

## 1936 Berlin Olympics

### Critical Thinking & Discussion Questions K-8

#### Heritage and Race

##### Grades K-2

Where is Germany? Have you watched the Olympics?

Why did some Americans not want to go to Germany for the Olympics?

Are Olympic athletes known for their skin-color or by the country they are from? Why?

How did German Nazis compare themselves with other people? Why did they not like Jewish people or people with brown skin?

Why do we sometimes make skin color more important than human life?

Hitler believed that only certain people should be born. He only wanted people with white skin and blue eyes. If you could talk to Hitler, what would you say to him?

In this country, we can eat many different kinds of food from different places. What kinds of food have you tasted? (Italian, Japanese, Indian, French, etc.)

In what other ways can one celebrate a person's heritage? (Language, clothing, music, religion)

How do the Olympic games celebrate national heritage and respect for one another?

##### Grades 3-5

Where is Berlin, Germany? Have you ever watched the Olympics?

Why did some Americans not want to go to Germany for the 1936 Olympics?

German Nazis thought that "Aryans" were better than people with brown skin or who were Jewish. Why do we sometimes make skin color more important than human value?

Imagine the Olympics in 1936. What good lessons could these Nazis learn from the diverse US Olympic team?

In this country, we can eat many different kinds of food from different places. What kinds of food have you tasted? (Italian, Japanese, Indian, French, German, etc.) What ethnicities are your family background?

How is the word *race* different than ethnicity? Define national identity.

What would make non-Jewish Germans turn on Jewish Germans that had been their neighbors? How does your community respect different religions and cultures?

## **Grades 6-8**

Why were Hitler and Germany so interested in the concept of an “Aryan” race? How does ideology (shared set of ideas and beliefs) influence how we view others? What makes some ideas dangerous?

What country were you born in? What ethnicities are your family line? Are human beings one race or many? How do you know? Explain the difference between race, ethnicity, and national identity.

How did Hitler show his dislike of the “American experience” being various ethnicities united under one national identity? What does this unique characteristic of the United States offer to the Olympic experience?

Look up the definition of eugenics. Is eugenics an issue in any current topics of discussion?

What would make non-Jewish Germans turn on Jewish Germans who had been their neighbors? How does your community respect different religions and cultures?

## **The Olympics and National Honor**

### **Grades K-2**

Most countries have a national song, or anthem. Can you name a song that celebrates your country? Why do countries play their national songs during a sporting event?

Why was winning medals important to the Black American runners during the Berlin Olympics?

Why is it an honor for an athlete to compete for their nation?

Describe what a good leader is like. What made Hitler a bad leader? How can we protect ourselves from having a bad leader?

Have you ever been a leader in your classroom (e.g., line leader, song leader, game leader)? Why did you have to be responsible?

How do you honor your school? Community? Nation?

## **Grades 3-5**

Define the title, *Fuhrer*. Give characteristics of a good leader and a bad leader.

What does the term *ambassador* mean? In what ways can Olympic athletes be considered ambassadors?

What is the purpose of a national song, or anthem? How does a loss of national honor and patriotism affect the mood of world sports?

If you were a leader, how would you bring goodness and honor to your nation?

How did Hitler dishonor his country at the 1936 Olympic games?

After World War II, what happened to the German leaders at the Nuremberg Trials? Do you know of any leader (national or local) that has been punished for their wrongdoing?

## **Grades 6-8**

What were the Nuremberg Laws? After World War II, what happened to the German leaders at the Nuremberg Trials? Do you know of any leader (national or local) that has been punished for their wrongdoing?

Define the title, *Fuhrer*. Give characteristics of a good leader and a bad leader.

What does *politics* mean? Explain how world sports competitions can be politicized. How did this happen in the world of boxing in 1935? Should athletes be allowed to vocalize or demonstrate their political grievances in the midst of competition? Give pros and cons.

How did Jesse Owens' record-breaking college career impact his hometown? What does the term *ambassador* mean? What are qualities of a good ambassador?

Why does the national tension of race relations often subside on the stage of international competition? How does learning about Owens' longtime friendship with Lutz Long impact you?

Most countries have a national song, or anthem. What issues and ideologies can cause citizens of **any** nation to lose their sense of nationality and appreciation for their "motherland".

How does this loss of nationality or patriotism affect the atmosphere/quality of world sports?

## Ideology and Social Protest

### Grades K-2

What is a tradition? Name a national tradition.

Have you been to a sporting event? What is a common tradition at a sporting event?

Why do Americans honor the US Flag? In the Olympics, most countries "dip their flag" to the leader of the host country. Why does the US believe this tradition is disrespectful to our flag?

