

Ville Ville Vieted and Edited by Kathy Kacer

with Karen Krasny, Alan Gotlib, Susan Gordin, and Shawntelle Nesbitt

We Are Their Voice

Young People Respond to the Holocaust

Edited by Kathy Kacer Guide written by Suzanne Meade Teacher's Guide

ISBN: 978-192692-077-1

Second Story Press www.secondstorypress.ca

We Are Their Voice Young People Respond to the Holocaust

Created and Edited by Kathy Kacer

Summary

This collection of stories, essays, and drawings created by students in Grades 6 to 8 showcases their reactions to learning about the Holocaust. Some of the students wrote about real-life people. Some wrote stories, letters, or diary entries from the point of view of someone who lived during that time. The goal of the project was to preserve the voices of Holocaust survivors so that their stories are not lost.

There is a glossary at the end of the book that provides additional information about some of the less-familiar words and concepts.

About the Editor

Kathy Kacer is an award-winning author who has written more than 20 books that focus on stories of the Holocaust. Her work includes picture books, historical fiction and nonfiction writing. As a child of Holocaust survivors, Kathy Kacer is a passionate advocate of Holocaust stories and has claimed that she feels a personal responsibility to collect stories and pass them on to the next generation. In the book *Teaching Tough Topics* by Larry Swartz, Kathy Kacer writes, "I think that the lessons we can learn—lessons about hatred and power, but also lessons about compassion, strength and selflessness are lessons for the ages. Remember this: Every time you remember the history, and every time you talk about it, you are honouring someone who lived and possibly perished during that time. You are giving meaning to their lives. And that is a remarkable thing" (2020 p. 69).

Before Reading

A discussion of the Holocaust, especially touching on the fact that some horrible things happened, might be prudent before reading. Knowing if material contained in this book might remind students of similar events in their own lives, or events they've heard of in their family history, would be helpful for the teacher to be aware of. Remind students that if they get overwhelmed and need to take a break, they can do so.

Ask students what they already know about the Holocaust. Discuss why Adolf Hitler introduced laws to limit the freedom of Jewish people and other marginalized groups. What stories, real or fictional, have they have read or seen about Jewish people during the Holocaust?

Since this is a collection of shorter pieces, each teacher can choose which to share based on the needs of their students.

Discussion Questions

Each chapter of the book deals with a particular question or situation experienced by people during the Holocaust. For each chapter, have students consider the central question and reply to it themselves through writing, drawing, or discussion.

Chapter 1: What is Happening to Us?

Try to imagine what life was like for Jewish families in Europe before the start of the Second World War. Their lives were not much different from ours (aside from not having all the technology we have today). Imagine what it would be like to have your freedom to go about your daily life—school, shopping, visiting friends—slowly stripped away. How would you feel? How might you react?

Chapter 2: Can We Stay Together?

Many Jewish families had to separate during the Holocaust. Some were separated by force while others chose to separate for their own safety. Can you imagine what it would be like to be separated from your family? For your parents to send you away for your own safety? And to not know when or if you would ever see them again?

Chapter 3: Where Will We Hide?

Many Jewish families who were not able to escape before restrictions made it impossible to leave were forced into hiding. Think about these questions: Where would you hide? Who could you trust?

Chapter 4: The Fear is Overwhelming

Everyone has been afraid at some point in their lives. For most of us the frightening event passes and we are able to move on with our lives. Imagine living with that fear for months or even years. How would you cope? What might you do?

Chapter 5: The Goodness of Some

Helping Jewish people during the Holocaust was a dangerous choice, and many people were unwilling or unable to do so. There were a few who did help, though, in different ways. Try to put yourself in the position of a non-Jewish person at the time. What would you be willing to do in a dangerous situation? Would you be able to ignore someone who was suffering or being treated unfairly? What if you might face life-changing consequences for helping someone in need?

Chapter 6: Not Everyone is Willing to Help

Sadly, many people supported the Nazis and their campaign to eliminate the Jews. Some were afraid to get involved. Some were active supporters. Imagine that you were a non-Jewish person living during the Holocaust. Would you support the Nazis? Why might you make that choice? How would you feel about yourself?

Chapter 7: How Will We Ever Survive?

As horrible as it was to live in constant fear, many Jewish people during World War II also lived with despair. Imagine that you are living in hiding or living in a concentration camp. What questions might come to mind? Do you think you would have the mental strength to survive? What do you think you would have to do?

Chapter 8: It Comes Down to Luck

Holocaust survivors attribute their survival to many different factors. What do you think it would take to survive the Holocaust? What role do you think luck played in helping people to survive?

Chapter 9: We Have to Have Hope

Hope is one thing that helps people stay alive in terrible circumstances. What kind of hopes would you have if you were a Jewish person living during the Holocaust? How do you think your hopes would help you?

Chapter 10: Looking for Justice

After the war ended, some members of the Nazi leadership were charged with war crimes for their role in the Holocaust. Others managed to escape by fleeing to other countries and changing their names. Do you think that punishing the people responsible for the Holocaust helps the survivors? Is there anything that can make up for the terrible things that happened?

Chapter 11: Fighting Back

People often wonder why the Jewish people did not fight back. The truth is, some did—but they were up against armed, well-trained soldiers. Imagine that you were a Jewish person living during the Holocaust. What are some of the reasons that you might choose to fight back? What are some reasons why you might not?

