

To Hope and Back

The Journey of the *St. Louis*

TEACHER'S GUIDE

by Helen Wolfe
with updates from Cindy Kozierok

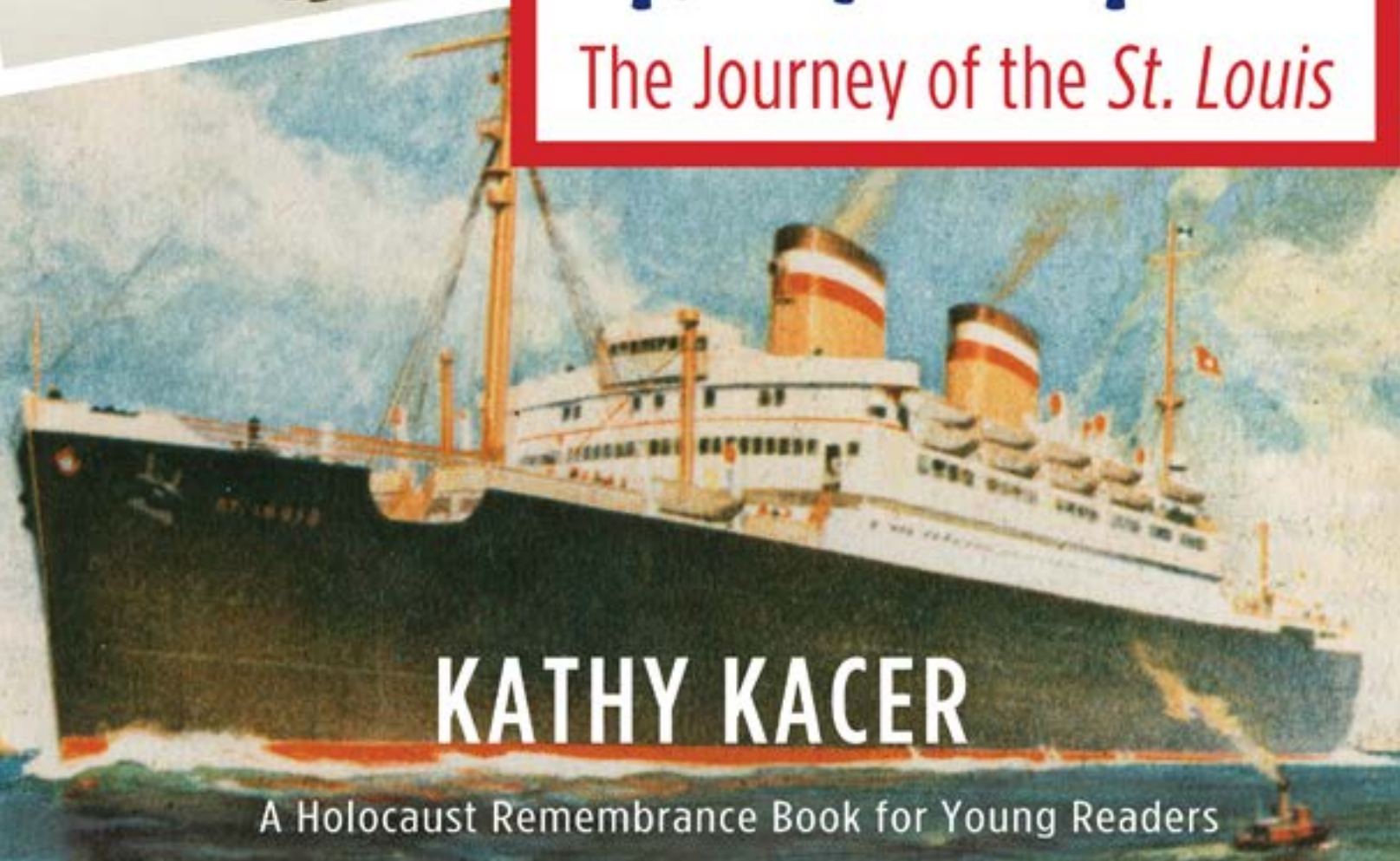
KATHY KACER

A Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers



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Second Story Press

Story Summary

To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis is a book for young readers that is based on the true story of the *St. Louis*—a luxury cruise ship that departed Hamburg, Germany, in 1939—and some of the real people who were on that ship. Most of the passengers were German Jews trying to escape the horrors of Nazism. The passengers ran the spectrum from working class people who used their life savings to escape, to the very wealthy who could afford all of the luxuries that the ship had to offer.

