the content of the film clips, the companion website content at www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking, and the quotes that accompany the film, collect WWII survivor stories and/or stories that illustrate examples of religious tolerance and intolerance. Create displays that illustrate these events and post them in a public area for others to see as a means for promoting religious tolerance within the school and community. Additional information for this activity can be found in the Lecture Series "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Holocaust" and "Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany" available on the KNOCKING DVD.
2. Using the examples of the Thomas and Kempler families provided in the film, use **Modules 1 and 2** and the companion website content available at www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking to learn more about the family conflicts involving religious differences/intolerance. Use these examples to examine your own belief systems about religion. Write a short story, diary entry, poem, song or other creative piece that illustrates how a family can be torn apart by religious intolerance or brought together by learning about religious differences and being accepting of them. Share these pieces by posting them on a website, or as a blog or podcast.

Activity 4

Standing for What You Believe
(90-120 minutes + assignments)



“The Nazis offered Witnesses a deal. If they signed a document renouncing their faith, they could leave the camps for good. No other group was given this choice. Overwhelmingly, the Witnesses refused.”

Joel P. Engardio, filmmaker

Activity 4

Standing for What You Believe

(90-120 minutes + assignments)

Objectives:

Students will:

- learn about the role of Jehovah's Witnesses as Civil Rights activists
- respond to a writing prompt using a short narrative
- utilize critical reading and viewing skills
- utilize interview skills to talk with someone outside of class about related topics
- participate in class discussions and debates
- conduct research and summarize findings to share with classmates in an oral presentation
- create a piece of creative writing in response to the theme of the lesson
- share their creative writing and provide oral feedback about it for classmates

Skills:

Narrative writing, stating and supporting opinions in class discussion, critical reading and viewing, interviewing, research, summarizing information, creative writing.

Materials:

Board/overhead, student and teacher handouts (provided with guide), **Modules 1 and 2**, access to Internet and library resources.

People often claim that they are “taking a stand” or arguing something “based on principle,” but how many people would actually stand for what they say they believe when faced with a life-or-death situation? This lesson examines how Jehovah’s Witnesses have stood for their beliefs historically and calls on students to examine their own belief systems and what they would be willing to endure to uphold their own ideas and principles.

1. Direct students to pair up. Have students write a short answer to the prompt below, and give the pairs 3-4 minutes to share their responses with one another.
 - Describe a time when you've had to “take a stand” about something you believed in. Be sure to describe the outcome of your actions.
2. Facilitate a short discussion about different ways people stand for their beliefs. Encourage students to provide historical examples along with sharing their personal experiences.
3. Distribute the **Student Handout D: Standing for What You Believe** and review the directions. View **KNOCKING Module 1 and Module 2** as a class. Provide students time between clips and at the end to complete the chart on the handout.

NOTE: The **KNOCKING Film Quotes** are referenced in this step and could be distributed to students for use during discussion.

4. Discuss the **Standing for What You Believe** handout. Focus on what students think they would have done in a similar situation. During the discussion, refer to the KNOCKING Study Guide pages 8-9, 30-31, and 34-35 available at <http://itvs.org/outreach/knocking>. Focus attention on the Nazi persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses and the documents they could sign to escape the concentration camps. Also consider individual Witnesses who took their cases all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in order to secure their rights, even though they personally faced difficulties. Additional information can also be found in the Lecture Series "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Holocaust" and "Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany" available on the KNOCKING DVD.
5. Ask students to discuss the **Standing for What You Believe** handout with a family member or friend as an out-of-class activity. Students should complete the area below the table by describing whom they talked with and how the individual reacted to the ideas related to standing for personal beliefs.
6. When the out-of-class activity has been completed, facilitate a classroom discussion based on the feedback students received when exploring this subject with their friend/family member. This could be done as a large group or by having students share their experience in small groups or pairs.
7. Direct students to use 20-30 minutes of class time to review newspapers, news magazines, Internet articles and other primary sources for examples of situations worldwide in which people are currently standing up for their beliefs. Students should select the story they find most moving and summarize it for their classmates, describing the facts surrounding the event, specific things people are doing to stand for their beliefs and the outcome of these activities. Students should work in small groups to share their articles. Each group should have a short discussion about whether or not they agree with the stance taken by the person/group featured in each article. They should also share what they believe they would do in a similar situation.

