

Discussion Questions  
Johtje Vos: Choices of Courage

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the effect of the German invasion of the Netherlands on the lives of Johtje and her family?
2. For Jews in the Netherlands, what was the effect of the German invasion?
3. Johtje states that she and Aart were part of an “underground organization.” What does the term *underground* mean?
4. What is “the Group” to which Johtje belonged, and what made it part of an underground organization?
5. How did “the Group” use simple objects like scraps of paper and geraniums to communicate?



## Discussion Questions Johtje Vos: Choices of Courage

Name \_\_\_\_\_

11. What do you think of Johtje's comment that she and her husband "didn't tell things to each other" about what they did during the German occupation of the Netherlands?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What were the pros and cons of making decisions as part of "the Group," which constituted a kind of rescue community?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Helen Fein, a sociologist, coined the phrase "universe of obligation," which she has defined as "the limits of the common conscience; those whom we are obligated to protect, to take into account, and to whom we must account." Think about your own "universe of obligation" and give examples of those to whom you feel obligated to protect. What kind of commonalities emerge as you share your answers? To whom do we appear to feel most obligated to protect? Why? How might understanding the concept of universe of obligation help us to better understand the actions of many rescuers? How might it help us better understand ourselves?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. In Dr. King's acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, he said: "I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him. I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsom and jetsom in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him." In response to this quote, consider Dr. King's phrase, "events that surround" a person. Do events have to be local for us to be surrounded by them? Why or why not? What types of events can we influence? How?