



Poland Diary 2011

Day 3 - Shabbat

Dear Parents,

After experiencing a very meaningful Shabbat, we wish to give you a brief account of the Shabbat we spent in Poland.

We got ready for Shabbat and made our way to a Shul established in 1924 in the Jewish quarter of Krakow called Isaac synagogue. Whilst praying in a very luxurious and beautiful shul, we had a strong realisation of how grand and rich Jewish life was in Poland before the war. The service was energetic and lively, we sang and danced to the tunes of the Kabbalat Shabbat, which brought life to such an empty place. After a fabulous service, as a year group we walked back to our hotel, to enjoy a delicious Friday night dinner. Following our meal, Immanuel College students were able to speak about their experiences and feelings so far. We built a very open atmosphere where everyone felt comfortable speaking to their fellow peers, madrichim and teachers. This concluded a very special, and most of all, happy Shabbat evening.

We gained a well needed sleep after two early wake ups. We were accompanied by a glistening morning with a lush blue sky on our way to a synagogue called Kupa. We were delighted to have our very own chazan Joshua Cainer lead the shacharit morning prayers and Ben Bazini read from the Sefer Torah. After this we walked through the Jewish quarter of Krakow and learnt about its history. It was very interesting to see how such a flourishing Jewish community was evaporated and destroyed by the evil of the Nazis. We even saw some of the places where "Schindler's List" was filmed and truly got a sense of how terrible the liquidation of Krakow was.

Later on Shabbat afternoon, I'm sure I can speak on behalf of my whole year when I say that, we had a fascinating and emotional experience. An elderly woman named Paulina came to speak to us about her inspirational life story. She is a non-Jewish Polish woman who lived in Krakow, between her and her family several Jews were saved during the Holocaust. Her life was at stake yet she remained true to her decisions. Before she departed from us we sang her songs. This was a very emotional moment of true inspiration and gratitude towards her bravery.

After this moving experience, more was to follow as we headed to the memorial at Plaskow to make Havdalah, The Holocaust survivor Gina Turgel, requested a candle to be lit in the name of her family, and so we lit the Havdalah candle there. The camp was totally destroyed by the Nazis, so in its place stood a massive monument of stone. Indeed we did complete Gina's request as we did havdalah standing by this monument. After this we visited the grave of Sara Schneirer who was the founder of the Beit Yaakov movement, and



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allowed Jewish education for girls to develop and flourish. She had the power of being a visionary and she most certainly made the Jewish nation stronger.

This amazing Shabbat will be one that will never be forgotten. It brought emotion, inspiration, realisation and happiness to us all.

Lots of love,
Ariel Tamman, Sammy Hakimian and Aaron Lester