NOTE: A list of reliable news sources is provided in the **Teacher Handout A: Supplemental Materials for Activity Four References**.

8. As a final activity, have students complete a piece of creative writing (a poem, short story, play, song, etc.) that addresses a cause they feel they might stand up for or support or that addresses the theme of standing up for personal beliefs. Encourage students to make the project as personal as possible and truly explore their ability to face adversity because of their principles.
9. Offer students the opportunity to share their creative writings in small groups when the assignment has been completed.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Handout B: Take Action: Today's Civil Rights Issues

Key Issues Related to This Topic:	Key Issues Related to This Topic:	Key Advocacy Groups Who Took/Are Taking Action on This Topic:
Rights of Children and Youth		
Voting Rights		
Privacy Rights and National Security		
Free Speech		
Immigrant Rights		
Gay/Lesbian Rights		
Right to Due Process		
Religious Freedom		
Women's Rights		
Education		
Right to Health Care		
Disability Rights		
Protection Against Hate Crimes		
Other:		

Project Description:

Select a current civil rights issue, such as those listed on the chart “Today’s Civil Rights Issues” and complete a creative project that could be used to increase awareness about this issue and/or affect change related to this issue.

Follow these steps to create a project you can share with classmates and your community to increase awareness and/or affect change about your topic.

- The specific Civil Rights issue I plan to research is _____

- I believe this issue is important because _____

- Use reliable Internet and library resources to learn the facts about your issue. Provide references to the section of Constitutional or state law which address this civil right. Identify organizations and individuals who have taken a stand for this civil right. Be sure to include specific examples, stories or events in your research so you can personalize the issue for others and bring it to life for them. Utilize your own life experiences, as well of those of your friends and family members, to support your research when appropriate.

- Use a creative means to deliver your message about this Civil Rights issue to others. Consider creating a podcast, blog or website that can raise awareness. Compose a public service announcement that could be posted on a website or aired on local television or radio. Create a thought-provoking poster, billboard, sign or bumper sticker. Develop a pamphlet or brochure to spread your message. Write a song, short story or play that uses your Civil Rights issue as an integral part of the story line and activism as a central theme. Be creative and challenge yourself to design a project that will help others understand the issue and want to take action that supports your point of view.

When your project is completed, share it with your family/school/community. Be prepared to defend your position on this topic and convince others that seeking social change related to this issue is important.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Handout C: Promoting Religious Tolerance Project Guide

We have talked about the importance of religious tolerance in U.S. history. Follow the steps below to help increase awareness about religious biases and teach others that it is important to learn about other points of view before judging people and making religion a source of conflict.

Finding the Facts: Class Activity

Conduct your own survey about religious tolerance. As a class, we will brainstorm a list of questions related to religious tolerance. Using these questions, survey at least 10 others (students outside of your class, family members, community members and people with religious beliefs that differ from your own) about their religious tolerance. Tabulate the results of your survey using the attached Survey Form.

Finding Your Focus:

Based on the results of your survey and the classroom survey, decide what you can do to increase awareness about the importance of religious tolerance. Some things to consider when planning:

- Which people/groups do you think need the most education about religious tolerance?
- Which groups can you most impact with your message?
- What medium will reach the most people in the most effective manner (i.e. billboard, pamphlet, website, podcast, video, bumper sticker, panel discussion, town hall meeting, festival, song, play, etc.)?

Your Plan for Increasing Awareness:

- On a large poster board, post your survey results as tabulated
- List your target audience
- Describe the medium you will use to reach your audience
- Create a sample or write a short summary of what you plan to do to increase religious tolerance
- Develop a plan for assessing your success in creating awareness about religious tolerance
- Prepare a 3-5 minute oral presentation that summarizes:
 - o the results of your individual survey
 - o your target audience
 - o the medium you have chosen to reach that audience
 - o your exact plan for reaching the audience (tell us exactly what you will do to increase their awareness and assess your success in this endeavor)

Execute Your Plan: (OPTIONAL)

Carry out your plan as described to the class and document its effectiveness and your success using a diary, videotape, follow-up paper or survey, etc.

