

## THE PYRAMID OF ALLIANCE: An Activity for Senior High Students

### Rationale:

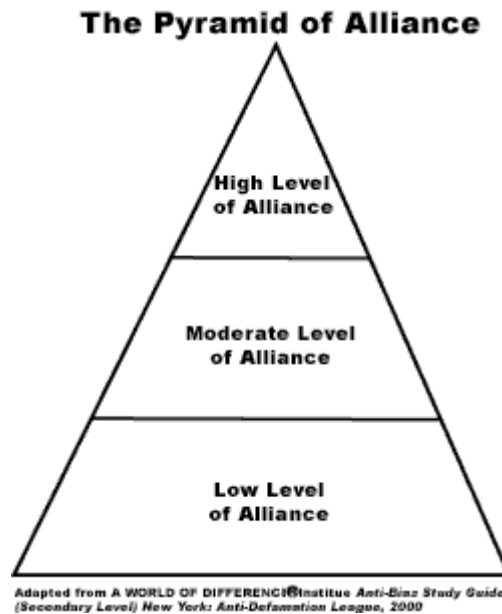
The purpose of this activity is for students to examine some of the ways that people take action against bigotry. The activity also gives students an opportunity to consider some of the ways a person can be an ally and to assess how building alliances strengthens a community.

### Directions:

1. Explain to students that in this activity they will explore some of the ways that individuals and communities fight bigotry.

2. Have students brainstorm the kinds of things people have done or can do to fight hate in their communities. List their suggestions on a piece of chart paper. Discuss how these measures can be effective in both curtailing hate activity and in helping victims of hate.

3. Explain that many individuals do play an active role in combating hate. When the Anti-Defamation League and the National Urban League joined together and asked people to make donations to help rebuild the African-American churches that were burned in 1995 and 1996, hundreds of individuals wrote letters and sent personal contributions.



4. Explain that expressing sympathy and sending donations are two ways that people can be an ally to others, but there are other actions that can be taken as well.

5. Show the Pyramid of Alliance to students. Briefly review the handout and then divide students into small groups of four to five students. Give each group chart paper and markers and instruct them to select a recorder and a reporter.

6. Each group is to draw a pyramid similar to the one shown here and then identify actions that represent the different levels of alliance (e.g., low level of alliance might be interrupting a joke about a particular group of people; moderate level of alliance might be attending a rally or march supporting a group; high level of alliance might be helping to rebuild a mosque or a church or clean a synagogue that has been desecrated). Allow 15 to 20 minutes for groups to build their pyramids.

7. Have each group share its Pyramid of Alliance with the class. Students should notice that what some individuals see as a low level of alliance may seem like a high level of alliance to others. Sometimes an act of alliance may require a greater degree of risk because of the circumstances (e.g., if a student interrupts a joke with a classmate the risk may not be great, but if a student interrupts a joke told by a teacher or parent, the risk may be greater).

8. After all groups have presented and the pyramids are displayed around the room, lead a group discussion using the following questions:

- Have you ever been an ally? For whom? What motivated you to act?
- For which groups have you not been an ally? Why not?

- Have you ever attempted to be an ally to someone but your efforts were rejected? How did you feel?
- What are some possible reasons why someone would reject an ally? What else can you do in that situation?
- Who, if anyone, has been your ally? What level of the Pyramid of Alliance did the individual or group's behavior represent?
- How does building alliances strengthen a community?

9. As a homework assignment, have students listen to the local news or read the local paper and identify situations where it would be beneficial for members of the community to act as allies to a particular individual or group. Students should identify what level of alliance would be appropriate to the situation as well as some possible actions that could be taken. Have students also share how these actions could ultimately strengthen the community. [NOTE: Students can also discuss situations in their school community where alliances would be beneficial.]

10. Have students meet in small groups to share the homework assignment.

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