More than nine hundred passengers and crew optimistically embarked on the journey from Hamburg, Germany, to Havana, Cuba. For many, their goal was to eventually make their way to the United States and freedom. However, they didn't know that powerful forces were conspiring against them. For example, their expensive travel documents had been sold to them by unscrupulous agents, and those documents often turned out to be invalid. Also, antisemitic protesters in Cuba were putting pressure on the country's prime minister to not allow the Jewish refugees into the country. Equally disturbing, many countries in Europe and both North and South America had racist immigration quotas that would deny these refugees access. The ship landed in Havana, but passengers were prevented from disembarking and faced the threat of being sent back to Germany. So began the political game that drew worldwide media attention.

The story is told from the first-person narrative point of view of Sol and Lisa, two German Jewish children who were passengers on the ship with their families. Lisa, a young girl from an affluent family from Munich, was a first-class passenger, along with her mother, brother, and grandmother. Sol, a boy from Hamburg, whose father—a tailor—had already escaped a prison camp in Poland, was travelling in more modest third-class accommodations. Although Lisa and Sol are both very young, they become keenly aware that their journey is potentially perilous. The chapters entitled "What the Captain Knew" describe in detail the dangerous political climate of the time and the valiant efforts of the ship's captain and others to save the passengers. The book also includes archival photographs of the *St. Louis* and its passengers, the captain, and other historical figures who played a role in shaping the destiny of those aboard this ship.

To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis was written by Kathy Kacer, a renowned author of many Holocaust children's books, and published by Second Story Press in 2011. It is appropriate for students ages nine to fourteen years old, and it can be integrated into language arts or English programs, as well as a social studies or history curricula. The book has 204 pages.

A. Listening, Speaking, and Pre-reading Activities

Activity 1: Teacher's Note

This is an activity where students can work in groups to discuss and then pack a small suitcase of what they would take with them. To prepare the students for the book, tell them that the families in the story were going on a ship and moving far away from their homes. What they should pack with them should be small mementos and keepsakes that they can easily take with them.

Note: This activity may not be appropriate for students who have had challenging refugee experiences. It may be adapted by asking a fictional character with whom they are familiar what they might pack instead of answering from a personal perspective. By applying the questions to another person, the integrity of the activity is maintained and the risk of triggering negative emotions related to their lived experiences is mitigated.



Activity 1: On the Move: What Would You Always Keep with You?

Directions:

- a. Choose 3 or 4 students to work in a group with you. Try to choose students who you may not have worked with before.
 - b. Discuss these questions in your group. Each person in the group can make their own notes.
 - c. Your group will make a short presentation (5 minutes) in front of the class.
 - d. Take turns being the questioner and please make sure that all group members have a chance to contribute their ideas.
 - e. You will have 30 minutes to complete this activity.
-
1. Have you ever had to move from your first home to another country? How do you think you would feel if you had to do that? In your group, make a list of feelings and reasons for them. Make a chart that looks like this:

MOVING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY

HOW WOULD WE FEEL?

REASONS?

2. Your parents allow you to pack one small suitcase by yourself. You need to choose five to ten items to take with you. Your parents will take care of the food, most of your clothes, and household items. You need to focus on ten items that have a special meaning to you. Each person's answer will be different. All members should be prepared to explain what they would take with them and the reasons for their choices.
3. When you move to another country, what would be some of the big changes that you would have to deal with? Discuss those changes in your group. We will complete the discussion as a class.

Activity 2: Teacher's Note

Author Kathy Kacer has written a foreword that provides a brief introduction to Nazi Germany and its policies of persecution leading up to the voyage in the spring of 1939. However, it is important that students have a basic understanding of the history of the time in order to contextualize the story of the *St. Louis* within the broader timeline of Holocaust and World War II.

There are numerous resources available to support learning about the Holocaust for younger students. It is advisable that you spend several lessons providing this background for your students before reading the book. For a curated set of resources and accompanying activities appropriate for elementary students, go to <https://www.liberation75.org/>.

The questions in Activity 2 can be used to guide small- or large-group discussions, or can be assigned for individual student responses.



Activity 2: The History Behind the Voyage of the *St. Louis*

Directions:

- a. Read the book's Foreword (pages 1–2), which provides important information that will help you understand the story better.
- b. Answer the questions below using short and clear sentences.

Who was Hitler and what was the Nazi party?

What is antisemitism?

Describe the Nuremberg laws and provide an example.

What happened in Germany on November 9, 1938?

What was "Dachau"?

Why didn't Jewish people just leave Germany and move to another country?



Activity 3: Survivor Testimony

To personalize the events of this time in history, it is highly impactful to share the testimony of individuals who survived the Holocaust. In the past, this was done by arranging for a Holocaust survivor to come into the classroom as a guest speaker. Since the Holocaust ended over 75 years ago, there are few survivors still alive and this option is no longer practical. Fortunately, Holocaust education organizations have risen to this challenge to provide a variety of alternatives.

Some options currently available:

- **Carrying Testimony from Generation to Generation:**
Provides guest speakers for classroom visits who are descendants of survivors. Speakers share their families' personal histories using their own voices and first-hand video testimony from a filmed personal interview with their parent or grandparent who survived the Holocaust. In-person and virtual options available.
- **USC Shoah Foundation—Dimensions in Testimony:**
Through Dimensions in Testimony, students and educators can ask questions that prompt real-time responses from a pre-recorded video of Holocaust survivors and witnesses engaging in virtual conversation, redefining inquiry-based education.
- **iWitness Teaching with Testimony:**
Through powerful, thought-provoking engagement with first-person stories from survivors and witnesses of genocide, students worldwide develop empathy, understanding, and respect while deepening their learning across the curriculum.



Activity 4: Visit to a Holocaust Education Centre

If possible, visit your local Holocaust Museum for a tour or go online for a virtual tour.

- Toronto: The Toronto Holocaust Museum
- Montreal: Montreal Holocaust Museum
- Winnipeg: Holocaust Education Centre at the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada
- Ottawa: The National Holocaust Monument
- Vancouver: The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
- Virtual: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Virtual Field Trip

Activity 5: Teacher's Note

The photographs in the book are invaluable in helping students understand the experiences of the passengers on the *St. Louis* and the historical figures who played a role in their story. Have students discuss the following questions in groups. Use some of these discussion questions before reading the book. Others can be used as a discussion group break from reading and writing work as you are progressing through the story.



Activity 5: Examining Photographs from the Book

1. Look at the pictures on pages 6 and 23. The little girl and boy in the pictures are Lisa (page 6) and Sol (page 23), two children who were passengers on the *St. Louis*, along with their families. Their chapters describe the journey from their points of view. How old do they look? Imagine that you are able to read their thoughts. How do you think they feel about having to go on this journey? Choose some adjectives to describe their feelings.
2. Look at the photographs on pages 28, 46, and 47. These pictures show the lifestyle that Lisa and other first-class passengers had aboard the ship. How did first-class passengers aboard the *St. Louis* live? How do you think their experiences aboard the ship were different from people who were not rich?
3. The photographs on pages 54, 62, 70, and 73 show the kinds of activities that all passengers could do as they were sailing to Havana. Do you think that passengers were enjoying themselves on the voyage? Give reasons for your opinion.
4. Look at the photographs on pages 101 and 112. Who are the people in each picture? Explain how the two pictures are connected to each other.
5. Look at the photograph on page 170. When was it taken? What are some words to describe the mood or feeling of the people in the photograph?
6. Look at the pictures of Lisa and Sol on pages 187 and 189. How old do you think they are now? How do you think they feel telling their stories about the voyage of the *St. Louis*?

7. Choose any photograph that shows people and details of the journey. Without looking at any text, tell the story of what is going on in the picture. Answer the following questions to help you tell that story:
 - a. What happened before the picture was taken?
 - b. Where was the picture taken?
 - c. How do you think the people in the picture are feeling? What are some reasons for their feelings?
 - d. Are they doing anything special in the picture? What do you think they're doing? How do they feel about it?
 - e. What may have happened after the picture was taken?

8. Pages 39, 59, 118, 136, and 166 have pictures of real historical figures who were part of the story. Choose one of these photos. Identify the person in the picture. Write a short paragraph giving a physical description of that person. Write a second paragraph giving some reasons why you chose this particular person to write about.

C. Reading and Writing Activities

Activity 6: Teacher's Note

Below are questions requiring students to recall the plot, setting, characters, and theme of the story. Pose some of them orally to review specific details, or for small group discussion. Others can be assigned as in-class written work, evaluated assignments, and tests. Also included are questions requiring students to express their feelings and opinions about events and characters, and to predict outcomes.

If possible, provide your students with a map of Europe, which they can use to track the voyage of the *St. Louis*.



Activity 6: Reading Comprehension Questions

Chapter 1: Lisa (pages 3–10)

1. Where was the ship leaving from? Where would the journey finish?
2. *Mutti* is a German word for a member of the family. What do you think it means?
3. Where were many Jewish passengers going after they landed in Havana?
4. What does it mean to have “mixed feelings?” Why would Lisa have mixed feelings about leaving Germany?
5. How do we know that Lisa and her family had a comfortable life?
6. Who were Oma Ida and Phillip?
7. On page 7, Lisa said that the yellow Stars of David that they had to wear “branded [them] as Jews.” What did she mean?
8. What is a “nest egg?” Why did Papa feel he needed to prepare one in Holland?
9. Who were the Gestapo? Why were Jews so afraid of them?

10. What did Papa do when he had to stay in Holland? Do you think that he had a choice? Give reasons for your opinion.
11. What happened to Lisa's Papa?

