



## Classroom Learning Sheet and Activities for Teachers and Docents

by [Debra Campbell](#), President of Forward Thinking Initiatives and Teacher at Hillel School of Tampa

---

Define the following words:

### **Scapegoat**

*Suggested definition: A scapegoat is one who bears the blame for others or one who is the object of irrational hostility.*

### **Prejudice**

*Suggested definition: Prejudice is prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge.*

### **Stereotyping**

*Suggested definition: A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences.*

### **Propaganda**

*Suggested definition: the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.*

### **Bigot**

*Suggested definition: a person obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices, especially one who regards or treats the members of a group (as a racial or ethnic group) with hatred and intolerance.*

Take a look at the [Rogues Gallery](#).

Using the above words and definitions, how would you describe what Father Coughlin did when he published the anti-Semitic piece of propaganda, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," that accused Jews of plotting to seize control of the world.

For a number of years, into the early 1940s, members of Coughlin's Christian Front carried out physical assaults on Jews in cities such as Boston and New York. Using one or more of the above words, what would you say about these assaults?

Father Coughlin was known for giving a mixed message of social justice for the poor with a viciously anti-Communist, anti-Semitic rhetoric that frightened an American Jewish community that was already experiencing the worst anti-Jewish prejudice in its history. He supported social justice for the poor but also created bias and hatred against another group of people (the Jews), so how should history judge him? Was he a good man or a bigot?

Henry Ford, a gifted American inventor and businessman, blamed the "Jewish moneylenders" and the "Wall Street kikes" for gaining control of the world's economy and destroying the moral backbone of "his" America. Does a man of this kind of power and influence have a moral responsibility before he makes public comments like that? If so, how would you describe the responsibilities of people that have access to the media and public opinions?

Phillip Johnson, the world famous architect, visited Germany and observed Adolf Hitler at a Nazi rally near the city of Potsdam. Philip Johnson fell in love with National Socialism. He and his colleague Blackburn sought to create the "Nationalist Party" and the "Gray Shirts," modeled on the Nazi Storm Trooper Brown Shirts. By early 1940 Johnson had become directly associated with the American Fascist movement. He was investigated by several government agencies and suspected of being a Nazi spy.

He later had moments of reflection and regret. In the early 1990s, he told an interviewer, when discussing his involvement with Father Coughlin and his time in Nazi Germany, that "I have no excuse [for] such utter, unbelievable stupidity.... I don't know how you expiate guilt." One of the ways in which he sought such expiation was in designing Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Port Chester, New York. Johnson took no fee for the project because he was so grateful for the support shown him by the congregants of the synagogue.

Compare this to the actor Mel Gibson (known for the Lethal Weapon movies). After being arrested for drunk driving and making antisemitic remarks to his arresting, Jewish officer, Gibson issued the following statement. "There is no excuse, nor should there be any tolerance, for anyone who thinks or expresses any kind of anti-Semitic remark. I want to apologize specifically to everyone in the Jewish community for the vitriolic and harmful words that I said to a law enforcement officer the night I was arrested on a DUI charge." Compare the Johnson's and Gibson's apologies. Do you think both were sincere? Do you think it made a difference? Did it erase the antisemitism that the original actions caused?

After reading the history of the "rogues" in the gallery, do you think that most people hold stereotypes or have prejudices? Is hate ever justified? Are there any stereotypes about teenagers? Have you ever felt discriminated against because you are a teen? A girl? Too tall? Too short?

What is your response to this National Geographic clip about Lindberg?

[Nazi Fascination - AOL Video](#)

[Teaching Guide Topics for Character Education](#)

[goodcharacter.com](#) is a wonderful link for Middle School through High School teachers with age appropriate topics such as Courage, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect.

### **Activity 1: Where Does Bias Come From?**

What are your thoughts about whether the media (magazines, tv, internet etc) influences our opinions about various groups of people?

Collect magazine pictures or internet images of:

- Thin, perfect, air-brushed MODELS
- Successful YOUNG working people  
[The youth bias in advertising - includes related article on the 1997 Ms. National Senior Citizen pageant | American Demograph.](#)
- Ethnic MINORITIES being portrayed as sports celebrities
- White PRIVILEGE
- Women WORKING in the 1950s, Rosie the Riveter etc.

### **Questions about Evaluating Bias in Consumer Product Advertisements** (from Glencoe Science)

1. What are some strategies that professional groups use to create “good ads?” Which strategies have the potential to introduce bias? Why?
2. What is a strategy that advertisers use to gain your attention? Think of an example of an advertisement that uses this strategy. Describe the ad and its strategy.
3. What are the elements of a magazine advertisement? How do they work to persuade the reader?
4. What is stereotyping? Why is stereotyping a problem?
5. Some types of advertising contain the ad creator’s perspective. What is propaganda? What is the difference between information and propaganda?

## **Activity 2: How Are Our Opinions Swayed?**

Link: The Ad Detective

[Glencoe Online External Link](#)

A wonderful video that I have used is called **Cracking the Advertising Code** from the Learning Zone Xpress

Looking at Advertising

Check out the following link: [Glencoe Science: WebQuest](#)

## **Activity 3: Taking a Stand**

This is an art activity. When I conducted this with our Middle School students, I allowed them to use material/media they wished to use and to create a work of any size. We worked together in order to find the art materials they needed.

Each student began by writing an essay (that would become their artist statement) about an issue in their community they felt was unfair, unjust or biased. Their community can be defined as their neighborhood, school, religious venue or club. The art work they created had to be a statement about the issue, however NOT a poster that would say everything to the viewer, but a symbolic work that would encourage the viewer to explore the art and possibly come up with their own solutions to the issue.

## **Activity 4: Response to Bullying**

This is a critical topic in all schools and can be used as a teaching topic in Social Studies and Language Arts as well as Fine Art.

Students can be encouraged to think about a time they have experienced being the victim of bullying (they do not need to share this out loud). The students are then asked to draw a picture of the consequences of the bullying. This could be a picture of about feelings, loss of friendships, physical consequence, etc. Did anyone step in to help them? Processing is important after such an exercise but sharing should not be mandatory. Part of the process is to ask the student to write or share what steps they wish others would have done...or did do...to stop the bullying.

Link: [Bullying in Middle Schools: Prevention and Intervention - Middle School Journal](#)