

You are: CHIUNE SUGIHARA

You were a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania during World War II. In 1940, thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution came to you, desperate for travel visas to escape Europe and reach safety. You knew that helping them went against your government's orders. But you chose to follow your conscience. You began issuing Japanese transit visas, allowing Jews to travel through Japan to other safe countries. You worked day and night, handwriting visas—sometimes up to 300 a day.

Even as you were forced to leave Lithuania, you kept signing visas from your train window. Thanks to your bravery, around 6,000 Jews were able to escape the Holocaust.

Later, you said: "The spirit of humanity, philanthropy... neighbourly friendship... with this spirit, I ventured to do what I did... because of this reason, I went ahead with redoubled courage."

In 1985, Israel honoured you as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations," a title given to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

You are: RAOUL WALLENBERG

You were a Swedish diplomat sent to Budapest, Hungary, in 1944. Upon arrival, you began issuing protective passports—documents that identified the bearer as being under Swedish protection. These were not officially recognized by the Nazis but were often respected due to Sweden's neutral status.

You rented buildings and declared them Swedish territory, turning them into safe houses for Jews. You coordinated with other neutral embassies and humanitarian organisations to expand these efforts. You regularly visited deportation trains and camps, intervening directly to remove individuals who held or claimed to hold Swedish protection documents.

You worked under constant threat, often using persuasion, bluffing, and diplomatic pressure to rescue people. By the end of 1944, you had helped protect tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest.

In January 1945, you were detained by Soviet forces and disappeared. Your fate remains unknown.

You are: OSKAR SCHINDLER

You were a German industrialist and member of the Nazi Party during World War II. In 1939, you took over an enamelware factory in Krakow, Poland. You employed Jewish workers from the nearby ghetto because they were cheaper and available under wartime labour policies.

As the war progressed and Jewish communities were targeted for deportation and extermination, you used your factory's classification as essential to the war effort to keep your workers from being sent away. You maintained contact with Nazi officials and used bribes and influence to protect those on your payroll.

In 1944, when the Krakow ghetto was liquidated and Jews were sent to Auschwitz, you arranged for over 1,000 of your workers to be transferred to a new factory in Brněnec, in occupied Czechoslovakia. You compiled a list of names—later known as "Schindler's List"—to ensure their relocation. The factory produced little, and you focused on keeping the workers housed and fed.

You spent most of your money doing this work. Approximately 1,200 Jews survived because they were listed as employees under your care.

You are: IRENA SENDLER

You were a Polish social worker and nurse in Warsaw during World War II. When the Nazis established the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940, you joined the underground resistance group Żegota. You gained access to the ghetto under the pretense of conducting sanitation inspections. You organised the rescue of Jewish children, smuggling them out of the ghetto through various means—ambulances, sewers, secret passages, and even toolboxes. You placed them with Polish families, orphanages, and religious institutions, giving them false identities. You kept detailed records of each child's real name and new identity, writing them on thin slips of paper and hiding them in jars buried beneath a neighbour's garden, so they could later be reunited with their families.

In 1943, you were arrested by the Gestapo, tortured, and sentenced to death. Żegota managed to bribe officials and secure your release. By the end of the war, you had helped save approximately 2,500 Jewish children.

You are: JOHANNA ECK

You were a German war widow living in Berlin during World War II. In 1942, you sheltered Heinz Guttman, a young Jewish man whose family had been deported. You had known Heinz's father, Jakob, through your husband, who served with him in World War I. Heinz was homeless, without food or shelter. You took him into your apartment and shared your limited food rations.

When your home was destroyed in a 1943 air raid, you found a new place to live and arranged alternative shelter for Heinz. You continued to support him with food and contacts. In early 1944, you took in Elfriede Guttman, another Jewish woman who had narrowly escaped a Gestapo raid. You helped Elfriede assume a false identity using documents from a former classmate.

You sheltered four people in total during the war. In 1973, you were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for your actions. A Berlin school was later named in your honour.

You are: OLGA NOWAK

You came from the Polish town of Boryslaw (Eastern Poland - Galicia) and when the war broke out you chose to help Jews whose lives were endangered. Usually you were approached and asked if you would help. Being just a young woman yourself, and of Ukrainian origin, you and your family were well known in the town. You were able to use your connections to secure accommodation, work and food supply for Jews. The first people you began to hide in your own flat were Cecilia Nadler and her son Leszek Nadler. You placed Alka Nadler with your sister in the country. There were times when you hid your neighbours and their entire families during an "Akcja" (a violent action against Jews). You hid a young male when he had to escape from his forest hiding place and kept him at your place for over 3 months. You were never paid for any of your deeds.

