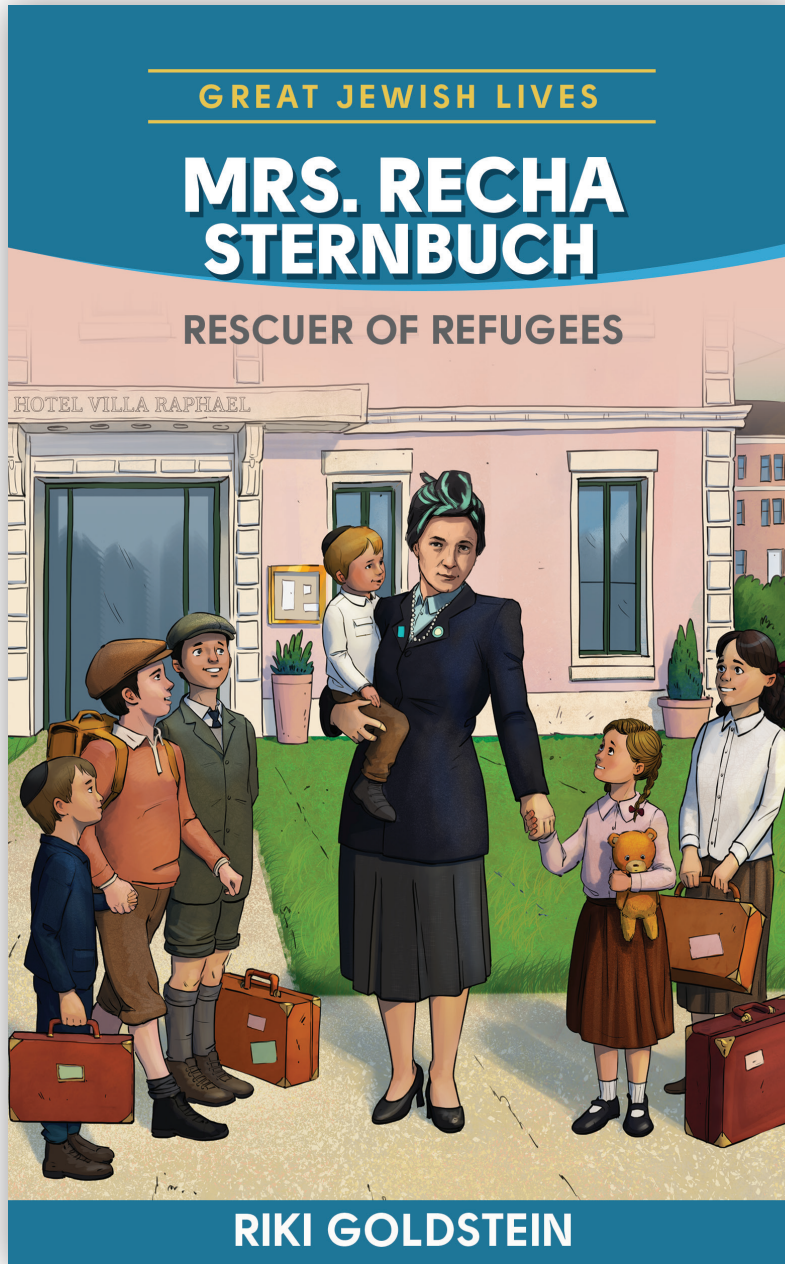


Educator's Guide



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FOR THE TEACHER

This guide consists of lessons to assist you in using *Mrs. Recha Sternbuch: Rescuer of Refugees* in your classroom. The guide is written in a chapter-by-chapter format and includes a synopsis, pre-reading activities, and comprehension questions, as well as supplementary activities to be used at the end of the book.

The book and its accompanying guide can be used in a number of ways. Students reading at the same level might participate in a small-group guided reading of the book, returning to it over several weeks as they read and discuss it with the teacher. The entire class might read the book and discuss it in small groups using literature circles or reciprocal teaching. The teacher can then use the suggested questions to guide students in their discussions. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. Students should be encouraged to support their answers with evidence from the text. Students might keep a notebook of their responses throughout the year, which can then be used for progress monitoring and assessment purposes.

This teacher's guide includes many document-based questions. These questions focus on utilizing critical-thinking skills. Students are also asked to make comparisons, draw analogies, and apply historic analysis using primary and secondary sources from this time period. Source material for questions include photographs and documents. The questions can be used to teach students how to analyze source documents and deepen their understanding of the life and times of the person featured in this biography.

Using this guide can help you as a teacher create more active readers. Students who are encouraged to think about their reading, make inferences, compare and contrast events and characters, and notice authors' language will read more closely and carefully. They will become more thoughtful readers, and their reading comprehension will improve. Working on this in the context of authentic literature helps to inspire a motivation and love for reading.

SYNOPSIS Mrs. Recha Sternbuch devoted her life to saving Jews from the Nazis. She used her position in neutral Switzerland to arrange for Jews to escape Nazi countries, and provided for them once they arrived in Switzerland.

Pre-Reading Activities

Use one or more of the following activities to introduce the book.

1. **Predictions:** Preview the book by reading the title, the author, and looking at the illustration on the cover. Have you read any other books in this series? What clues can you gather about the book from the phrase “Rescuer of Refugees”? What is a refugee, and why would a refugee need a rescuer?
2. **Building Background:** Mrs. Sternbuch lived in Switzerland during the Second World War. Give students background information on Switzerland at that time and the concept of neutrality
3. **Genre Focus:** *Mrs. Recha Sternbuch: Rescuer of Refugees* is a biography. This means that it tells the true story of a persons’ life. As you read this book, complete the graphic organizer at the end of this packet to describe the character traits of Mrs. Sternbuch, her life, and accomplishments.



INTRODUCTION


1. List some of the ways Mrs. Sternbuch helped the refugee Jews.
2. How might people in Nazi Germany and Poland have heard about Mrs. Sternbuch far away in Switzerland?
3. Describe Mrs. Sternbuch’s appearance and some of her character traits, as discussed in the introduction.
4. What are some questions you now have about Mrs. Sternbuch?

CHAPTER 1: A YOUNG GIRL IN ANTWERP

SYNOPSIS Recha Rottenberg grows up in Antwerp in a house full of Torah and marries Yitzchak Sternbuch of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about Recha’s childhood and marriage.

Guided Questions


1. What is meant when it says on page 1, “Her non-Jewish school had no teachers as interesting as her father. And no subjects as alive as the Torah”?
2. Describe Recha’s childhood. What did she do all day? What was her schooling like?
3. Why was Antwerp called “the diamond capital of the world”?
4.  **Document-based question:** Study the photograph of Antwerp on page 5. What details do you notice in the picture?

CHAPTER 2: MOVING TO SWITZERLAND

SYNOPSIS Mr. and Mrs. Sternbuch move to Switzerland and raise their children there.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about how Mr. and Mrs. Sternbuch raise their young family in Switzerland.

Guided Questions

1. Based on what you read at the beginning of this chapter, why do you think Switzerland was a popular vacation destination?
2. Describe Mrs. Sternbuch's personality based on details in this chapter. Bring evidence from the text to support your ideas.
3. When Mrs. Sternbuch heard about Jews trying to get to Switzerland, "she couldn't just shake her head or turn away." What does this suggest about her personality?
4. It says in the text: "But, like all borders, the Swiss-German border was closed." Why might the border have been closed, and why was this a problem?
5.  **Focus on geography:** Locate Switzerland on a world map (see map on page 34). Trace its border with Germany. In what way might the Sternbuchs' life have been affected by how close they were to the Swiss-German border?

Vocabulary

neutral (p. 6): *Even when its neighbors fought wars, Switzerland remained **neutral**.*


aroma (p. 10): *The children would wait excitedly as the kitchen filled with a sweet **aroma**.*

CHAPTER 3: ESCAPE IN A HAY WAGON

SYNOPSIS Refugees, aided by Mrs. Sternbuch, escape Austria and arrive at the Sternbuch home in Switzerland.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about how Mrs. Sternbuch arranges for people to escape from the Nazis.

Guided Questions

1. What were some of the ways the Austrian wagon driver tried to hide the refugees?
2. The Sternbuchs' telephone changed their home "from a private home into a world center of kindness." Explain how.
3. List the steps in the boys' escape from Austria until they reached the Sternbuch home in St. Gallen.
4. Why didn't the Swiss guide need a map or light to lead him through the darkness?
5. What were some of the ways Mrs. Sternbuch continued to help the refugees even after they arrived in St. Gallen?
-  6. **Creative writing:** Imagine you are a refugee who just arrived at the Sternbuch home. Write a diary entry including your thoughts, feelings, and impressions.

Vocabulary

plodded (p. 13): A calm horse **plodded** along the country lanes, pulling a wagon full of hay.

residence (p. 14): This telephone had changed the Sternbuch **residence** from a private home into a world center of kindness.

CHAPTER 4: THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR

SYNOPSIS Mrs. Sternbuch is arrested by the police for helping foreigners enter Switzerland, is put in jail for two weeks, and is eventually cleared of charges.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the reaction of the Swiss police to Mrs. Sternbuch's activities.

Guided Questions

1. List the reasons the police officers gave for Mrs. Sternbuch's arrest.
2. Explain what was written in the Sternbuchs' letter to the judge.
3. What was Paul Grüninger's role in helping the Jews who escaped to Switzerland?
4. Prove how the chief prosecutor's feelings about the Sternbuchs changed over the course of the time spent in trial.

Vocabulary

smirked (p. 20): *One of the officers **smirked**.*

denounce (p. 21): *Your demand, however, that I should **denounce** human beings who have not harmed anyone — this I cannot do.*

divulge (p. 21): *I refuse to **divulge** information even if I will be kept in prison...*

CHAPTER 5: RIGHTEOUS HELPERS

SYNOPSIS Some non-Jews, impressed by Mrs. Sternbuch, help her in her rescue efforts.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how some others help Mrs. Sternbuch in her efforts to rescue Jews.

Guided Questions

1. How did Dr. Julius Kuhl and Mr. Aleksander Lados help Mrs. Sternbuch in her efforts?
2. List some of the ways the Polish embassy was helpful to the Sternbuchs.
3. Why was Mrs. Sternbuch amazed by the paper Phillipe Bernadini gave her?
4. Explain why Phillipe Bernadini was helpful to the Sternbuchs.

Vocabulary


annexed (p. 25): *First, in March 1938, Hitler **annexed** Austria.*

CHAPTER 6: "I WILL GO WITH THEM!"

SYNOPSIS When a group of refugees is caught and sent back to the Gestapo, Mrs. Sternbuch faces down the German chief and says, "I will go with them!"

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out to what extent Mrs. Sternbuch tries to help Jews who escape the Nazis.

Guided Questions

1. Why did Erich tell Mrs. Sternbuch to give up this time?
2. After Erich told her to give up, "Mrs. Sternbuch did not listen. She could not listen." Why couldn't she listen to his advice, and what does this show about her personality?
-  3. **Creative writing:** Write a diary entry that Mrs. Sternbuch might have written on the day she faced down the Nazi guard. What might have been her thoughts and feelings after returning home that night?

Vocabulary

fury (p. 36): *The German's face turned red and his eyes popped with **fury**.*

beastly (p. 37): *The **beastly** man stared and stared.*

CHAPTER 7: THE BAR MITZVAH

SYNOPSIS A group of three refugees is in trouble, and Mr. and Mrs. Sternbuch miss their son Avrumi's bar mitzvah to save them.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs go out of their way for three Jewish refugees.

Guided Questions



1. Explain how the three refugees were saved because of Eli Sternbuch's help in the past.
2. How might Avrumi have felt when his parents left his bar mitzvah to help these three refugees? Explain.
3. What lesson can you learn from this chapter, and how might you apply that lesson to your own life?

CHAPTER 8: THE UNUSED ESROG

SYNOPSIS The Sternbuchs try to help Jews in all possible ways, such as sending packages to Jews trapped in Nazi Europe.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs help Jews in every possible way.

Guided Questions

1. Explain how the small packages of coffee, chocolates, and sardines could be useful to the Jews stuck in Nazi Europe.
2. Why was Mr. Domb in Warsaw able to send messages to the Sternbuchs?
3. In his letter, Mr. Domb spoke about Uncle Geirush and Misah. Explain what he meant by these names.
4. What were some of the ways the Sternbuchs' rescue efforts extended past Europe?
-  5. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph and caption on page 49. What details do you notice in the picture?
-  6. **Document-based question:** Study the telegram and caption on page 51. What information can you gather from this telegram?

CHAPTER 9: A TALE OF TWO SUITCASES

SYNOPSIS Mrs. Sternbuch continues to help Jews in every way she can, including smuggling packages with German soldiers and hosting many people in her home.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs go out of their way to help other Jews.

Guided Questions

1. Explain why Mrs. Sternbuch sent her friend Miriam Gromb on the mission instead of going herself.
2. Why was it hard for Miriam to refuse a request from Mrs. Sternbuch?
3. Why did Mrs. Sternbuch arrange to smuggle suitcases of chocolate and cigarettes into Germany?
4. Describe the relationship between Rabbi Shteinman and the Sternbuch family.

Vocabulary

gruffly (p. 55): *“Where are the suitcases?” one of them asked **gruffly**.*



raging (p. 56): *Outside Switzerland, World War II was **raging**.*

CHAPTER 10: THE MUSY MISSION

SYNOPSIS The Sternbuchs negotiate the Musy Mission, attempting to exchange Jewish lives for large sums of money.

➔ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs try to help Jews stuck under Nazi rule.

