

Teacher's Guide



Janusz Korczak's Children

By Gloria Spielman

Illustrated by Matthew Archambault

About the book: Young Henryk Goldszmidt dreamed of creating a better world for children. As an adult, adopting the name Janusz Korczak, he became a doctor, writer, and educator. Dr. Korczak introduced the world to progressive ideas in educating children, and established a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. With the start of World War II, the Nazis came to Poland and occupied Warsaw. When Dr. Korczak heard that the children in his care were to be deported, he refused offers to be saved and marched with them to the trains that would take them to their death.

Pre-reading: Who do you think are Janusz Korczak's Children? Do you think he is the father to them all? Why would someone want to create a better world for children?

Discussion Guide:

1. Why did Henryk Goldszmidt feel lonely as a child? What other concerns did he have for children?
2. What did Henryk's father call him? How would you feel if a parent treated you this way?
3. How did Henryk's life become more difficult when he was eleven? What did he do to help the family?
4. Why did Henryk decide to become a doctor instead of a writer? How was he different than most doctors of that time?
5. Explain how Henryk's writing ended up helping the same children he wrote about.

6. Why did Dr. Korczak decide to become a director of an orphanage?
7. List the things that made the Warsaw orphanage different than most orphanages of that time. How were the children treated?
8. The children were given a special drawer. Why? What would you put in that drawer?
9. Why did Dr. Korczak call the orphanage a “children’s republic?” Would you like to have one at your home or school? Why or why not? What else did he start for the children?
10. Who was King Matt? How did Dr. Korczack try to bridge the divide between children and adults? How did he reach his audience?
11. Explain what life was like inside the Warsaw Ghetto. How did Dr. Korczack try to make it a better place for his children?
12. Why was Dr. Korczack offered a chance to save himself? What did he do instead? Where were Dr. Korczack and the children taken?

Projects:

Language Arts:

Write a story that Dr. Korczak would approve of, that is- something that would help adults understand the world of children better.

Reading:

Make a character web about Dr. Korczak. Under his qualities (like bravery) list the examples from the book that show this character trait and others.

Math/Logical:

Create a timeline of the life of Henryk Goldszmidt. Add color illustrations.

Art:

Create a collage from magazines, newspapers and other items to represent the life of Dr. Korczack. Explain your piece on the back.

History:

Read other stories about children during the Holocaust and create a poster about what you learned.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
The Devil’s Arithmetic by Jane Yolen
Yellow Star by Jennifer Roy
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne

Comments or feedback about the book? Contact author Gloria Spielman at www.gloriaspielman.com

This guide was created by [Tracie Vaughn Zimmer](#), a reading specialist and children’s author. Visit her website to find hundreds of guides to children’s books.