

ACTIVITY ON ALLY-SHIP

This activity draws upon earlier discussions of Ally-ship and presented in the Conceptual Frameworks Section. Please review this material with participants, especially the boxed Characteristics of an Ally.

We recommend the short film *Courage to Care* but want to emphasize taking lessons from this film (Christians who rescued Jews) and extending them to Christians as allies to any members of marginalized, targeted religious groups. What's important for the purposes of this activity is that the Christians in this film emphasized that their acts were not "heroic" so much as spontaneous, in the moment, and were based on their understanding of who they are as human beings. In some cases their actions were rooted in their religious faith and privileged social positions; in other cases, it came out of their sense of common humanity while acknowledging their privileged positions. They acted in the moment and used whatever materials were at hand, to help.

[The film *Courage to Care* (28 minutes) is available from <http://movies.yahoo.com/movie/1800248233/info> or from www.humanitas-international.org/holocaust/hvideo01.htm]

After showing the film, give participants a few moments to be quiet and to talk, if they wish, to the person next to them. Then ask them questions such as these:

- What do you think enabled the speakers to take action to help people in distress?
- What were some of the everyday ordinary events and everyday resources they used to help out?
- Were they working alone or in community with others (whether they knew it or not)?
- What strengthened and sustained them in these efforts?
- Are there insights you can take from these people (living in an extraordinarily dangerous time) that will be helpful to you in everyday life?

Then, facilitators ask the whole class (or participants working in small groups) to think back on other minority religious groups, using specific examples in the readings, or examples they used from this Website, or examples that have been discussed or noticed in class. Ask them: Can you think of any situations you have observed or can imagine happening in which members of marginalized religious groups would want to count on help from you and others? What are the specific everyday actions that you can take -- either as members of a privileged Christian majority or working "horizontally" as allies from other minority religious communities -- to help people who have been targeted for their religion? What support and resources would you need? Ask participants (perhaps in small groups) to think through the whole situation in which they are allies -- from the situation that requires help, to exactly what they can do.