Chapter 2: Sol (pages 11–24)

12. How do we know that Sol's family was not rich?
13. On page 14, Sol said that it felt "different" to be Jewish. What do you think he meant? Have you ever felt different because of your religion or culture? If you have, please explain.
14. Why couldn't Sol and his cousin Edith play freely in the park anymore?
15. Sol described why it became so dangerous for Jews to stay in Germany. List all of the reasons he gave.
16. What happened to Sol's Papa and all of the Polish Jews in Germany?
17. What was Papa's plan for himself, Mutti, and Sol?
18. Describe the plans that Sol's family made to leave Germany.
19. How and why had Sol's father changed when he returned from Poland?

Chapter 3: Lisa (pages 25–33)

20. What memories did Lisa recall as she boarded the ship? Why do you think she had those memories at that time?
21. Why didn't Lisa care about making friends on the ship? Do you understand how she felt? Why or why not?
22. On page 29 Lisa said, "Can you believe that almost every single passenger on this ship is Jewish?" Everyone she saw was Jewish just like her. Why would this be a surprise to her?
23. How were the Jewish passengers on the ship treated? Why would they be pleased and surprised by that treatment?

Chapter 4: Sol (pages 34–37)

24. What did Sol remember as he was leaving Germany? Why do you think he had that memory?
25. What happened in Germany on November 9, 1938? How would you feel if this happened in your country?
26. What does the word “abnormal” mean? According to Sol, how was life in Germany abnormal?
27. Why would burning a synagogue be so horrible for Jewish people?
28. Read the last paragraph on page 37. What words would you use to describe Mutti and Sol’s feelings as they left Hamburg?

Chapter 5: What the Captain Knew (pages 38–43)

29. Read just the first two paragraphs on page 38. What are some differences between the writing and information in this chapter and the others you have read so far? What kind of information do we learn as we read this chapter?
30. Give a definition of antisemitism in your own words.
31. People from various cultures sometimes face discrimination or unequal treatment. Have you ever seen, heard about, or experienced discrimination? If you can, describe what happened.
32. What do you think the words “naked hostility” on page 38 mean?
33. Besides Germany, what other countries did the Jewish passengers on the ship come from? Why do you think they were leaving their home countries?
34. Why would the couple that was not Jewish decide to leave Germany?
35. Who was Manuel Benitez? What kind of person was he?
36. What is a quota? Explain how the United States used quotas to control the number of new immigrants? Why would a country do this?
37. Could any Jew who wanted to escape Germany leave easily on this or any ship? Why or why not?

38. Describe what we know about Captain Schroeder so far. Why would you describe him this way?
39. What was the “Final Solution?” Why did this Nazi plan mean that it was so important for Jews to leave Germany?
40. What is propaganda? Explain how Nazi Germany was using propaganda to hurt Jews.
41. The “What the Captain Knew” chapters appear often in the book. Whenever you see that chapter title from now on, what kind of information can you expect to learn from it?

Chapter 6: Lisa (pages 44–50)

42. Why was Lisa feeling so sick? How did her grandmother try to help her?
43. Why did Mutti suggest that her daughter change her name? Was she right to make that suggestion? Give your opinion and reasons for it.
44. What are some reasons that people would change their names?

Chapter 7: Sol (pages 51–56)

45. What were some differences between the ways that Sol and Lisa’s families were travelling on the ship?
46. What does the word “feast” on page 52 mean? Why did Sol think that the food on the ship was a feast? What was he comparing it to?
47. Why did Sol’s mother and father admire the captain?

Chapter 8: What the Captain Knew (pages 57–60)

48. What is a telegram or cable?
49. Why was the captain worried about what he read? Give two reasons.
50. Why was he told to increase the ship’s speed to get to Havana?
51. What is a protest? Why were Cuban people protesting?

52. How did the protests affect the president of Cuba?
53. What was Decree 937?
54. Why was the president of Cuba angry with Manuel Benitez? What words could we use to describe those men?
55. Which countries that participated in the Evian Conference agreed to accept Jewish refugees? Why do you think most countries did not accept them?
56. Who was Morris Troper? What was he trying to do?

Chapter 9: Lisa (pages 61–68)

57. Why was Lisa feeling sick as she and Mutti were walking on the ship's deck?
58. Why were Uncle Werner and his family allowed to stay in the United States? Why would the United States and other countries accept some refugees but not others? In your opinion, how did they decide who to accept?
59. When Lisa and the other Jewish passengers were in the cinema, they watched a newsreel. What is a newsreel? Explain why watching it upset them so much.

Chapter 10: Sol (pages 69–76)

60. Why do you think the Nazi flag on the ship wasn't taken down?
61. On page 74, Sol said, "Here on the ship, we can pray safely and openly. It's like we have been freed from slavery, too!" What do you think he meant by this?
62. Why did Sol compare the hanging of Hitler's picture to Jews in Germany being forced to sit on yellow benches? How were they both the same?
63. What did Sol mean when he said "these moments are giving me goose bumps" on page 76?
64. The Jewish passengers on the *St. Louis* were enjoying themselves and thinking that they would now have safe and free lives. What clues have we read so far that they could be wrong? Make a list of those clues.

Chapter 11: What the Captain Knew (pages 77–81)

65. Who was Otto Shiendick? What was he doing aboard ship to upset the Jewish passengers?
66. Why couldn't the captain stop him?
67. Explain Otto's part in Operation Sunshine.
68. What was the conflict or problem about the Cuban landing permits for Jews?
69. What was Benitez doing in Cuba? In your opinion, why would someone like Benitez do these things?
70. Name other organizations that were trying to help Jewish refugees. What problems did these groups face?
71. Do you think the captain was right not to tell the passengers some information that he knew? Why or why not?
72. Why did the captain keep the deaths of Moritz Weiler and Leonid Berg a secret? Do you think he made the right decision? Give a reason for your opinion.

Chapter 12: Lisa (pages 82–87)

73. Why were the passengers on the deck so excited on Friday, May 26?

Chapter 13: Sol (pages 88–94)

74. What was Sol's Papa doing and saying as the family was waiting to get off the ship? Why do you think he was explaining these details to Sol and his mother?
75. Why did the family need to be patient and careful with their money in Cuba?
76. Predict why the ship remained on the shore and was not anchored at the pier in Havana.

Chapter 14: What the Captain Knew (pages 95–97)

77. What important information did the captain know about the Jewish passengers?
78. What were several reasons that Jewish immigrants would not be welcome in Cuba?
79. What was the social worker from New York trying to do?
80. What was Lawrence Berenson trying to do?

Chapter 15: Lisa (pages 98–106)

81. How was Lisa feeling when the ship got to Havana?
82. Why did a crew member raise a yellow flag at the back of the ship? Do you think the reason given by a passenger to Mutti was the real reason? Why or why not?
83. Why were people in small boats boarding the *St. Louis*?
84. On page 102, Lisa said “a tickle of fear has begun to creep into my mind.” What did she mean?
85. Who were Lisa and her family shocked to see meeting them on the shore?
86. How did Lisa react when her uncle shouted at her? How do you think she was feeling?
87. Predict what Uncle Werner would try to do to get his family off the ship.

Chapter 16: Sol (pages 107–116)

88. Why do you think a man tried to jump off the ship? Do you understand why he did this? Why or why not?
89. Why were newsmen and photographers beside the ship? Do you think that becoming famous would help the passengers or not? Give reasons for your opinion.
90. If you were a relative of one of the passengers, what would be some things you would try to do to get them off the ship?

91. What news did Aunt Edith give the family to make them feel more hopeful?
92. Do you think that Sol's aunt and uncle knew what the captain knew? Give a reason for your opinion.
93. What could Mutti be thinking when she handed her gifts to her relatives?

Chapter 17: What the Captain Knew (pages 117–124)

94. What were all the reasons that Max Loewe tried to kill himself?
95. What are five adjectives that you could use to describe the relationship between the captain, the committee, and the passengers?
96. Why were twenty-four Jewish passengers allowed to leave the ship?
97. What happened between the Gestapo and Robert Hoffman?
98. How do we know that President Bru was a greedy person?
99. Describe the message that the captain sent to President Bru's wife. How did he think the message might help?
100. On Thursday, June 1, the captain posted a message to passengers telling them the truth about their situation (page 121). Why do you think he decided that it was the right time to be honest with them? Would it have been better if he had told them sooner? Why or why not?

Chapter 18: Lisa (pages 125–129)

101. What three clues made Lisa believe that the voyage might not end happily?
102. Why did Lisa trust the captain?
103. Why were many adult passengers crying? What would they have known or suspected that a child would not?

Chapter 19: Sol (pages 130–134)

104. How do you think Sol's Papa felt when he couldn't answer his son's questions?

105. What did he probably realize about their travel documents?

106. Where did Papa say that the ship was taking them?

Chapter 20: What the Captain Knew (pages 135–138)

107. What were the captain's worries and concerns?

108. Why did the two messages he received give him hope?

109. What was Lawrence Berenson trying to do? What were his reasons?

110. Why did Berenson suggest that the ship go to Isla de la Juventud?

111. What does the word “negotiate” mean? Explain the negotiation that Berenson wanted to complete. What result did he want?

112. What offer did President Bru make? What personal quality or character trait did that offer demonstrate?

Chapter 21: Lisa (pages 139–143)

113. On page 140, Lisa said “But something told me it was too early to start celebrating.” How would you describe her feelings?

