

One School, One Book

Discussion Questions & Activities

Directions: Add this document to your Three Stars in the Night Sky GoodNotes folder. Your LA teacher will tell you which questions to answer and which activities to complete.

Highly Recommended Activity:

[Introduction Activity](#)

Intro- Pages 1 & 2

Discussion Questions:

1. What is a refugee?

2. Examine the picture on page 1 of the Jewish refugees and then examine the picture on page 2 of the Syrian refugees. What emotions were sparked? Did one image resonate with you more than the other?

3. How much of their former culture should immigrant children give up when they come to the United States? How much of their former culture should they keep?

4. What differences are there between a child immigrating with his/her family and immigrating alone?

Gerda's Childhood in Germany Pages 5-12

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe how the Nazis came to power in Germany. What does the phrase "racially inferior" mean? (Page 7)

2. Examine the Nazi posters on page 7. How did the Nazis appeal to young Germans?

3. The author said that the citizens of Gerda's small community "looked the other way" at Jewish persecution. What does that phrase signify? (page 7)

4. How would you describe Gerda's childhood? In what ways is it similar/different than yours?

5. School should be a place where children learn without fear. In what ways do you agree or disagree with Gerda's parents' decision to send her to a Jewish school? (page 8)

6. What aspects of Kurt Mayer's story (page 9) are most disturbing to you? Why would the Nazis burn books? What is your response to book burning? How important are books in your life? How important are books to democracy?

7. What kind of man was Gerda's brother Fritz? Do you think he changed by being in a concentration camp? What did he mean when he wrote: "All children have the same value"? (page 10)

8. Describe the emotions the Katz family felt on the day of Gerda's departure. If you knew you were headed to safety would you be able to leave your family behind? (page 11)

9. As she was about to depart, Gerda's father "reassured Gerda that she would see her family again" even though he had no way of guaranteeing it. What is your reaction to this promise? (page 12)

Highly Recommended Activity-

Work on the *Three Stars in the Night Sky* side of our [Compare and Contrast Activity](#). This is also located on our One School, One Book Website- www.threestarsinthenightsky.weebly.com under activities Social Studies Connection.

Gerda's New Home in Seattle Pages 13-18

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of man was Gerda's brother Fritz? Do you think he changed by being in a concentration camp? What did he mean when he wrote: "All children have the same value"? (page 10)
2. Describe the emotions the Katz family felt on the day of Gerda's departure. If you knew you were headed to safety would you be able to leave your family behind? (page 11)
3. As she was about to depart, Gerda's father "reassured Gerda that she would see her family again" even though he had no way of guaranteeing it. What is your reaction to this promise? (page 12)
4. What is a "boarding house"? Is there anything comparable to a boarding house in your city?
5. Describe the importance of letters to Gerda.
6. The author notes Gerda's "emotional adjustment was even more daunting" than her physical adjustments to living in Seattle. What emotional problems do you believe were most challenging for Gerda?
7. How did Gerda respond to her parents' letters? Do you agree with her decision not to tell them "any bad news"?

Extension Activity:

Break up into small groups. Each group will develop a "dictionary" of words and phrases- and their definitions- used by people your age that might be useful for immigrant students to learn.

Escape to the Dominican Republic Pages 19-26

Discussion Questions:

1. Look up where Dominican Republic is on a map to get an understanding of where it is located.
2. Who was Rafael Trujillo and what role did he have in the Katz family's arrival in Dominican Republic?
3. For what purpose was the 1938 Evian Conference held? Discuss the reasons nations offered to justify their refusal to admit Jewish refugees.
4. The term "culture shock" refers to the deep confusion and disorientation people feel when they move from one country to another. In what ways did the Katz family suffer from "culture shock" when they moved to the Dominican Republic?
5. The Katz family tried to hold onto some of its German customs while in the Dominican Republic. What customs did they maintain? What customs do you think refugees coming to the United States today should maintain?
6. Fritz writes about the importance of education. Why is education so important to the Katz family?

Extension Activity:

Here is an example of a "Movietone News" from 1940. ([The Blitz Begins- Movietones](#)) The movie shares about the first attack the Germans had on London. This was the first of 57 consecutive nights the Germans attacked London.

How would you feel learning about your family from these short movie clips? There are other movietones that show graphic scenes from the concentration camps. Why do you think that people stood by, looked the other way and chose not to help?

Three Stars in the Night Sky Pages 29-34

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the following sentence mean: “A mother gives part of her heart when she sends a child abroad”? (Page 29)
2. The author titled her work **Three Stars in the Night Sky**. Why did she choose that phrase for the title of her book?
3. According to the Jewish tradition, the evening does not begin until one clearly sees three stars in the sky. How do you know when the night has begun?
4. The Japanese Internment- What were the consequences of Executive Order 9066? What lessons can you learn from this order about how the United States government treated minority groups during times of war? How can you compare and contrast how the Japanese Americans were treated vs. the Jews in Germany? (Page 30)
5. Of the photographs of Gerda on pages 32-34 which is your favorite? What emotions are sparked as you look through these photos?
6. What techniques does the author use to show readers how much time Gerda spent waiting to reunite with her parents?
7. Why couldn't Gerda's family obtain exit visas from the Dominican Republic?

Extension Activities-

- What does it mean to be labeled as an “enemy”? What does the term “enemy alien” mean? Should aliens be treated any differently during times of war? Examine Gerda's

“enemy alien” registration card on page 15. What is your opinion of the United States government requiring registration of aliens during times of war?

- Research the consequences of Executive Order 9066. Write a letter to the President of the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time. Provide your opinion of the relocation of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Pages 35-40 The Katz Family Reunited

Discussion Questions:

1. Have any of your family members been separated and then reunited? If so, describe the circumstances. What emotions did your family experience during the separation and reunion?
2. Describe Gerda's response when she first saw her parents after a separation of over two decades (page 37)
3. What kind of relationship do you think Gerda had with her parents after their arrival in Seattle? (page 37)
4. What happened to the Jews of Munqenberg who did not escape Nazi Germany? (page 38)
5. Describe the circumstances of Gerda's reunion with Edith Westerfeld Schumer.
6. How is it possible for two unrelated people to consider themselves family members? (In Gerda's case, she referred to Edith as "her sister.")
7. What does the author mean when she claims that Gerda's "childhood immigration and losses defined her"?

8. What are your feelings at the conclusion of **Three Stars in the Night Sky**.

****End of Book Activities will be listed on our One School, One Book website.****