

# Lesson Plan – The Righteous Among The Nations

## Introduction

Student age range: 14-16

Subject: History

Time required: 50 minutes

## Overview:

This lesson invites students to consider the people – a rare minority – who acted to protect Jews during the Holocaust. These people are honoured by the Yad Vashem museum in Israel with the title Righteous Among the Nations. Students will be assigned roles and participate in a semi-scripted interview show, learning from the personal histories of Chiune Sugihara, Oskar Schindler, Irena Sendler and others.

## Essential questions:

- What range of responses did non-Jews have to the Holocaust?
- Why did some people act to assist Jews during the Holocaust?
- What kinds of actions were taken to assist Jews during the Holocaust?

## Learning Objectives

- Students will learn that the vast majority of non-Jews either collaborated with the Nazi regime, benefitted from the expulsion and murder of Jews, or did nothing.
- Students will recognise the values in practice among the Righteous Among the Nations.
- Students will learn that there were various ways to assist Jews, on large and small scales.

## Key issues/concepts:

- Cause and effect
- Perspectives

## Materials:

Whiteboard and markers

**Handout – Brave Choices**, printed and cut so that each student receives one card, and the Host and Teacher each receive the full script.

## Teaching notes:

This lesson introduces some ordinary people who made the extraordinary decision to help Jews during the Holocaust. Students should understand that although they will learn a number of different histories today, this was far from the norm during the Holocaust.

Students should also recognise that although these people did remarkable things, at risk to themselves, they were not special in any other way. They were not angels or superheroes. They were simply people making choices, and students should be encouraged to see the value in making their own strong personal choices. Students should recognise that even an ordinary person can make a big impact.

## Glossary:

- Righteous Among the Nations
- Values
- Ethics
- Visa

## Lesson Instructions

### ONE – Introduction (5 minutes)

Teacher tells students that this lesson will consider the courage and values of the rare people who acted to protect the lives of Jews during the Holocaust.

Teacher states that the vast majority of non-Jews either participated in the cruelty, or did nothing.

Teacher distributes the resources from **Handout – Brave Choices**.

- Students will each receive one resource from the set. The set contains:
  - 4 x main character cards (all 4 must be used)
    - Sugihara
    - Schindler
    - Wallenberg
    - Sandler
  - 4 x other character cards (all 4 must be used)
    - Eck

- Nowak
- Twardowski
- Ingram
- 16 x question cards (it is not necessary to use all of these cards)
- 1 x host card (this may be taken by the teacher, or by a student who is very comfortable reading and performing)
- 2 x summariser cards (at least one of these cards must be used)
- Students will have 5 minutes to read their assigned card.
- The class will then participate in a panel interview show.

NB All the characters and their stories are real.

## TWO – Preparation (5 minutes)

Students have 5 minutes to read the information on their cards. The Host reads the script.

Teacher arranges 4 chairs at the front of the room, facing the class.

## THREE – ‘Brave Choices’ interview show (35 minutes)

Teacher invites the summariser(s) to come to the front. These students are given board markers, and their task is to make notes on the board during the interview show.

Teacher invites the following four characters to sit at the front, and writes their names on the board above them:

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

Teacher invites the Host to come to the front.

The Host begins the interview show, and follows the script to the end.

## FINISHING UP (5 minutes)

Students consult the notes that have been made on the board. Students identify the main words or themes that arose from the interviews.

Through plenary discussion, students list the values they recognise being enacted by the Righteous Among the Nations. It is not necessary to identify values common to all

the Righteous Among the Nations, as these may not exist – each acted for their own reasons. But in each case, they shared a view of Jewish people as human beings, and an empathy towards them as such.

### Modifications:

There are resources for 27 students. If the class has more than 27 students, remaining students can ask questions of their own devising. Alternatively, do not distribute questions, and allow all students in the audience to invent their own questions. In this case, instead of reading the cards for five minutes during class, character cards should be distributed in the previous lesson, and read for homework.

### Additional Resources

[This half-hour podcast](#), called ‘Crossing the Boundary – The Righteous Among the Nations’ explores the courage and values of the Righteous Among the Nations.

### Related lessons

Sydney Jewish Museum has developed lesson plans to support the teaching of a complete unit about the Holocaust. [Click here](#) to see all lesson plans.

[Click here](#) to see a suggested plan for teaching a full unit about the Holocaust.