114. On page 141, Mutti explained the reasons why the ship was not being allowed to land in Cuba. We would call these reasons the politics of the situation. Without using a dictionary, give a definition of the word “politics.”

115. Do you think that politics are easy or difficult to understand? Why or why not?

116. How do we know that Lisa was a realistic, mature, and intelligent girl?

Chapter 22: Sol (pages 144–147)

117. Why was it difficult for Sol to understand the politics and problems of Jewish refugees?

118. How were the passengers trying to help themselves?

119. What memory did Sol have? How did that memory make his feelings for his father stronger?
120. What do you think a coast guard ship is? Why was it sailing beside the *St. Louis*?

Chapter 23: What the Captain Knew (pages 148–152)

121. How was the captain trying to help the passengers?
122. Why didn't many Americans want to welcome Jewish refugees?
123. Why did President Roosevelt pay attention to anti-refugee protesters?
124. The *New York Times* newspaper wrote, "The cruise of the *St. Louis* cries to heaven of man's inhumanity to man." What did the writer mean?
125. Why couldn't the passengers land in the Dominican Republic?
126. Why didn't the prime minister of Canada help?
127. Explain why Lawrence Berenson's negotiation with President Bru failed. Whose fault was it that it failed?
128. What order was the captain given? What did this order mean for his passengers?

Chapter 24: Lisa (pages 153–157)

129. How were Mutti's mood and conversation with Lisa different once they got the bad news? How was Mutti feeling?
130. In your opinion, was Oma right to be angry with the captain? Why or why not?
131. Describe what happened when Lisa was watching the children play on deck. What did Lisa realize as she was watching them?

Chapter 25: Sol (pages 158–162)

132. What do you think Sol's mother and father were talking about in their "deep conversations" (page 158)?

133. In what ways did the man who had been in a prison look different than the other passengers? What was Sol thinking about as he looked at the man?
134. What were Sol's greatest fears?
135. Sol said that he had a different relationship with each parent. Do you think that most kids have different relationships with each parent? Explain.
136. How had the mood aboard the ship changed?
137. What kind of hero did Sol imagine himself to be?

Chapter 26: What the Captain Knew (pages 163–168)

138. What did the captain know about the fate of his Jewish passengers?
139. Why did the passengers think of crazy ideas? What was their goal?
140. How were the Nazis going to use the return of the ship to Hamburg as propaganda?
141. What was Otto, the Gestapo spy, expecting to happen?
142. What does “high-jacking the ship” (page 165) mean? Why did Posner and other Jews want to do this?
143. What did the captain say to stop the high-jacking? Do you think he was right to do that?
144. What secret plan did the captain have to save the passengers?
145. What was Morris Troper's international rescue plan? Was his plan completely successful? Explain.

Chapter 27: Lisa (pages 169–173)

146. What was the “miracle” that Lisa referred to on page 169?
147. Where did Mutti decide that the family would go? Why was that country her choice? List the reasons.
148. Mutti said about her fellow passengers that “we are all bound together by this journey” (page 173). What did she mean?

149. Why did Lisa say that she was a little sadder inside? What do you think she meant?

Chapter 28: Sol (pages 174–179)

150. What country was the miracle for Sol's family?
151. How did the passengers feel about the captain?
152. What was Papa's hope about immigrating to the United States?
153. What was the feeling of the crowd waiting in Antwerp, Belgium, to welcome the ship?
154. Who was waiting to welcome Sol and his parents?
155. What was Sol's last thought before getting off the ship?

Chapter 29: What Finally Happened (pages 180–183)

156. Why didn't most passengers have any say or control over which country they would go to?
157. Why did most countries only want passengers who would be staying a short time?
158. Which country took the most refugees? Which took the least?
159. What was about to happen in 1939?
160. Which of the four countries turned out to be the best one for the refugees to go to? Why?
161. Why were many passengers who went to France, Belgium, and Holland not as fortunate?
162. What percentage of the passengers on the *St. Louis* died in World War II?
163. How could all of the passengers have been saved?
164. What is a reunion? Why did government leaders in Canada invite survivors of the *St. Louis* to a reunion in 2000?

165. Who is Douglas Blair and what did he say to the survivors? Why did he feel a responsibility to say this?
166. What did the United States Senate, a branch of the U.S. government, do on June 6, 2009?

Lisa Epilogue (pages 184–187)

167. Many books that are non-fiction have epilogues at the end. What would be a good reason to include an epilogue? If you're not sure, before reading both epilogues, look at the pictures on pages 187 and 189 to help you predict the information in the epilogues.
168. How was the family's life in London, England, different from their life in Germany?
169. Why did the family move away from London in September 1939?
170. What happened in early 1940?
171. What American city did the family settle in?
172. How do we know that the adults in the family had a hard life in the United States?
173. What did Phillip tell Eleanor Roosevelt when he met her? How did she answer him? Why did she answer this way?
174. How do we know that education was important to Lisa?
175. How have Lisa's experiences as a refugee motivated her work in human rights?
176. Where does she live now?

Sol Epilogue (pages 188–191)

177. What country was Sol's family assigned to?
178. What did the family do after the Germans invaded that country?

179. How did they manage to hide from the Nazis?
180. Explain how Sol, his mother, and his father escaped separately from the detention camp.
181. What country did they escape to then? Where did they eventually end up?
182. What did Sol study in university? What career did he have once he graduated?
183. What happened to Leon, Sol's friend from the ship?

What Happened to the Others? (pages 192–196)

184. Read the short descriptions of what happened to other people in the story. Which person do you feel the most sorry about? Give a reason for your choice.
185. Is there someone that you don't feel sorry about? Why don't you feel sorry about what happened to that person?
186. Which person in this chapter do you admire the most? Give a reason.
187. What happened to the *Flandre* and the *Orduña* ships? Why did some of their passengers eventually die?
188. What happened to the *St. Louis*?
189. How do you feel about what happened to the captain?
190. In 1993, the captain received an important award. What was the award? Did he deserve it? Why or why not?
191. Look at the picture of the Wheel of Conscience on page 195. The Wheel of Conscience has the words: "antisemitism," "racism," and "xenophobia" on it. What is xenophobia? Do you think it was appropriate for the Canadian government to place these words on this memorial to the *St. Louis*? Why or why not?

Activity 7: Teacher's Note

There are questions for all of the “What the Captain Knew” chapters already included. Each chapter has detailed information about the behind-the-scenes negotiations, players, and politics of the situation. Below is a more simplified note-taking worksheet that students can use to keep track of characters, issues, and events.

This activity would be especially useful if the book is being used as part of a social studies or history course.

Hand out one copy of the sheet to each student to take notes on the “What the Captain Knew” chapters.



Activity 7: What the Captain Knew: Note-taking Worksheet

Directions:

1. As you are reading this chapter, make point-form notes under the headings below.
2. Please write the information in your own words. Don't copy from the text.

What the Captain Knew

Chapter Number _____

A. Who were the important people in this chapter? (List people and their jobs or positions.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. What problems or conflicts were discussed in this chapter?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. How were the conflicts or problems solved?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

D. How did the captain feel about what happened? What were the reasons for his feelings?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 8: Teacher's Note

After you finish reading the book with your students, they can write a paragraph about the hero of the story. Brainstorming and creating a graphic organizer is a necessary first step to success in writing.

Have the students work in groups to do this activity.



Activity 8: Preparing for Paragraph Writing: Creating a Graphic Organizer

Directions:

1. Find two or three partners to do this activity with.
2. Answer this question:

In your opinion, who is the hero of the story of the *St. Louis*? Name that person. Then, give three reasons for your opinion. Use details and examples from the story to illustrate your opinion.

3. With your partners, decide who you think the hero of the story is. Write a sentence that could look like this:

In our opinion, the hero of the story of the *St. Louis* is _____.

4. Then, brainstorm some ideas and put them in a chart that looks like this:

Reasons	Evidence
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.



Activity 9: Paragraph Writing:
The Voyage of the *St. Louis*: Who Is the Hero?

Have the students use the graphic organizer above to write their paragraphs, either individually or in pairs or small groups. Before they write, review that a paragraph should include the following: a title, topic sentence, body, and concluding sentence.

Review any other expectations that you have already established with your students regarding paragraph writing and evaluation criteria.

D. Extension/Enrichment Activities



Activity 10: Oral Presentation: “You are there”: News Interview

The story of the voyage of the *St. Louis* received worldwide media attention. Below is a media literacy activity that allows students to work in pairs to present a news interview. Remind the students that since the story took place in 1939, the interview would be on radio or on a newsreel.

Give each student this assignment sheet, which explains the assignment. Use any evaluation tool that you would use for a similar assignment.

Directions:

1. Imagine that it is May 27, 1939, and the *St. Louis* is docked in Havana harbour. You are a news reporter sent by either a radio station or a newsreel company. You find a way to get aboard the ship where you can interview someone on board, or you find an important historical figure in the story and interview that person.
2. Choose a partner to work with. Here is a list of people that can be interviewed:
 - a. Captain Gustav Schroeder
 - b. Federico Laredo Bru, president of Cuba
 - c. Morris Troper, director of the American Jewish Joint Committee
 - d. Lisa Avedon's mother (Mutti)
 - e. Sol Messinger's father (Papa)
3. You and your partner need to decide who will be the interviewer and who will be the one being interviewed.

