

FILMHOUSE LEARNING

Teachers' Notes



Suitable for

Scotland - Senior Phase (S5, S6)
England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Key Stage 4 and 5 (Year 11 + GCSE and A Level)

Curriculum links

Scotland:

- Religious Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS)
- English: Literacy Focus
- Social Studies: History
- Media

England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- History
- Religious Education
- Philosophy
- Citizenship
- Media Studies
- Film Studies
- English Language
- English Literature

Details

Cert 12a
Hungary, 2017, 91 min., HD, Black & White
Hungarian with English subtitles
Directed by Ferenc Török
Based on the acclaimed short story 'Homecoming' by Gábor T. Szántó
Screenplay by Gábor T. Szántó & Ferenc Török
Produced by Iván Angelusz, Péter Reich, Ferenc Török
Music by Tibor Szemző

Synopsis

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, and just before the start of Communist rule, 1945 tells the story of one day in the lives of a group of Hungarian villagers. As the locals prepare for the wedding of the town clerk's son, two mysterious strangers arrive at the railway station. Their arrival sends shockwaves through the village, as the townspeople fear the two men are Jews, who have returned to claim back what is rightfully theirs.

Shot in exquisite black and white, the film exploits the style of the Western to paint a subtle cinematic portrayal of life post WWII, and raises interesting questions about guilt, grief, reckoning and redemption.

Themes

World War Two
Holocaust
Communism
Revenge
Guilt
Grief
Redemption
Religious Observance & Tradition

Advisory

Infrequent strong language, moderate sex, suicide (suggested by dangling feet)

Created by

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for Centre for the Moving Image 2018



BEFORE WATCHING

TALK ABOUT IT

- From the film title '1945' what do you think this film will be about?
- When Jews were removed from their homes and businesses during the Holocaust, what do think happened to their property?
- When the war ended how do you think the Jewish population were treated within central and eastern Europe?

THINK ABOUT IT

- During the Holocaust many people chose to be bystanders or perpetrators. As you watch the film consider which characters are depicted as which ones in this film and can their actions be justified?
- The film shares many features of the western. As you watch, which genre markers can you identify? (Look out for characters, action, music and the shot composition and direction)



AFTER WATCHING

TALK ABOUT IT

Social Subjects/History

- During the holocaust many people chose to 'turn away' and ignore the atrocities taking place in their communities. In the film however the Hungarian villagers are portrayed as very nosy, can you think of a reason for this?
- Why does the film director leave it to the final moments to let you know the younger Jewish man (Son of Hermann Samuel's family) has been in a camp? (A shot shows his tattooed numbers on his inside wrist).
- When did you work out that the trunks were not full of perfume and cloth? Why do you think this is what the villagers thought would be in them? (history of Jewish people as traders/shop-keepers)
- What kinds of language do the characters in the film use to describe Jewish people? (e.g. "You just can't get rid of them) and what is the effect of talking like this? As a member of the audience watching this – how did this make you feel?

RMPS/ Religious Education

- Why do the Jewish have a separate cemetery from the other villagers?
- Why does the Jewish boy cut a piece of his father's suit during the funeral?
- How can you tell that the Samuels are Orthodox Jews?

Media/English

- This film utilises many strategies from a Western; when are these used and what are they?
- The Hungarian villagers are portrayed as noisy, drunk and cheaters, this is in stark contrast to the Jewish visitors who are quiet with limited dialogue. Why do you think this is case?
- What do you think the bride-to-be burned the shop down? What does this represent?
- What devices does the film maker use to elicit sympathy towards the Hungarian characters during the film? (Consider the suicide of the drunken character Bandi)
- How does the film maker portray the guilt of the villagers?
- What strategies are used to sell this film to a wider audience than those with an interest in history?
- What media devices are used to represent the village with links to the atrocities of the holocaust? (Steam train smoke/destruction of property via fire e.g Kristallnacht)
- How does the telling of the story in black and white enhance the story-telling and add to the portrayal of events of this particular day?
- Have you read/viewed any other texts about the Holocaust and its aftermath – how does this compare?



A FILM BY FERENC TÖRÖK

1945



FURTHER ACTIVITIES for individuals or pairs

Social Subjects

- Research what happened to Europe at the end of the war and the Holocaust prior to the start of Communism. Produce a map with a key.
- Find out how prisoners during the Holocaust were able to and indeed continued to practice Judaism within the camps.

