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HVL LESSON TITLE:

FAITH ON THE FRONTLINES

DEVELOPED BY: SHELBY ANDERSON

FAITH ON THE FRONTLINES

GUIDING QUESTION:

How did faith influence the experiences of soldiers and families on the homefront during WWII?

OVERVIEW:

WWII veteran Ted Estridge struggled with his faith while fighting in Japan. After the war, he found a renewal in his faith as he traveled back to Japan for forgiveness. Many soldiers of this war, leaned on their faith or found faith while serving. This lesson addresses how faith in all religions was found on the frontlines.



SUBJECT(S):
Social Studies



VIETNAM VETERAN(S):
Ted Estridge



DURATION:
1-3 Days

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“The Lord called me back to Okinawa as a missionary. I told my family and we spent 15 years there as a missionary. I tell you, I hated Okinawa and hated the Japanese people at the time until the Lord saved me and I found forgiveness.”

WWII Veteran Ted Estridge

OVERVIEW:

WWII veteran Ted Estridge struggled with his faith while fighting in Japan. After the war, he found a renewal in his faith as he traveled back to Japan for forgiveness. Many soldiers of this war, leaned on their faith or found faith while serving. This lesson addresses how faith in all religions was found on the frontlines.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

During World War II, faith played a significant role in the lives of people both on the battlefield and at home.

For many, religious faith provided comfort, hope, and meaning during a time of great upheaval and hardship.

Some used their faith to guide their behavior and make sense of the world, while others found solace in prayer and religious practices.

Religious leaders also played a crucial role in building morale and providing spiritual support to soldiers and civilians alike

OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Analyze primary sources and secondary sources.
- Utilize research strategies in learning history.
- Integrate digital technology.

STANDARDS:

Reading Informational Text:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7: Conduct short as well as sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative sources.

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MATERIALS & DOCUMENTS

- [Memoirs of WWII Ted Estridge Video](#)
- [Guide to Setting Up Google Site](#)
- Listening Guide (Doc A)
- Project Instructions (Doc B)
- Primary Source Links Guide (Doc C)
- Teacher-Created Google Site

PROCEDURES

ACTIVITY 01

- Introduce the essential question: How did faith influence the experiences of soldiers and families on the homefront during WWII?
- Play the video: Memoirs of WWII – Ted Estridge: Return to Okinawa. NOTE: Turn on closed captions.
- While students watch, they complete the Listening Guide (Doc A) with 3 specific questions: 1. *What message did General Buckner give the troops, and how did it impact Ted?* 2. *What does Ted's question "Why me, Lord?" tell us about his personal beliefs?* 3. *How did Ted's faith shape his life after the war?*

ACTIVITY 02

- Use 3 post-viewing questions to transition into deeper dialogue for a class discussion:
- 1. *How did Ted's faith evolve from the battlefield to peacetime?* 2. *Why do you think soldiers turn to faith in times of war?* 3. *What questions does this story raise about how people of other religions might have experienced WWII?*

ACTIVITY 03

- Explain that students will create a collaborative digital exhibit using a Google Site (teacher set up prior to lesson). Direct their attention to Project Directions (Doc B). Go over the directions, expectations, and grading of the project. This can be an individual project or a small group project.
- NOTE: Project research could take 1-2 class periods or be completed as homework.

ACTIVITY 04

- After research is collected, students will work on inputting their content into their section of the site.
- Emphasize the importance of: citing sources, using historical evidence, and honoring the voices and experiences of real individuals.
- NOTE: Peer review and feedback encouraged.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Host a gallery walk or digital showcase to allow students to explore each other's work.

FAITH ON THE FRONTLINES

LISTENING GUIDE

DOC A



1. What message did General Buckner give the troops, and how did it impact Ted?
2. What does Ted's question "Why me, Lord?" tell us about his personal beliefs?
3. How did Ted's faith shape his life after the war?

FAITH ON THE FRONTLINES

PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

DOC B



Faith on the Frontlines: Religion, Service, and Identity in WWII

Project Instructions

Project Overview

You're going to help build a collaborative class website called "**Faith on the Frontlines**," which explores how religious beliefs shaped people's experiences during World War II. Each student or group will choose a faith tradition and create a page that includes historical information, a personal story, and analysis based on **primary and secondary sources**.

Project Specifics:

- Choose a religious tradition.
 - Research how people of that faith experienced WWII-either as soldiers, chaplains, civilians, refugees, or resistance members for the Allies.
 - Use at least **one primary source** and one secondary source
 - Create a page or section of your chosen faith with images, quotes, and citations.
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Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Choose a Faith Tradition

Pick one religion to focus on. You may select from:

- Christianity (any denomination)
- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Sikhism
- Indigenous spiritual traditions
- Other (get teacher approval)

2. Each group will be responsible for creating a tab on the shared class Google Site.

Your tab content should include:

- An overview of the religion's practices and beliefs during WWII.
- How members of the faith contributed to the war effort (military chaplains, medics, soldiers, homefront involvement, etc.).

CONTINUED

- At least two primary sources with citations (letters, newspaper clippings, religious broadcasts, etc.).
- Photos or documents (with proper sourcing).
- A reflection paragraph from your team: "What role did faith play in supporting morale, resilience, and hope during WWII for followers of this religion?"

3. Reflect

At the end of your page, include a short reflection:

What did you learn about faith and war that surprised you?

Scoring Criteria

- Projects includes accurate and relevant historical information.
- Project uses at least one primary source and one secondary source.
- Project has a well-organized layout and thoughtful analysis
- The reflection is personal and insightful
- All sources are cited properly.

FAITH ON THE FRONTLINES

PRIMARY SOURCE LINKS GUIDE

DOC C



Primary Source Resources by Religion

General Resources:

- [National Parks Service](#)

Christianity

- [Memoirs of WWII YouTube Channel](#) – Search for veterans who mention faith
- [Veterans History Project](#) – Filter by “Christian” under religion
- [American GIs and the chaplains who served them](#)
- [WWII's Immortal Four Chaplains Remembered](#)
- [Chaplains in WWII – National WWII Museum](#)

Judaism

- [USC Shoah Foundation Testimonies – Survivor interviews](#)
- [National WWII Museum - Jewish Americans in World War II](#)
- [Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#) - Jewish Soldiers in the Allied Armies
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation](#)

Islam

- Muslim American Veterans Stories – Library of Congress
- [The National Muslim War Memorial Trust](#) - The role of Muslims in WWII
- [The Muslim Soldiers of World War II](#)
- [The Washington Post](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [Informed Comment](#)

Buddhism

- [Japanese American Incarceration Oral Histories](#) – Densho
- [Heart Mountain Interpretive Center](#)
- [Buddhism Under Japanese Incarceration During WWII](#) - National Parks Service
- [Wings of Wisdom and Compassion: Lessons of Freedom from Japanese American Internment in WWII](#)
- [The Birth of an American Form of Buddhism: The Japanese-American Buddhist Experience in World War II](#)

Sikhism

[Sikh Soldiers in WWII](#) – BBC

[Sikh soldier fought in Burma campaign in World War II](#)

[SikhNet World War II and Sikh Soldiers](#) - Recording Their Stories

Indigenous Traditions

Code Talker Profiles – [National Museum of the American Indian](#)

[Veterans History Project](#) – Native Americans