After the war you and Leszek married, and migrated to Australia. You were honoured as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

You are: MARIA TWARDOWSKI

You lived in Warsaw Poland, and your closest friends, the Zettels, were Jewish. When they were sent to the ghetto, you supplied them with food. In September 1942, Mr and Mrs Zettel were deported to Treblinka and murdered. You took in their 18 year old son, Leon. You hid him in your tiny two room apartment for long periods over the next three years. You hid him behind a wardrobe when visitors called, and sold his parents' jewellery to get food for him.

You obtained false papers for Leon.

When neighbours became suspicious, Leon had to be moved. You sent him to a friend's farm until 1944.

After the war, Leon moved to Australia, but he stayed in touch with you for the rest of your life.

He ensured you were honoured as Righteous Among the Nations, and your medal is held at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

You are: BERNARD INGRAM

You were a Jewish boy, born in 1913 in Tarnopol, Poland. Your father was murdered in Belzec.

You studied medicine, even though that was very hard for a Jew at the time, and you fell in love with a beautiful non-Jewish woman named Irena. When other Jews were fleeing Tarnopol to escape the German offensive, you stayed with Irena. During a Nazi massacre of Jews in Tarnopol, Irena hid you in the flat she shared with her mother. You were then moved to a labour camp, and worked as a doctor in the ghetto. Irena helped you escape by organising false documents in the name of her Christian ex-boyfriend.

You and Irena left Tarnopol, and eventually found refuge in a village called Czermna, where you worked as a doctor and your patients paid you with food. You stayed until the end of the war, when "the endless nightmare of being hunted, hated and degraded was over".

After you both moved to Australia, Irena was honoured as Righteous Among the Nations for saving you.

QUESTION FOR CHIUNE SUGIHARA

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

You were punished by your government for what you did. You lost your job and went from working as a diplomat to being a janitor. Would you make the same choice again if you knew what it would cost you?

QUESTION FOR CHIUNE SUGIHARA

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

How many people did you save through your efforts?

QUESTION FOR CHIUNE SUGIHARA

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

What values were you living by when you signed all those visas?

QUESTION FOR CHIUNE SUGIHARA

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

What honour were you given by Israel?

QUESTION FOR OSKAR SCHINDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

Did it cost you anything to keep the factories running?

QUESTION FOR OSKAR SCHINDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

How many Jewish lives did you save?

QUESTION FOR OSKAR SCHINDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

You worked within the Nazi system, meeting Nazis, socialising with them, and providing them with goods from your factories. Was it hard for you to work with Nazis?

QUESTION FOR OSKAR SCHINDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

How did you influence the Nazis to keep your workers safe?

QUESTION FOR RAOUL WALLENBERG

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

What special skills or attributes did you use to save Jewish lives?

QUESTION FOR RAOUL WALLENBERG

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

Why did you act to protect Jews during the Holocaust?

QUESTION FOR RAOUL WALLENBERG

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

Why was Sweden different to other countries during World War Two?
What unique status did it have?

QUESTION FOR RAOUL WALLENBERG

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

You disappeared in January 1945, never to be seen again. Since then, you have been honoured with memorials all around the world. How do you feel about being recognised for saving tens of thousands of Jewish lives?

QUESTION FOR IRENA SENDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

What were some of the methods you used to smuggle Jewish children out of the Warsaw ghetto?

QUESTION FOR IRENA SENDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

How and why did you keep records on the Jewish children you saved?

QUESTION FOR IRENA SENDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

Why did you choose to focus on saving Jewish children (rather than older people)?

QUESTION FOR IRENA SENDLER

You might ask this question, or think of another question you'd like to ask:

You were caught by the Gestapo (German police force), tortured, and sentenced to death. How did you escape?

You are: A SUMMARISER

Your job is to summarise the discussion on the board, so at the end of the 'show' students can see a summary.

There will be 4 main interviewees, and 4 other Righteous Among the Nations from the audience.

You should write the name of each person, two or three words indicating their role in saving Jews, and perhaps an indication of how many they saved.

Try to focus on values – why did each person risk their own safety to save Jewish lives?

NB There may be a second summariser sharing your job.

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You are: THE HOST OF 'BRAVE CHOICES' INTERVIEW TV SHOW

PREPARATORY NOTES

You are responsible for running the interviews, and taking questions from the audience.

