

*Aleksandra Blalteberg, Poland*

*Class activities for students*

*based on the film 'Safe Haven: The Warsaw Zoo'*

*directed by Gary Lester*

Objectives:

1. To revise what students have learnt on WWII, the Warsaw Uprising and the Warsaw Ghetto in History classes
2. To learn about Jan, Antonina and Ryszard Zabinski and on what they did during the Second World War
3. To learn about The Righteous Among the Nations – the people, their deeds and the programme itself
4. To strengthen students' sensitivity to other people's feelings
5. To develop students' awareness of being part of human society

Materials:

**'Safe Haven: The Warsaw Zoo'**

<http://www.imdb.com/video/wab/vi3786670617>

Director: Gary Lester

Producers: Feliks Pastusiak i Alex Ringer

Executive Producer: Richard Lester

Director of Photography: Piotr Bujnowicz

Music: Richard Band

Company: Blue Heron International Pictures

Class Activities

Before you watch

Teacher asks students:

1. When did you last go to the zoo? What did you see there?
2. Optional questions – for non-Polish students: What do you know about Poland? Have you been to Poland? Where is Poland located? Can you name any famous Poles? etc.
3. Do you know anything of The Warsaw Uprising? When did it start?

4. Do you know anything about The Warsaw Ghetto? Who created it? When? Who was forced to live in the ghetto?
5. Do you know any stories/ films about WWII rescuers or about the people who helped others survive the Second World War?

### While you watch

#### I. Introduction

Warsaw is the capital of..... . It is situated by The ..... River.

1. Jan Zabinski became the zoo keeper in
  - a. 1939
  - b. 1929
  - c. 1930
2. He married Antonina
  - a. two years later
  - b. five years later
  - c. in 1929
3. Their son Ryszard was born in
  - a. 1942
  - b. 1930
  - c. 1932
4. The family lived in ..... on the Zoo's ground.
5. Their house was also home to:
  - a. sick and injured animals
  - b. domestic animals
  - c. tame animals
6. The villa was also a temporary shelter for more than ..... people regarded by the Nazis as 'subhumans'.

#### II. 1. Answer the questions:

- a. What happened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939?
- b. What happened to the animals in the Warsaw Zoo?
- c. When did German troops enter Warsaw?
- d. What did the Germans give to the citizens of Warsaw? Was it real humanitarian aid?
- e. What did the Jews have to wear?
- f. How much/what kind of food could they get?

#### 2. According to the Nazis an adult was a person

- a. older than 6 years old
- b. older than 16 years old

- c. older than 6 months old
3. The food from Warsaw was sent to
    - a. Germany
    - b. Poland
    - c. Gdansk
  4. Answer the questions:
    - a. How was the Warsaw Ghetto separated from the city?
    - b. How many Jews were forced to live in the ghetto?
    - c. Who slipped through the wall to look for food outside the ghetto?

*While you watch & After you watch*

**III. Complete the sentences:**

Anyone who stepped outside the ghetto could ..... by the Nazis. Anyone who dared to help the Jews could ..... too.

Jan Zabinski was also a member of the Polish ..... He could enter the ghetto because he took care of the ..... inside the ghetto. Zabinski ..... many Jews to escape to safety. He said 'We did it because .....'  
 At first the Jews were hidden in ..... on the Zoo's ground. They were moved to the Zabinskis' villa ..... Ryszard knew he couldn't ..... anybody about 'the guests' who visited his home. It was very .....

Ryszard didn't go to school because the school were ..... by the Germans.

When the Nazis decided to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto many adults and children died in .....

The Warsaw Uprising began because the Poles wanted to liberate ..... but they didn't have enough ..... The Germans ..... the city with their planes. Thousands of Poles were killed. One day a German soldier wanted to ..... Ryszard but finally he shot Ryszard's ..... instead.

The Warsaw Uprising lasted ..... days and collapsed in .....

About ..... Jews who fled the ghetto survived the war. The Zabinski family helped about ..... people. Many Poles risked their lives taking part in such rescuing actions.

Jan Zabinski and his family were among at least ..... of them who did such extraordinary things.

### After you watch

Go to [http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous\\_new/featured\\_stories.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/featured_stories.html)

Write your answers to the following questions:

#### **I. A. Featured stories – Poland - Jan and Antonina Zabinski**

1. When were Jan and Antonina Zabinski recognized as *Righteous Among the Nations*?

#### 'Historical Background'

2. When did the Nazis create the ghetto in Warsaw? When did they start to liquidate the ghetto?
3. When did the Warsaw Uprising begin? When was Warsaw liberated?

#### **B. Featured stories**

4. What was the name of the German officer who helped Wladyslaw Szpilman? When/where did he die? When was he recognized as *Righteous Among the Nations*? Why?

#### **II. What can you find on the Virtual Wall of Honor?**

#### **III. Featured stories – Poland**

1. *Read a story and make notes – include the following information:*
  - ✓ name/names of the *Righteous Among the Nations*
  - ✓ their date of birth, family background, job
  - ✓ who they saved and in what way
  - ✓ when they were recognized as *Righteous Among the Nations*

### ***Homework***

1. Read some students entries to the WWII project by Mr. Michael Fitzgerald of MICDS in St. Louis, the USA. <http://geo-squirts.wikispaces.com/World+War+II+Project>.
2. Make your own entry:  
Optional tasks
  - a. answer the project questions
  - b. interview a person who was involved in WWII and write your report on it
  - c. read a featured story about the *Righteous Among the Nations* and write your remarks on what you have found out about  
[http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous\\_new/featured\\_stories.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/featured_stories.html)

## ***Tips for Teachers***

### **Before you watch**

If your students need more information on Poland, The Warsaw Uprising and The Warsaw Ghetto, many valuable materials are available on the net, eg.

- The Warsaw Uprising  
[www.warsawuprising.com](http://www.warsawuprising.com)
- The Warsaw Rising Museum  
[http://www.1944.pl/index.php?lang=en&lang\\_time=1](http://www.1944.pl/index.php?lang=en&lang_time=1)

#### The Warsaw Ghetto

- The Warsaw Ghetto Database  
<http://warszawa.getto.pl/index.php>
- Jewish Historical Institute  
<http://www.jewishinstitute.org.pl/en/edukacja/public/1,1.html>
- Wikipedia entry  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw\\_ghetto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_ghetto)

You can also read some projects on Poland by students of Gimnazjum #4 in Gdynia, Poland:

- 'Poland' - <http://se4gdy.w.interia.pl/poland.html>
- 'Proud to be Poles' - <http://se4gdy.w.interia.pl/proud.html>

### **While you watch & After you watch**

Some students may find it difficult to watch the film and complete the exercises at the same time. I told my students before watching "Safe Haven" they were to do the tasks but also that we would go through all the exercises together after the film. They could be engaged in the story but their interest was not disrupted by focusing only on their written work result.

### **After you watch** (optional)

Before students start their work with the Yad Vashem's materials you can also show them some USC Shoah Foundation testimonials:

- <http://www.youtube.com/user/USCShoahFoundation>
- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Testimony Clips  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIBKIVJCffQ>