



Sharing the Art and Story of Holocaust Survivor Esther Nisenthal Krinitz

VIEWING GUIDE

THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE: THE ART OF ESTHER NISENTHAL KRINITZ

Materials: [Through the Eye of the Needle – The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz](#), (30-minute film), Scavenger Hunt Handout (provided or [fillable PDF](#))

Background Resources on the art and story of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz: [Memories of Survival](#) (book), [“Meet Esther” close read](#) (PDF), [Fabric of Survival](#) (website gallery) and/or [Fabric of Survival Interactive Gallery](#) (Sutori)

Subject Areas: History, Social Studies, Art

Grades: 5 - 12

Topics/Themes: World War II (Europe), Holocaust, First Person Accounts, Jewish Life, Poland, Primary Sources, Art, Upstanders/Bystanders/Victims/Perpetrators, Heroes

OVERVIEW:

These questions and activities use the artwork and story of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz as a springboard to learn more about the Holocaust and World War II. The 30-minute film conveys the importance of telling one’s own story and through a documentary style, informs students about the series of events that impacted Esther and her family.

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to:

- Make predictions based on prior knowledge
- Gather evidence through primary sources
- Analyze artwork and primary sources
- Recognize the importance of including primary sources, first person accounts and experts in documentary films

LEARNING STANDARDS:

- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
- Comprehend and Collaborate

BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM – A FEW QUESTIONS:

Before viewing the film, students should gain some familiarity with Esther’s art and story by reading about her and seeing her artwork and then answering these questions:

1. Jewish people lived in both the cities and countryside of Poland. From what you know, what do you think life in the countryside was like?
2. Why do you think Esther created her artwork? Is there a stage when people seem to want to tell and make sense of their life stories?
3. Why do we have to tell our own story? Why is it that the lives of ordinary people are often ignored or overlooked?

PRE-VIEWING OR POST-VIEWING OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:

Ask students to review the images Esther created over her lifetime to tell her story and have students analyze the artwork as presented in the [Fabric of Survival Interactive Gallery](#) (Sutori)

POST-VIEWING OPTIONAL SCAVENGER HUNT:

Have the students complete the *Through the Eye of the Needle* Scavenger Hunt (provided below).

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS:

1. After viewing the movie and learning more about how Esther grew up, what are some things you learned about Jewish life in the countryside of Poland?
2. How is the portrayal of the Holocaust different from other depictions of the Holocaust you have seen?
3. How did Esther use beauty to convey such a harsh reality?
4. Think back to the dream Esther had about the sky falling. Why can that imagery be seen as a metaphor?
5. What types of experts appeared in the documentary? What were some of the important concepts they helped to explain?

EXTENSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a young girl Esther had to make many critical choices. Give an example of one.
2. What decisions can young adults make to respond to injustice in the world today?
3. The closing title of the film contains a quote from Elie Wiesel, “Whoever reads or listens to a witness, becomes a witness.” What do you think Wiesel means? What does it mean to be a witness?

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Through the Eye of the Needle

Scavenger Hunt

Name:

Class:

Teacher:

Date:

What made Esther different as a mother, according to her daughters?

What was the name of Esther's childhood home?

What were Esther's siblings' names?

What does Mikveh mean? Hint: Look at the ruler

In which year did the Nazi's first arrive

What was the name of the river near Esther's childhood home?

At whose whose home did they gather to bake Matzohs?

Which animal did every family own?

When Esther came to the United States, where did she live?