

Educator's Guide

★ GREAT JEWISH LIVES ★

LADY AMÉLIE JAKOBOVITS

Queen of Kindness



LEAH GEBBER

1235 38th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218 • www.menuchaclassrooms.com



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FOR THE TEACHER

This guide consists of lessons to assist you in using *Lady Amélie Jakobovits: Queen of Kindness* 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 author's 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 Lady Amélie Jakobovits, wife of Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, lit up the world with her kindness and love for her people. Her rich and varied life experiences were full of interesting ways that she helped Jewish people around the world.

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 “Queen of Kindness”? What might the word “queen” mean in this context?
2. **Building Background:** Lady Jakobovits lived in England after the Second World War. Give students background information on England at that time. Flip through the book and discuss the photographs to build background knowledge.
3. **Genre Focus:** *Lady Amélie Jakobovits: Queen of Kindness* is a biography. This means that it tells the true story of a person’s life. As you read this book, complete the graphic organizer at the end of this packet to describe the character traits of Lady Amélie, her life, and her accomplishments.



INTRODUCTION


1. What are some questions you now have about Lady Jakobovits?
2. What did Amélie’s father mean when he said, “There is never a day without a tiny ray of sunshine. If you can find the ray, everything will be easier”? How did this give Amélie encouragement?
3. What conclusions can you draw about Rabbi Munk’s personality from information in this introduction?

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY YEARS

SYNOPSIS Amélie Munk is raised in Ansbach, Bavaria, until her family moves to France. There is tension in France, which increases when Germany invades.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about Amélie’s childhood in Germany and then in France.

Guided Questions

1. What is meant when it says on page 1 that “...anti-Semitism reared its ugly head”?
2. Who were the Stormtroopers, and how did they make life increasingly uncomfortable for the Jews of Germany?
3. Why do you think Opa Goldberger said that his tefillin and a picture of Amélie were all he needed when he was arrested by the Nazis?
4. Explain the relationship between France and Germany once World War II began, and the effect this had on the Munk family.
5.  **Creative writing:** Write a postcard from Amélie in Paris to her friends back home in Ansbach describing life in France.

Vocabulary

reared (p. 1): Then anti-Semitism **reared** its ugly head.

adored (p. 4): Amélie **adored** Opa Goldberger, and he loved her in return.

CHAPTER 2: RUNNING AWAY

SYNOPSIS The Munks flee Paris by train to Albi, hoping to locate Rabbi Munk.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Munk family leaves Paris.

Guided Questions

1. Explain why it was so important for the Munks to flee Paris.
2. Describe the train ride from Paris to Albi. What were the living conditions on the train? How did the travelers interact with one another?
3. Explain why the travelers were treated kindly by people along the way.

Vocabulary

oppressed (p. 8): *Again the Jews were being singled out. Bullied. **Oppressed**.*

unified (p. 11): *In the most difficult circumstances, these things **unified** them.*


deserted (p. 12): *Along with the rest of the refugees, the Munks were taken to a large **deserted** castle.*

CHAPTER 3: FINDING FATHER

SYNOPSIS Amélie is sent to find her father in the military camp, which she does. The family moves from Albi to Milhas to Toulouse.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Munk family manages in Albi.

Guided Questions

1. Describe Amélie's personality based on events at the beginning of this chapter.
2. Describe Amélie's daily schedule when living in the primitive farmhouse in Milhas.
3. Why did the Munks leave Milhas for Toulouse?
4. List the stages in the Munk family escape from Ansbach to Toulouse.
-  5. **Creative writing:** Write a diary entry for Rabbi Munk on the day Amélie found him at the army compound. Include his thoughts and feelings at that time.

Vocabulary

lush (p. 13): *She enjoyed the exercise and the **lush** countryside.*

primitive (p. 17): *It was surrounded by fields and lovely, but it was very **primitive**.*

discharged (p. 18): *He had been **discharged** from the military camp and had walked all the way to Milhas to find his family.*




CHAPTER 4: TOGETHER AGAIN

SYNOPSIS The Munk family settles in Nice, where conditions worsen, prompting Rabbi Munk to decide that the family should escape France and travel to Switzerland.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how life changes for the Munk family as the war progresses.