SURVEY FORM SPEAKER AND QUOTES GRID

Total number of people surveyed: _____

Total adults surveyed: _____

Total minors surveyed: _____

Total females surveyed: _____

Total men surveyed: _____

Survey Question	Adult Male Yes	Adult Male No	Adult Female Yes	Adult Female No	Minor Male Yes	Minor Male No	Minor Female Yes	Minor Female No	Overall %ages
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=
									Y= N=

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Handout D: Standing for What You Believe

Statement	Personal Consequences	What Would You Have Done?
"When I was a kid, my mom became one (a Jehovah's Witness). Despite the television jokes and slammed doors, she felt a great sense of purpose in her knocking."		
"By the 1930s Jehovah's Witnesses had 25,000 members in Germany...They refused to say Heil Hitler or serve in the army. Instead they stood on street corners proclaiming their allegiance only to God."		
"On the eve of World War II, two young Jehovah's Witnesses refused to salute the flag in a Pennsylvania classroom."		
"A rare genetic disease has been attacking Seth's liver since he was a teenager." "...He'll need a liver transplant, and this is a problem. Seth wants the transplant, but as a Jehovah's Witness, he won't take a blood transfusion."		

I discussed this topic with: _____

His/her feelings about standing for personal beliefs are summarized below.

TEACHER HANDOUT A: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

All Activities

- ITVS COMMUNITY CINEMA Resources and KNOCKING Study Guide:
www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking/
- KNOCKING PBS website:
www.pbs.org/independentlens/knocking/
 - The Learn More section of the broadcast website provides many suggested links and readings for further study and exploration.

Activity 1 References:

In addition to what was seen in the film excerpt, spur discussion using the quotes below from portions of the film that were not viewed for this lesson.

- **Joel P. Engardio:** "I'm certainly afraid of extremists who want to take away my rights or threaten our democracy. But Jehovah's Witnesses practice a different kind of fundamentalism. Their door-to-door message may be annoying but their uncompromising faith hasn't hurt our freedom. In some surprising ways, it's actually helped define it."
- **Joel P. Engardio:** "Jehovah's Witnesses are moral conservatives, but they say mixing religion with politics is unchristian. Is it possible for a morally conservative religion to stay out of the culture wars? To merely share their message, not legislate it? Witnesses won't protest or impose their beliefs on groups with whom they disagree."

Activity 2 References:

Below is a list of online resources that could be accessed in advance of the classroom discussion for this lesson. These resources provide information about medical ethics questions related to religious beliefs and the refusal or acceptance of treatment.

National Women's Law Center

"Don't Take 'NO' for an Answer: A Guide to Pharmacy Refusal Laws, Policies and Practices"

<http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/DontTakeNo2007.pdf>

Guttmacher Report on Public Policy

"New Refusal Clauses Shatter Balance Between Provider 'Conscience,' Patient Needs"

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/tgr/07/3/gr070301.pdf>

National Law Journal

"Fighting Refusal to Treat"

<http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1107550992983>

ACLU

Religious Refusals and Reproductive Rights

http://www.aclu.org/FilesPDFs/refusal_report_sum.pdf

http://www.aclu.org/FilesPDFs/refusal_conflicts.pdf

Religion and Ethics Newsweekly

"Refusal to Treat"

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week840/cover.html>

American Bar Association

Religious Beliefs and Healthcare Necessities: Can they Coexist?

<http://www.abanet.org/irr/hr/spring03/religiousbeliefs.html>

Medical College of Georgia
 Legal Issues in Medicine
 Case Studies (particularly 2, 9, 10)
<http://www.mcg.edu/legaethics/tutorial2/CaseStudies.html>

National Public Radio, Morning Edition
 Religion and the End of Life – Audio clip
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4560681>

Activity 3 References:

As you work with students to create survey questions for the **Promoting Religious Tolerance Project**, the following questions can be used to prompt student thinking about differing perspectives on the enforcement of “separation of church and state”:

- Should school breaks and holidays be tied to religious holidays?
- Should religious symbols be displayed in publicly owned buildings or land?
- Should students be allowed to wear religious attire or symbols in school (i.e. head or face coverings, jewelry, etc.)
- Should religious references be included in the “Pledge of Allegiance” or on money?
- Should religious groups be allowed to meet in schools (i.e. prayer around the flagpole, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, etc.)
- Should there be a Benediction as a part of high school graduation ceremonies?
- Should performing arts groups within schools be allowed to play and perform religious music?