Guided Questions


1. What is meant by the sentence: “But the Germans still had hundreds of thousands of Jews in their claws”? Why does the author use these words?
2. Explain what the Musy mission was and why it failed.
3. Explain why Himmler allowed one train of Jews to leave the concentration camps.
-  4. **Focus on geography:** Use a world map of the region to explain the first paragraph of this chapter.
-  5. **Document-based question:** Study the document on page 65. What details do you notice?

CHAPTER 11: LIBERATION

SYNOPSIS The Sternbuchs continue to help their fellow Jews after liberation, arranging for food and care packages and helping them leave Germany.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs continue to help Jews even after the war is over.

Guided Questions



1. Explain the message in the leaflets that were dropped into German territory at the end of the war.
2. What did Mrs. Sternbuch plan to give the survivors beyond the food they were given by the Americans?
3. What were some of the feelings experienced by the survivors when they received the food packages from Montreux?
4. What were some of the ways HIJEFS and the American Vaad Hatzalah helped the survivors after the war?
5.  **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 75. What details do you notice? Pay particular attention to the different kinds of clothing worn by the people in the picture. Who might these people be?

CHAPTER 12: “THESE CHILDREN ARE OURS”

SYNOPSIS After the war, Mrs. Sternbuch searches for Jewish orphans who were raised by gentiles and brings them back to the Jewish community.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Mrs. Sternbuch continues to help the survivors, particularly the children.

Guided Questions

1. Explain who the French children were that Mrs. Sternbuch was looking for.
2. How did Mrs. Sternbuch manage to persuade the French priests and parents to give back these children?
3. What were some of the ways Mrs. Sternbuch cared for the French children after she brought them to Aix-les-Bains?
4. Explain how Mrs. Sternbuch arranged for the escape of the Jewish children in Communist Poland.
-  5. **Readers Theater:** Reread the dialogue on pages 79 through 80 with a friend, one person playing Mrs. Sternbuch and one person playing the farmer. Read with expression and fluency.
-  6. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 82. What details do you notice?

Vocabulary

scowled (p. 80): *He **scowled**. “Who are you?”*


pleading (p. 82): *Mrs. Sternbuch traveled around, **pleading** with French families who had taken in the children to give them back.*

CHAPTER 13: CELEBRATIONS

SYNOPSIS After the war, the Sternbuch family returns to normal, but they continue to help survivors in every way they can.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Sternbuchs live when life returns to normal.

Guided Questions

1. What were some of the ways the Sternbuchs continued to help survivors in Montreux after the war?
2. The text says, “Mrs. Sternbuch was a truly modest Jewish woman.” Bring evidence from the text to support this point.
3. Who were some of the non-Jews to whom Mrs. Sternbuch showed her appreciation? What had they done to help Jews during the war?
-  4. **Creative writing:** Write a letter Mrs. Sternbuch might have written to a friend after returning to her “quiet life.” Include her thoughts and feelings.

Vocabulary

frenetic (p. 87): *The Sternbuch home was no longer the center of **frenetic** activity it had been during and right after the war.*

regal (p. 87): *Tables were set with **regal** dishes, shining silverware, and pretty flowers.*

heroine (p. 92): *Mrs. Recha Sternbuch, a unique Jewish **heroine**, passed away in February 1971.*

A NOTE FROM MRS. STERNBUCH’S DAUGHTER

According to her daughter, in what way can Mrs. Sternbuch be compared to Nachshon ben Aminadav?

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Use one or more of the following activities to conclude the book.



Geography

Using a world map, indicate all of the places where Mrs. Sternbuch traveled. For each place, include one or two sentences describing the important events that occurred in that place.



Creative Writing

Suppose you could accompany Mrs. Sternbuch on one of her rescue missions. Which one would you most like to join and why?



Interview

If you had a chance to interview Mrs. Sternbuch, what ten questions would you ask her? What would she answer?



Focus on Biography

Consider another biography in this series, such as *Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld* or *Lady Amelie Jakobovits*. Compare and contrast the lives and experiences of Mrs. Sternbuch to those of the subject in the selected biography. Answer the following:

- In what ways were their times similar? In what ways were their times different?
- In what ways were their rescue stories similar? In what ways were they different?
- What were some of the challenges faced by each hero that were unique to his or her time period?

Who Was Mrs. Recha Sternbuch?

★ FACTS ★

Year of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Year of Death: _____



Mrs. Recha Sternbuch

Her major accomplishments were:



Some of her outstanding character traits were:



Biography Sketch

Physical Description

Actions

Name

Her Thoughts and Feelings

What Others Say and Think about Her