How do we learn what is good? Who teaches us what is bad?

When should we protest something that we don't like? A boycott is a social protest. Can you give another example? (March, Rally)

How can you protest when you see a classmate be mean to someone?

Do you like sports? How would you feel if your favorite sports team refused to play?

German leaders used **propaganda** to make people believe that Jewish people were evil. How would you feel if you heard an adult say something mean about someone else?

### Grades 3-5

The Olympic tradition of "dipping the flag" was done to honor the leader of the host country. Only the US has refused this tradition. Give ideas about why some people like this tradition and why some people do not like the tradition.

American coaches had a hard decision: let their Jewish runners compete or use their best runners who were Black. How did this decision affect the whole team?

What is good about social protest? A boycott is one example. Can you give another? Are there things we should not protest?

If you were an athlete, explain how it could be hard or easy to not compete because of a social protest?

Is there something you do not like that would cause you to boycott an event or a company?

What is the function of propaganda? Does it work? Give examples from both the slide deck and what you have learned about Marxism, Nazism or World War II.

Can you give examples of propaganda at work today? Why is it important to think for yourself?

Describe what the world would look like if other countries had begun to think like German Nazis.

## **Grades 6-8**

Why did the Americans refuse to dip the flag to Hitler during the opening ceremony of the Olympic games? Was that ritual—dipping the flag—still in practice at recent Olympic events?

Why were the American Jewish runners benched during the 1936 games? Should the American coaches have left the original relay squad intact?

Is a boycott a successful form of social protest? Should the Americans have boycotted the Olympics in Germany? Name other forms of social protest.

Is limiting oneself an opportunity (not competing) worth standing for a cause (racial equality or personal conviction)? Is there an issue that would cause you to boycott an event or a company?

What is the function of propaganda? Does it work? Give examples from both the slide deck and what you have learned about Marxism, Nazism or World War II. Can you give examples of propaganda at work today?

Explain a time when you were told something, only to find out that it was not true. What did this situation teach you?

## Sportsmanship and Athletic Skill

### Grades K-2

If you played a sport, would you want to compete against other schools or just your friends?

What does *sportsmanship* mean? How was Tidye Pickett a good sport? What lessons can we learn when we lose a game?

How would you feel if you were named the best in the world at something? The best in your class? Tell a story of when you worked hard at something.

Why is it important to be a good sport, even if you are not the best at something?

Why is teamwork important? How did Jesse Owens support his teammates? Describe a time when you and your classmates worked together.

Think of a physical activity you can do now, that you could not do when you were younger. Can you wash dishes? Ride a bicycle? Swim? How does trying hard and not giving up help us?

Jesse Owens said he would not run in a race so that his team mate could have a turn. Have you ever given up your turn to do something you liked, so that your friend or a sibling could have a turn?

Has anyone ever let you go first in a game at recess or P.E?

Why is self-sacrifice hard? Why is it honorable?

### Grades 3-5

Name ways that learning a sport and competition can help you excel in future situations—in school, at home, and a profession.

How would you feel if you were named the best in the world at something? The best in your class? Tell a story of when you worked hard at something.

What lessons can we learn when we lose a game? What does *sportsmanship* mean? How was Tidye Pickett a good sport?

Sports and studying were important to Archie Williams and Jim LuValle. Share ideas about how they planned their day or shaped their lifestyle in order to achieve their goals.

Do you want to do well in a particular hobby, sport or school subject? What can you do now to prepare yourself to meet that desire?

What is something you enjoy doing at school or at home? Jesse Owens' two Jewish teammates loved track, but were denied the chance to run. How would you feel if leaders didn't let you do what you enjoyed?

What Woodson Principle did Jesse Owens' display by offering not to run so that his Jewish teammates could have a turn? How have you exhibited this Principle? If so, how did it make you feel?

## **Grades 6-8**

Many athletes go into other fields after they retire. How does athletic training and competition help prepare individuals for success in any vocation?

Sports and studying were important to Archie Williams and Jim LuValle. Share ideas about how they planned their day or shaped their lifestyle in order to achieve their goals.

Do you want to become skilled in a particular hobby, sport or school subject? What can you do now to prepare yourself to meet those goals?

What lessons can we learn when we lose a game? What does *sportsmanship* mean? How was Tidye Pickett a good sport?

Jesse Owens was willing to bow out of the qualifying heat to let a Jewish teammate have an opportunity to run. What Woodson Principles describe his character?

Describe a time when you forfeited an opportunity so that someone else could have a chance to meet a goal? How have you felt when you realized that a parent or friend gave up an opportunity so that you could have something that you wanted?