Guided Questions

1. Why did the Munks decide to travel to Marseilles?
2. What can you conclude about the Munk family's personality based on descriptions at the beginning of this chapter?
3. Describe how Amélie got eggs for her brother Jackie's bar mitzvah celebration. What does this suggest about her personality?
4. Explain why Rabbi Munk was afraid that conditions would change for the Munk family once the Italians took control of Southern France.
5. Describe the ways Rabbi Munk tried to disguise himself and his family.
6. Why did Rabbi Munk announce that the family would be smuggled across the border? Why would it be safer for them in Switzerland?
-  7. **Document-based question:** Study the map of France on page 26. Locate the places where the Munk family lived, and describe who controlled those cities during World War II.

Vocabulary

heartfelt (p. 23): *The family bid Amélie's grandmother a **heartfelt** goodbye.*

rationing (p. 24): *There was just one catch: **rationing** was in place.*


released (p. 27): *Amélie and Ruth were **released** before their father was.*

CHAPTER 5: MIRACLES AT THE BORDER

SYNOPSIS The Munk family travels by train to a town near the French-Swiss border and is smuggled into Switzerland.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Munk family finally leaves France.

Guided Questions

1. Why did the Munk family split up for the train ride to the Swiss border?
2. Explain the meaning of the phrase “lion’s den” as it is used on the bottom of page 31.
3. The soldier explained to the Munk family that the area between Switzerland and France was no-man’s land. Explain what this means.
4. Explain how baby Max “saved the lives of his entire family.”
5.  **Creative writing:** Write a speech that Max may have delivered when he stood with his family at the river years later. Be sure to include the story that happened that night and how Max’s crying saved his family.

Vocabulary

usher (p. 32): *The family hoped that they would be able to **usher** in the new year from the safety of free Switzerland.*


hauled (p. 33): *Finally, when all was silent, they **hauled** themselves up and continued following their guides in the darkness.*

CHAPTER 6: AFTER THE WAR

SYNOPSIS The Munk family returns to Paris after the war, and Amélie marries Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about Amélie’s life after the war.

Guided Questions

1. How did Amélie and her friends try to help the survivors?
2. Contrast Amélie with her mother-in-law, Mrs. Jakobovits.
3. What did Mrs. Jakobovits mean when she said about Amélie, “She is a lovely girl, but she will never make a lady”?
4. Why do you think Rabbi and Mrs. Jakobovits left France to live in Dublin, Ireland?
-  5. **Creative writing:** Write a diary entry for Mrs. Munk on the day she returned to her apartment in Paris. Include her fears and her feelings when she saw her old home again.

Vocabulary

reserved (p. 43): *She was different from Mrs. Jakobovits, who was proper and quite **reserved**.*

CHAPTER 7: THE DUBLIN YEARS

SYNOPSIS The Munk family grows during their years in Dublin, and Amélie is involved in helping the community find joy in Torah and mitzvos.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about Amélie's life in Dublin.

Guided Questions


1. Describe some of the ways Amélie's life in Dublin was not so easy at first.
2. Compare and contrast Amélie's personality with her husband's.
3. What were some of the ways Amélie helped the Jews of Dublin learn to enjoy keeping mitzvos and Jewish holidays?
4. Describe how Rabbi Jakobovits proved to the woman who found the bird that Zippy was indeed his.
5. In what way was Amélie's role in Dublin less clear than her husband's?

CHAPTER 8: LIFE IN AMERICA

SYNOPSIS The Jakobovits family moves to New York, where they spend happy times raising their children.

➔ **Prompt:** Read to find where the family settles next and what life is like for them there.

Guided Questions

1. Contrast Amélie's new community in New York with the one she left behind in Ireland.
2. Describe what childhood was like for the Jakobovits children growing up in New York.
3. If you were a child in the Jakobovits family, would you rather grow up as part of the community in Dublin or in New York? Explain why.
-  4. **Creative writing:** Write a postcard from one of the Jakobovits children to their cousins, the Schonfelds, describing one of their family trips. Use information and photographs from this chapter to guide you.

Vocabulary



startled (p. 60): *The bear was **startled** by the noise... Aviva's horse **startled**.*

CHAPTER 9: MORE CHANGES

SYNOPSIS The Jakobovits family once again relocates, this time to London, England, where Rabbi Jakobovits becomes the chief rabbi.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out where the family moves next.

Guided Questions


1. Explain why Rabbi and Mrs. Jakobovits did not originally want to move to England and what made them change their minds.
2. Describe some of the ways life in England was different from the life Amélie was used to in New York.
3. What did Mrs. Jakobovits decide about hosting dinner parties? Why?
-  4. **Document-based question:** Study the photographs of London on pages 64 and 65. What details do you notice in these pictures?
-  5. **Creative writing:** Write a letter from Mrs. Jakobovits one month after arriving in London to her friends back in New York. Describe her thoughts and feelings at the time.

CHAPTER 10: DINNER WITH THE QUEEN

SYNOPSIS The Jakobovits couple provides for many needs of the people of London, and Rabbi Jakobovits is knighted by the Queen, giving Amélie the title of “Lady.”

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Jakobovits couple gets to know the Queen of England.

Guided Questions

1. What were some of Rabbi and Mrs. Jakobovits’s accomplishments in England?
2. Describe some of Amélie’s thoughts and feelings when she was invited to Windsor Palace.
3. Explain how Amélie became known as Lady J.
4. What evidence can you bring to prove that Rabbi Jakobovits deserved to be knighted?
5. Reflect back on Amélie’s mother-in-law’s statement in chapter 6, “She is a lovely girl, but she will never make a lady.” What might the older Mrs. Jakobovits have thought once Amélie truly became a Lady?
6.  **Document-based question:** Study the photographs on pages 69 and 70. What details do you notice in these pictures of the palace?



CHAPTER 11: QUEEN OF KINDNESS

SYNOPSIS After Rabbi Jakobovits retires, Lady J continues to spread her sunshine by helping people and speaking about her war experiences.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Lady J continues to help people even as she gets older.

Guided Questions


1. How did Lady J continue to help her people even after Rabbi Jakobovits retired?
2. The text says, "Everywhere she went, she spread her sunshine." Describe some of the ways Lady J spread her sunshine.
3. What can you learn from the way Lady J visited people in the hospital or at a shivah?
4. Why was it especially important to Lady J to speak about Jewish history?

CHAPTER 12: SAYING THANKS

SYNOPSIS Lady J spends her days making people feel happy and good about themselves.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out some of the ways Lady J connects with other people.

Guided Questions

1. Why do you think Margaret Thatcher may have wanted to visit Lady J?
2. What can you learn from the letter Lady J wrote to the garbage collectors and street cleaners after Margaret Thatcher's visit?
-  3. **Creative writing:** Write a thank-you letter that Lady J may have written to the first-grade students to thank them for the notes they wrote her after the siddur party.

CHAPTER 13: HER LAST DAYS

SYNOPSIS Lady J passes away at age eight-two after a brief illness.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the end of Lady J's life.

Guided Questions

1. Why do you think so many people attended Lady J's funeral?
2. What lesson did Lady J's family take from the four siddurim they found among her belongings?
3. What lessons can you learn from Lady J? Explain.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

1. Why do you think the author never forgot the time she heard Lady J speak about her wartime experiences? What made her speech so memorable?
2. Explain why the author was particularly excited to write a biography of Lady J.

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 the Munk or Jakobovits families lived. For each place, include one or two sentences to describe the important events that occurred in that place.



World Government

Research the British system of government and its Parliament. Contrast it with the American system, and present your findings to the class.



Creative Writing

Suppose you could accompany Lady J on one of her visits or listen in on one of her many phone calls. Which one would you most like to join and why?



Craft

Design a thank-you note for a worker in your community, like the ones Lady J would have written.

“” Quotable Quotes

Each of these quotes was particularly meaningful to Lady J's life story. Select three quotes, and for each one explain what it means, who said it, and how you can apply it to your life.

“There is never a day without a tiny ray of sunshine. If you can find that ray, everything will be easier.”

“In life, there are no problems, only situations.”

“Nature offers something much more beautiful than anything you can buy or make yourself.”

“Is there something you can do for your fellow Jew that no one else can do?... Then you should do it.”

“Please tell me how I can help.”

“There is a corner of your heart that belongs only to the One Above.”

Who Was Lady J?

★ FACTS ★

Year of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Year of Death: _____



Lady Amélie Jakobovits

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
