

## A Story of a House

The workshop based on the story of the Kwarciak family

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**Target group:** from 15 to 18 years of age (middle/high school) groups participating in youth exchange program

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**Workshop duration:** 90 minutes

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**(Optimal) group size:** 24 people

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**After the workshop students should:**

have the basic knowledge about saving Jews

during World War II and the medal Righteous Among the Nations

be able (based on the story of the Kwarciak family) to point out the essential problems that followed saving Jews during the war

know the historical context and social situation in Poland under German occupation

understand the emotions of both rescued and rescuers during World War II

recognize the problems of responsibility for historical memory

**Requirements regarding persons running the workshop:**

sound knowledge of the World War II, Holocaust and Righteous Among the Nations

knowledge of the story of the Kwarciak and Fiszer families (Attachment 1)

ability to moderate over the discussion and to mobilize the participants to work independently on the subject

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**Requirements regarding participants:**

basic knowledge concerning World War II and Holocaust

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**Materials:**

flipchart sheets (min. 5), markers (min. 4) scotch tape, sheets of paper, pens

printed materials (attachments)

multimedia presentation, slide projector

sweets (or other prizes for the quiz)

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## **Exercise 1 – QUIZ (20')**

Divide the group into 2 teams.

Explain the rules of the quiz: the questions will appear on the slides (presentation). If a member of the team knows the answer, he/she has to say it clearly in a loud voice. The team who answers first, gets a point (a sweet). The team who gets the most points is the winner (remember to have some award/s for the winners and maybe some consolation prize).

Explain/Elaborate the answers to more difficult questions (in the presentation, after some questions there are slides with additional information).

## **Exercise 2 – LIFE DURING THE WORLD WAR II (15')**

Before the workshop, cut up statements from the annexe. On the flipchart draw a circle and divide it into 3 parts. Write on them:

**TODAY**

**DURING THE WAR**

**IN THE HIDING PLACE**

Explain to the participants that they will each get a piece of paper with one statement which should be matched with adequate part of the circle – it should be stuck on the proper field. If the statement covers various situations, it may be put on the line dividing two fields.

Distribute the papers with statements (at least 1 per participant, see: Attachment 2) and scotch tape or some kind of glue, and ask the participants to think over the statement and put it on the field he/she finds adequate.

When the task is done, sum up the results. Ask if all participants agree with the suggested division (you may move the statements while summing up), and if they know any stories related to the presented situations.

NOTE: Remember that you are talking about typical situations. Avoid discussing extreme or exceptional ones.

### **Exercise 3 – WORKING ON THE STORY (35')**

Tell the participants that they will learn the story of two families – a Polish one and a Jewish one.

Divide the group into 4 teams. Distribute questions among the teams (see: Attachment 3). Ask them to think over the answers and write them down. (5')

After the teams have finished the first task, distribute materials – source texts, questions regarding the text (see: Attachment 4), flipcharts and markers. Ask the teams to compare the reflections and answers to initial questions with the situations described in the texts. Ask them to prepare short presentations for the other teams about what they have learned. (15')

Ask each team to show their presentation in such order as to create the whole story. (15')

NOTE: While describing the part regarding food supplies you may tell participants about blackmailers [szmalcownicy] and denouncing people in exchange for vodka and sugar.

#### **Exercise 4 – FINAL DISCUSSION (20')**

Talk with the participants about what they have learnt during the workshop, what are their reflections. You can use the following questions:

What do you remember? What was most important? What did you find most interesting?

What would you tell people who did not take part in the workshop?

Why – in your opinion – does the Yad Vashem award medals Righteous Among the Nations?

Do we need history/historical memory nowadays?

Should we keep alive the memory of the Righteous?

Should we remember about the people who refused to help?

NOTE: You can quote the fragment of the Kwarciak family's story in which they refuse to help a few people (see: Attachment 5). Discuss the motivation of that decision. Can we judge them?

#### **Additional questions:**

What are the criteria for awarding medals by Yad Vashem? Why? Are they justified?

What is the sense of continuing to collect and present the testimonies of Rescuers and Rescued?