Activity 4 References:

A number of reliable news outlets provide current events stories, as well as in-depth coverage and searchable databases, related to topics that might be chosen for this activity. These websites include:

NOW
<http://www.pbs.org/now>

Newshour
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour>

CNN
<http://www.cnn.com>

ABC News
<http://www.abcnews.go.com>

MSNBC
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com>

Time Magazine
<http://www.time.com>

Newsweek Magazine
<http://www.newsweek.com>

BBC: “Religion & Ethics” site
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/witnesses/>

A critique of the film and religion by a former Jehovah's Witness
http://www.pressbox.co.uk/detailed/Society/Jehovah_s_Witnesses_PBS_Film_KNOCKING_Omits_the_Facts_33760.html

TEACHER HANDOUT B: GUIDELINES FOR CONVENING A COMMUNITY FORUM

Inviting community members into the classroom to share their insights and expertise can enhance students' learning by showing how the issues they are studying affect people around them. Consider inviting community members who represent multiple perspectives so the discussion can reflect the complexity of a particular issue as well as the diversity of your state and community. Introducing students to the contributing roles of scholars, advocates and policy-makers, along with those most affected by a policy or program emulates a process of good information gathering. An appropriately facilitated discussion with opposing viewpoints also helps build understanding of democratic debate. If possible, involve students in researching and inviting the local panel members and developing the discussion questions. Another outcome of this activity might be to connect students to service learning or other mentoring opportunities with community organizations.

Planning a KNOCKING Panel:

STEP 1: Using the Educator Guide, determine which Activity area you would like to focus on and incorporate a Community Forum.

STEP 2: Using the table below as a guide, develop a plan for your preferred panel participants.

STEP 3: Using the Educator Guide and the Discussion Guide (available at www.itvs.org/outreach/knocking/), compile a list of potential discussion questions to share with potential panelists.

STEP 4: Using your knowledge of community organizations, your students' contacts and research with some of the search tools provided, recruit your panelists.

STEP 5: Plan the format of your forum, finalize the discussion questions, select or designate a facilitator.

Here is a list of organizations that might assist you with identifying representatives for a community panel.

Suggested Panel Members	Organization examples	Search Tools
Jehovah's Witness Elder	Jehovah's Witness/ Local Kingdom Hall	Office of Public Information for the Jehovah's Witnesses (718) 560-5000 (explain your interest in using KNOCKING in the classroom and see if they can assist you with a local contact)
Civil Rights Attorney	American Civil Liberties Union	ACLU Affiliates and Chapters http://www.aclu.org/affiliates/index.html
Medical Ethicist	Medical Schools American Medical Association Ethics Resource Center	E-mail: ethics@ama-assn.org

Suggested Panel Members	Organization examples	Search Tools
Comparative Religions scholar		
Holocaust scholar		
Hospital Representative		
Faith & Interfaith Organizations		

KNOCKING Film Quotes

Jehovah's Witnesses and Culture

Joel P. Engardio: "The media has always liked to focus on fundamentalists who are either ridiculous or dangerous."

Joel P. Engardio: "I'm certainly afraid of extremists who want to take away my rights or threaten our democracy. But Jehovah's Witnesses practice a different kind of fundamentalism. Their door-to-door message may be annoying but their uncompromising faith hasn't hurt our freedom. In some surprising ways, it's actually helped define it."

Joel P. Engardio: "Jehovah's Witnesses are moral conservatives, but they say mixing religion with politics is unchristian. Is it possible for a morally conservative religion to stay out of the culture wars? To merely share their message, not legislate it? Witnesses won't protest or impose their beliefs on groups with whom they disagree."