Media/English

Produce a film poster for 1945 (see **FURTHER RESOURCES** for exemplar and online design tool). Include the following:

- A screen shot
- A rating
- A strapline
- Film review quotes and stars from press pack

Explain why you have chosen each one

RMPS/Religious Education

- How, if at all, do you think it is possible to retain your faith during periods of immense trauma/destruction/atrocity? How did the Holocaust test peoples' beliefs (i.e. saved by God, abandoned by God?)

- Should the perpetrators of the Holocaust be punished? If so how, if not, why not?

English: Literacy

- What if the Jewish inhabitants of the village in Hungary really did come back to hold the villagers to account?
- Imagine a dialogue between the older Jewish stranger Samuel (the father) and the Istvan Szentes (the town clerk). What do you think they would say?

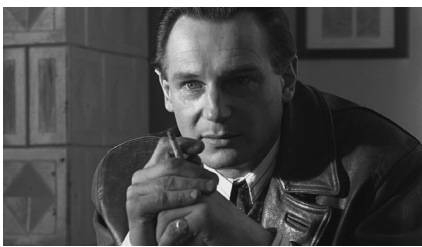
You might choose to write this as questions and answers or statements back and forth between the two characters. As you do this try and remain faithful to how their characters were represented in the film (e.g. Szentes was loud and aggressive and Hermann was quiet and controlled).

FURTHER RESOURCES

- 1945 press pack: www.seattlejewishfilmfestival.org/media-menu/press-kits/43-press-kit
- Film poster exemplar: www.barfutura.com/the-movie-poster
- Design a film poster online: www.bighugelabs.com/poster.php
- Holocaust Educational Trust: www.het.org.uk/education

WATCH NEXT

Schindler's List



Cert 15
3h 15min | Biography,
Drama, History | 1994 (USA)
Black & White
Director: Steven Spielberg
Stars: Liam Neeson, Ralph
Fiennes, Ben Kingsley

Synopsis:

In German-occupied Poland during World War II, successful businessman, Oskar Schindler, gradually becomes concerned for his Jewish workforce after witnessing their persecution by the Nazi Germans. He turns his factory into a refuge for Jews. Based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, who managed to save more than 1100 Jews from certain death in the Auschwitz concentration camp. The film is a testament to the good in all of us.

Life is Beautiful



Cert PG
La vita è bella (original title)
Italian with English subtitles
1h56min | Comedy, Drama,
Romance 1998 (Italy)
Director: Roberto Benigni
Stars: Roberto Benigni,
Nicoletta Braschi, Giorgio
Cantarini

Synopsis:

This multi-Oscar winning film centres on an open-minded Jewish librarian and his son. When they become victims of the Holocaust, he uses a perfect mixture of will, humor, and imagination to protect his son and survive the horrors of their Nazi concentration camp.

Son of Saul



Cert 15
Saul fia (original title)
Hungarian and other
languages with English
subtitles
1h 47min | Drama, War |
2015 (Hungary)
Director: László Nemes
Stars: Géza Röhrig, Levente
Molnár, Urs Rechn

Synopsis:

In the horror of 1944 Auschwitz, a prisoner forced to burn the corpses of his own people finds moral survival upon trying to recover from the flames the body of a boy he takes for his son. He tries to carry out an impossible deed: recover the body and find a rabbi to bury it.

EVALUATION

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate. Please send us any feedback, including examples of pupil work or documentation of classwork:

education@cmi-scotland.co.uk

FILMHOUSE LEARNING

As Scotland's leading independent cinema, Filmhouse is internationally renowned as a venue for dynamic programming and debate. Our key aim is to challenge, inform and entertain through the delivery of an essential, intelligent and enlightening programme for all audiences, whether through formal education, informal courses or professional development.

Our Schools programme offers year-round screenings for primary and secondary pupils, usually including supporting resources or discussion, all designed to support Curriculum for Excellence. Schools can also benefit from cinema tours, events linked to the annual Edinburgh International Film Festival, and advice and support for teachers and students of Media, Film, Literacy, Social Subjects, Modern Languages and other subjects. Filmmaking projects such as Understanding Cinema and the Edinburgh Schools Film Competition support and develop film literacy in schools and youth groups across Edinburgh and further afield.

Every June, during the Edinburgh International Film Festival we welcome over 1000 school pupils to screenings and to participate in film making workshops and our Media Days. We continue to support the future of film criticism with our Student Critics programme, where ten students are mentored by professional critics to hone their evaluation and writing skills in the fast paced environment of the Festival.

For more information please visit:

www.filmhousecinema.com/learning