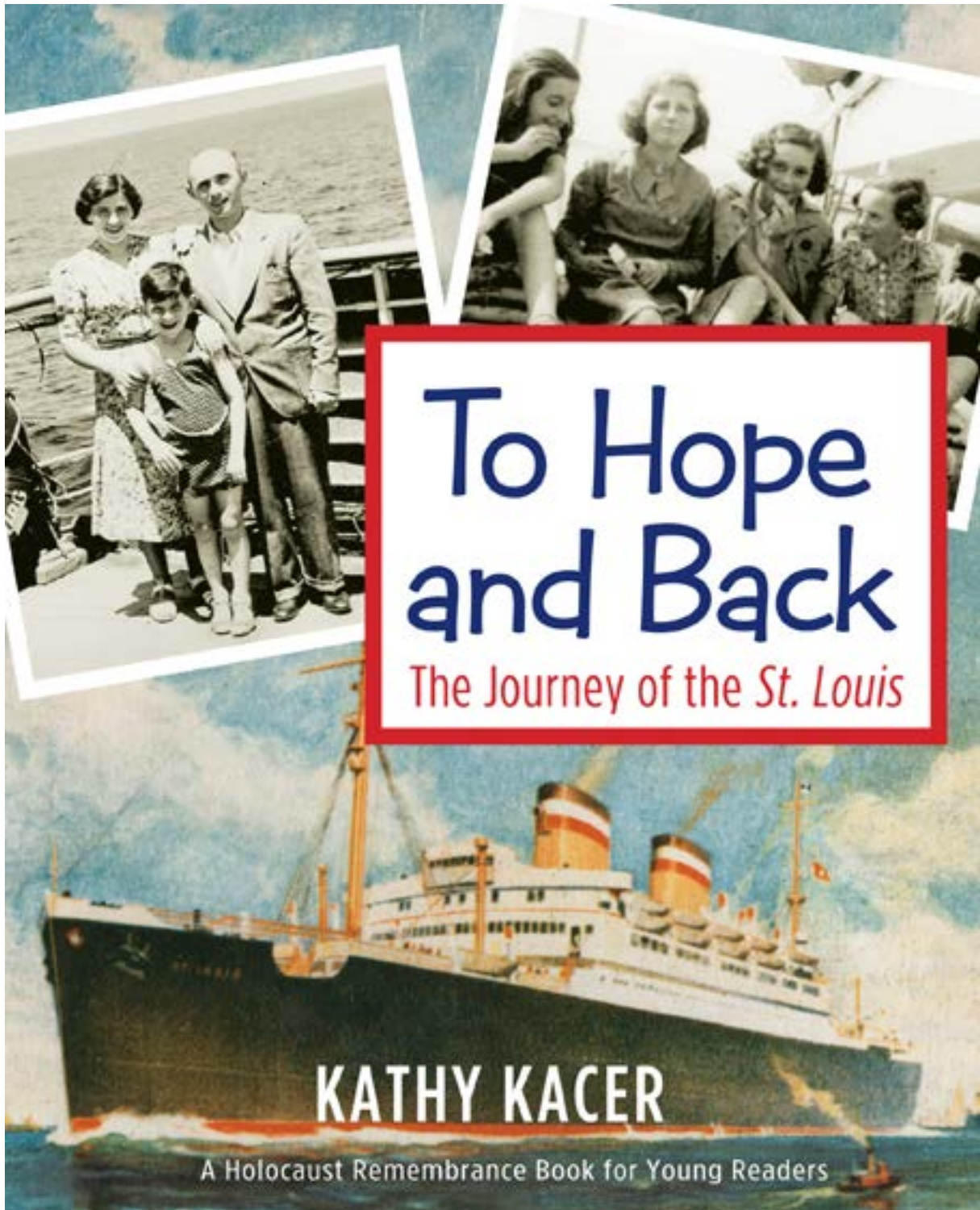
4. Prepare an interview (five minutes long) that has ten questions and answers. Each person in the pair can have a script that has questions or answers, but don't just read questions and answers. The interview should show your knowledge of the story and people being interviewed. Make sure to review the chapters that give accurate information about the person being interviewed.
5. You will have some time to practice your interviews before presenting them. Feel free to dress up as the people you're portraying when you do your presentation.
6. Your presentations will be done in front of the class or can be recorded. Your assignment will be evaluated for language skills, fluency, accurate historical details, and realism.



Activity 11: Creating a Memorial to the *St. Louis*

To differentiate instructions, students can work in groups to create their own memorial to the voyage of the *St. Louis*. This could either be an evaluated or non-evaluated activity. Encourage your students' creativity by having them create original artwork, poetry, journal responses, collages, and slogans that are relevant to the topic.

The memorials can be part of a bulletin board display in your classroom.



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