Jehovah's Witnesses and WWII

Joel P. Engardio: "In pursuit of their total worship of God, Jehovah's Witnesses gave up all civic involvement. They refused to pledge allegiance, vote or support the military. No manmade government, they said, could bring world peace. Russell's new take on Christianity took hold in America and then spread to Europe where it slowly grew. By the 1930s, Jehovah's Witnesses had 25,000 members in Germany. Like their American counterparts, the German Witnesses were non-violent and apolitical. They refused to say Heil Hitler or serve in the army. Instead, they stood on street corners proclaiming their allegiance only to God. Ten thousand Witnesses were sent to prisons and concentration camps. The rest went underground. The prisoners smuggled detailed diagrams and firsthand reports of atrocities out of the camps. The Witnesses tried to alert the world."

Joseph Kempler: "I was separated from my parents when I was 14, just about your age. I was all alone, no place to go, and I finally wound up in a concentration camp. I prayed but, you know, prayer didn't do any good. We could've prayed all we wanted to and there was no response. There was one barrack, had its own barbed wire around it. It was like a camp within a camp. And I was told that there were Bible students, or <speaks German> it was known in German, or Jehovah's Witnesses. They said, 'We have to love our neighbors and not kill them.' This was so incredible. People who would stand up to the Nazis. People who would stand up to Hitler, who dare to say, 'No,' and they could not be persuaded any way to do that, give us a tremendous sense of courage, in a way."

Joel P. Engardio: "The Nazis offered the Witnesses a deal. If they signed a document renouncing their faith, they could leave the camps for good. No other group was given this choice. Overwhelmingly, the Witnesses refused."

Joel P. Engardio: "The Witnesses were scorned as unpatriotic. They wouldn't pledge loyalty to any man-made symbol, calling into question what it means to be an American. On the eve of World War II, two young Jehovah's Witnesses refused to salute the flag in their Pennsylvania classroom. Across America, thousands of Witness kids took the same stand and were kicked out of school. Teachers who were Jehovah's Witnesses were fired, and so were parents who wouldn't salute the flag at work."

Ray Vasvari: "Between 1935 and 1958, the Jehovah's Witnesses were in the Supreme Court a remarkable 45 times. And there are periods in First Amendment history when you see a group really carrying the banner of free expression. You could say that they don't fight, you could say that they don't vote, but what they have done is litigate and in a way they have contributed more to American democracy than a lot of people have with their votes."

Joel P. Engardio: "Jehovah's Witnesses stood up for their own religious freedom. Even if their intention was not to help other groups, the impact shifted the Court's focus to protecting the unpopular and expanding rights for everyone: the right to speak freely on street corners and door to door; to publish an unconventional message without getting arrested; the right to be a conscientious objector of war; and the right of all patients seeking medical treatment to control what's done to their bodies."

Dr. Michael Berenbaum: “Jehovah’s Witnesses are fundamentalists who have an uncompromising faith. The largest question in our world today is whether people of uncompromising faith are going to destroy the other or embrace the other, whether people of uncompromising faith are going to see it is imperative to act out with violence toward the other or to act out with decency and dignity toward the other. So the question of our world may not be whether we’re going to have fundamentalism or whether fundamentalism is bad, but what type of fundamentalism we’re going to have.”

Film Caption: “Jehovah’s Witnesses are currently banned in 28 countries. They are litigating over 400 free speech and human rights cases worldwide.”

Family and Religious Differences

Delores Rasmussen: “God, I hate to use the word ‘cult.’ I don’t like the word ‘cult,’ but that’s kind of the way it is. It’s not just a religion; it’s a way of life. The Jehovah’s Witnesses cut out the family. They-- It- it’s like a carving. They carve a niche that they fit in but, unless you become part of the niche, you’re out.”

Audrey Thomas: “I wish my mother would embrace the fact that we are doing something that works for us. Not that we’re doing it against her.”

Religion and Medical Ethics

Joel P. Engardio: “Witnesses and doctors have been at odds ever since blood transfusions became common in the 1950s. Witnesses asked for alternative treatments. The medical establishment refused, often forcing blood on Jehovah’s Witnesses against their will. Witnesses felt they had a right to determine their own medical care. Doctors felt a religion had no right to let its members die.”