Chapter 12: We Are Their Voice

There are very few survivors of the Holocaust left to tell their stories. Have you ever had the chance to hear one of them? Have you seen or heard a recording of a Holocaust survivor? How can you help to make sure that the stories are not forgotten once all of the survivors are gone?

Chapter 13: Putting Words into Actions

What happens now? How can you, as young people nearly a century after the Second World War, make sure that the Holocaust is not forgotten or repeated? Think about how you can be a positive voice for the future. What can you do help make your community and the world safer today?

Extension Activities

Consider putting together a book containing student responses, similar to the project that created the book *We Are Their Voice*. The book could then be kept in the classroom library for students to read.

Have the class plan ways to take action to make sure that the Holocaust is not forgotten. This plan could be based on ideas from Chapter 13 and/or ideas they generate themselves after reading/hearing that chapter.

Have students research the stories of Holocaust survivors or those that helped and share their learning with others.

Read fictional books about the Holocaust and discuss how the stories compare to what the students have learned about real people who lived at that time.

Additional Resources

For more information about the Holocaust, check out some of these resources.

This is a compilation of links and resources for both students and teachers:

https://remember.org/educate

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has a variety of resources as well:

https://www.vhec.org/what-we-do/

The Montreal Holocaust Museum has videos and programs to support teaching about the Holocaust:

https://museeholocauste.ca/en/primary-education/

Further Reading

Picture Books (Ages 7+)

The Brave Princess and Me by Kathy Kacer illus. Juliana Kolesova Fiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-102-2 *The Magician of Auschwitz* by Kathy Kacer illus. Gillian Newland Nonfiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-927583-46-3 *Fania's Heart* by Anne Renaud illus. by Richard Rudnicki Nonfiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-057-5 *The Secret of the Village Fool* by Rebecca Upjohn illus. Renné Benoit Nonfiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-926920-75-7

The Promise by Pnina Bat Zvi and Margie Wolfe illus. Isabelle Cardinal Nonfiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-058-2

Middle Grade (Ages 9-12)

All About Anne by Anne Frank House illus. Huck Scarry Nonfiction \$24.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-060-5
The Ship to Nowhere by Rona Arato Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-772600-18-6
Guardian Angel House by Kathy Clark Fiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-897187-58-6
The Choice by Kathy Clark Fiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-927583-65-4
She's A Mensch! Ten Amazing Jewish Women by Anne Dublin

Nonfiction \$22.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-320-0

What Does Hate Look Like? by Sameea Jimenez and Corinne Promislow with Larry Swartz

Nonfiction \$21.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-290-6 Clara's War by Kathy Kacer Fiction \$8.95 ISBN: 978-1-896764-42-9 Hidden on the High Wire by Kathy Kacer Fiction \$13.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-251-7 *Hiding Edith: A True Story* by Kathy Kacer Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-897187-06-7 *Shanghai Escape* by Kathy Kacer Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-92758-310-4 The Diary of Laura's Twin by Kathy Kacer Fiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-897187-39-5 The Night Spies by Kathy Kacer Fiction \$8.95 ISBN: 978-1-89676-470-2 The Secret of Gabi's Dresser by Kathy Kacer Fiction \$10.95 ISBN: 978-1-896764-15-3 The Underground Reporters by Kathy Kacer Nonfiction \$17.95 ISBN: 978-1-896764-85-6 *To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis* by Kathy Kacer Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-897187-96-8 We Are Their Voice: Young People Respond to the Holocaust by Kathy Kacer Nonfiction \$16.95 ISBN: 978-1-926920-77-1 Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine Nonfiction \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-896764-55-9

Hana's Suitcase on Stage by Karen Levine and Emil Sher Nonfiction, Book + Play \$18.95 ISBN: 978-1-89718-705-0
Hana's Suitcase Anniversary Album by Karen Levine Nonfiction \$24.95 ISBN: 978-1-92692-036-8 (10th anniversary special edition)
The Righteous Smuggler by Debbie Spring Fiction \$9.95 ISBN:978-1-896764-97-9
When We Were Shadows by Janet Wees Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-061-2

Ages 13+

Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust by Ella Burakowski

YA Nonfiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-927583-74-6

Names in a Jar by Jennifer Gold

YA Fiction \$14.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-207-4

Restitution: A family's fight for their heritage lost in the Holocaust by Kathy Kacer

Nonfiction \$19.95 ISBN: 978-1-89718-775-3

To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A teen's account of a war criminal trial by Kathy Kacer with Jordana Lebowitz

YA Nonfiction \$13.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-040-7

Under the Iron Bridge by Kathy Kacer

YA Fiction \$15.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-205-0

Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations compiled by Eli Rubenstein, with The March of the Living

Nonfiction \$32.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-149-7

Branded by the Pink Triangle by Ken Setterington

YA Nonfiction \$15.95 ISBN: 978-1-926920-96-2

A Partisan's Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust by Faye Schulman

Nonfiction \$19.95 ISBN: 978-0-92900-576-8

Heroines, Rescuers, Rabbis, Spies: Unsung Women of the Holocaust by Sarah Silberstein Swartz

YA Nonfiction \$19.95 ISBN: 978-1-77260-262-3

For Teachers

Holocaust Remembrance Series Teacher Resource: Elementary Social Justice Teacher Resource

Education \$149.00 ISBN: 978-1-89718-794-4

544 page Five-Part Comprehensive Guide