The four people on the panel are:

- Chiune Sugihara
- Oskar Schindler
- Raoul Wallenberg
- Irena Sendler

Some people within the audience are characters from the Holocaust. They are:

- Johanna Eck
- Olga Nowak
- Maria Twardowski
- Bernard Ingram

Other people within the audience have been provided with questions to ask the panelists.

Ensure the interviewees keep their initial responses very short, just giving the basic details. More information will come out through the questions from the audience.

SCRIPT

HOST: Welcome to our interview panel show, 'Brave Choices'. My name is [*state your name*], and I am the host of the show. Today, we will be focusing on a special group of people, who have been honoured with the title 'Righteous Among the Nations'. This award recognises non-Jews who took great risks to save the lives of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

During the Holocaust, people had different attitudes towards Jews, but mostly they ranged from indifference to hostility. People throughout Europe watched on as Jews were rounded up and killed. Some of those people participated by collaborating, others benefited by taking over the homes, businesses and belongings of Jews, and some simply did nothing. Elie Weisel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize-winning peace advocate said, "What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander."

But there were a small minority who refused to be bystanders. They gathered the courage to stand by their values. This minority acted to rescue Jews because to do anything else would be an unacceptable break with their moral and ethical responsibilities.

There are four such people on the stage with me today.

[Address Chiune Sugihara]: Chiune Sugihara, let's begin with you. Could you please tell us very briefly, in just one or two sentences, what action you took to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust?

[*Sugihara responds.*]

HOST: Thank you Mr Sugihara. Is there anyone in our audience today who has a question for Mr Sugihara?

[Allow for questions and answers. There may be up to 4 questions.]

HOST: Let's turn to you, now, Mr Oskar Schindler. Please tell us in just one or two very brief sentences, why the movie about you is called 'Schindler's List'. What was this list?

[Schindler responds.]

HOST: What an extraordinary story. Let me turn to the audience now – does anyone have a question for Mr Schindler.

[Allow for questions and answers. There may be up to 4 questions.]

HOST: Excellent questions. Thank you. What about you, Raoul Wallenberg? It's good to see you here, since you went missing in 1945, and haven't been seen since... Can you tell us very briefly what strategies you used to assist Jews during the Holocaust?

[Wallenberg responds.]

HOST: Who has a question for Mr Wallenberg?

[Allow for questions and answers. There may be up to 4 questions.]

HOST: So far, all three of our Righteous Among the Nations heroes has had a remarkable story. Those three were operating at high levels of diplomacy or business. But it was different for you, wasn't it, Irena Sendler? Please briefly tell us your role in saving Jews during the Holocaust.

[Sendler responds.]

HOST: There must be questions for Ms Sendler. Anyone?

[Allow for questions and answers. There may be up to 4 questions.]

HOST: Thank you for those questions, and thank you once again to our excellent panel members. As you heard, our guests today were responsible for saving lives on a very large scale. Between them, they saved tens of thousands of Jews, and the descendants of those Jews number perhaps in the hundreds of thousands. However, to be recognised as Righteous Among the Nations, it was not necessary to act on such a large scale. Sometimes, people were in a position to save just one or two lives. As one Jewish sacred text, the Talmud says, "Whoever saves a single life is considered to have saved a whole world". These people also took enormous risks to do what they could, and to live by their values.

Johanna Eck, if you are with us today, can you share your story?

[Eck responds.]

HOST: Thank you Johanna. Olga Nowak, are you here in the audience? I believe you are also honoured as Righteous Among the Nations for saving individual Jewish people. Tell us about that.

[Nowak responds.]

HOST: So we have Righteous Among the Nations here in Australia. Is there any other member of the audience who can speak about an Australian Righteous Among the Nations?

[Bernard Ingram tells how his girlfriend (later his wife) saved him.]

HOST: What a wonderful story of courage and romance. Thank you Mr Ingram. We are nearly out of time for today, but is there anyone in the audience who would like to share their own story of saving Jews?

[Twardowski responds.]

HOST: Thank you, Maria, for your courage, and for sharing with us.

Well, that's all we have time for, folks. I hope the values our guests exhibited in their lives will inspire you all to live by your values in the future. We can certainly see what a difference that can make.

Thanks for tuning in, and be sure to join us tomorrow for the next instalment of 'Brave Choices'.

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TEACHER COPY – Notes for the Host of ‘Brave Choices’

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