Joel P. Engardio: “A rare genetic disease has been attacking Seth’s liver since he was a teenager. Jehovah’s Witnesses accept most medical treatment. Seth takes 30 pills a day and gets nightly injections to keep his liver functioning. However, he’ll need a liver transplant and this is a problem. Seth wants the transplant but as a Jehovah’s Witness, he won’t take a blood transfusion—even his own, stored in advance.”

Ralph Thomas: “You certainly start thinking about, ‘Well, is this the right thing to do?’ And obviously as parents, you know, with Seth being 23 years old, uh, we didn’t make this decision by ourselves.”

Joel P. Engardio: “USC will perform Seth’s surgery to meet the religious needs of Jehovah’s Witnesses. In turn, the hospital gets to test out new technology on them. The aim is to limit blood loss to the point where most transfusions are unnecessary. USC thinks bloodless surgery should be the new standard for everyone. The threat of HIV and other viruses in the blood supply has given doctors an incentive to work with Witness patients.”

Dr. Arthur Caplan: “That led to this alliance between very strange bed fellows: Jehovah’s Witnesses, who never liked blood, didn’t want to use blood, and a scientific community trying to figure out how to do surgery without blood because it might be infected. So they came together in this bizarre confluence and said, ‘Let’s try and use less blood or no blood.’”

Film Caption: “142 U.S. hospitals now offer some version of bloodless surgery to all patients regardless of religious beliefs.”

RECOMMENDED NATIONAL STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts, National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies (correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
3. Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language (e.g., conventions, style vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
4. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
5. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language and genre to create, critique and discuss print and non-print texts.
6. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
7. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Expectations of Excellence, National Council for the Social Studies

Performance Expectation 1: Culture

- Predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.
- Interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes that contribute or pose obstacles to cross-cultural understanding.
- Construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues;

Performance Expectation 4: Individual Development and Identity

- Identify, describe, and express appreciation for the influences of various historical and contemporary cultures on an individual's daily life;
- Describe the ways family, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the development of a sense of self;
- Examine the interactions of ethnic, national, or cultural influences in specific situations or events;
- Analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs in the development of personal identity;
- Compare and evaluate the impact of stereotyping, conformity, acts of altruism, and other behaviors on individuals and groups;
- Work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals;

Performance Expectation 6: Power, Authority and Governance

- Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare;

Performance Expectation 8: Science, Technology and Society

- Analyze how science and technology influence the core values, beliefs and attitudes of society, and how core values, beliefs and attitudes of society shape scientific and technological change;
- Evaluate various policies that have been proposed as ways of dealing with social changes resulting from new technologies, such as genetically engineered plants and animals;
- Recognize and interpret varied perspectives about human societies and the physical world using scientific knowledge, ethical standards, and technologies from diverse world cultures;

For specific content standards on subjects such as social sciences, ethics and media literacy, please refer to your respective State Standards.

GUIDE CREDITS

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About ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM:

ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is an educational resource providing new documentary video content and accompanying curricular materials, lesson plans and homework assignments to high school and community college instructors and youth-serving community-based organizations. Video content includes approximately 15 minutes excerpted from an independently produced documentary film scheduled for broadcast on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Content is grouped into subject-specific segments that correspond to lesson plans and educational activities. Designed with key education standards in mind, all CLASSROOM materials are available, along with the video content, on a DVD-ROM and online.

ITVS COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is a product of the Independent Television Service and KQED Education, with support from PBS Teachers, the National Council of Churches, National Association of Community Colleges, 4-H, National Council for the Social Studies and National Council of Teachers of English.

About ITVS:

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

About *Independent Lens*:

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted this season by Terrence Howard, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at pbs.org/independentlens.

Independent Lens is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

About KQED Education Network:

KQED Education Network engages with community and educational organizations to broaden and deepen the impact of KQED media to effect positive change. Through parent education and professional development workshops, public screenings, multimedia resources, and special events, Education Network reaches more than 200,000 Bay Area residents a year and serves people of all ages, with a particular emphasis on reaching underserved communities. Learn more about its three unique services, Early Learning, Educational Services, and Community Engagement, at kqed.org/ednet.

About PBS:

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS's premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.