Synopsis

Guido is an energetic and creative man with a romantic spirit and a sense of adventure. He meets the woman of his dreams; they marry, have a child and head into a dark period of their lives. Guido must shield his young son from Nazi concentration camp horrors through vivid stories invented to disguise the Holocaust as an elaborate game.

Discussion Questions

- Even as Guido was being lead away at gunpoint, he acted as though the trip to the camp was a game for his son. Can you recall a time from your childhood that you later learned that your parents lied to you to protect you from the truth? What was the situation? What happened when you found out the truth? Have you ever lied to your children to protect them?
- When Dr. Lessing said he needed to talk to Guido in the camp, we assumed he wanted to help Guido escape. Guido obviously thought this as well. What would have caused someone like Dr. Lessing to ignore the fact that Guido was in imminent danger?
- At one point in the movie, Guido’s uncle suffers from constant vandalism of his property. His horse is even spray painted with “Jewish Horse.” Is this what would be considered hate-speech? In the USA, the first amendment protects our right to free speech. Often that right covers similar types of angry rhetoric. What are your thoughts about legislating hate speech?
Do your Own Research

• Often when we learn about the Holocaust we only learn about the fate of Jewish people in Germany or Eastern Europe. The family in Life is Beautiful was from Italy. Research what happened to the Jewish people living in Italy. Did their experience match that of Jewish people throughout the rest of Europe?
• Visit the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. If you are not able to travel there, please visit their website for information, exhibits and important research that is available to the public. You can find the museum online at www.ushmm.org.

Get Involved

• One of the most important things you can do to honor the memory of those who died in the Holocaust is to be educated about what happened, remember that it happened and realize that genocide still happens today. Educate yourself and others about the Holocaust, about what happened during WWII and in what ways genocide still happens.
• Visit the United States Holocaust Museum resource website for DVDs, posters, photos, links and other educational material that can help you get the word out about current genocide issues.
• Donate to a non-profit corporation that seeks to assist refugees who have had to flee their home because of genocide in their country. Some websites you can visit for information on how to help include:
  • UN Refugee Agency www.unhcr.org
  • U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants www.refugees.org
  • Refugees International www.refugeesinternational.org