

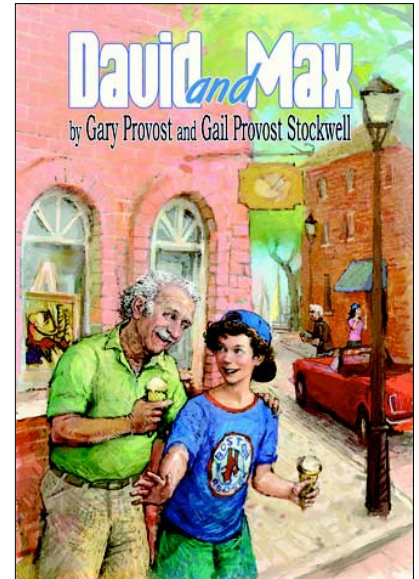
USING *DAVID AND MAX* TO INTRODUCE MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS TO HOLOCAUST STUDIES

A Complimentary Study Guide Developed by Holocaust Educator, Ann Miracle and adapted by the Jewish Publication Society

David and Max is the story of twelve-year-old David, a short-but-passionate basketball player, and his relationship with his grandfather, Max, a Holocaust survivor. Readers of this novel are introduced to the Holocaust as Max shares with David his heart-wrenching, horrific Holocaust memories and experiences.

Through guidance and discussion, *David and Max* readers will be encouraged to consider such moral values as truth, responsibility, and honesty and the concepts of diversity, prejudice, and human rights as they relate to the book, to their own lives, and to history. In this way, readers of *David and Max* learn *about* the Holocaust, and learn *from* the Holocaust.

“Max, a Holocaust survivor, and his grandson, David, share in lively adventures and deeply personal dialogues about core values as the past suddenly becomes intertwined with the present. David and Max is a compelling story for young readers.” – Ann Miracle, Holocaust Educator



OVERALL OBJECTIVES ARE FOR CHILDREN TO:

- Be introduced to the people and events associated with the Holocaust and, by identifying with the Jewish characters David and Max, to become emotionally invested in learning more about this period in history.
- Understand what it was that Max “survived” during the Holocaust-- (persecution, ghetto, mass murder, concentration camps, slave labor, starvation, disease, death march, etc.).
- Feel emotionally bonded with David and Max so that the Holocaust’s millions of victims are remembered not as “statistics” but rather as living, breathing “individuals”—real people who existed, with families and friends, hopes and dreams of their own. Innocent people who were brutally murdered. 12 million individuals. Six million Jews. People like Max’s parents and grandparents, brother and sisters, cousins and friends. Klare’s family. B.B.’s entire family.
- Along with David, develop a deep desire to understand the contributing forces behind the genocide. . . forces that *allowed* such a nightmare to occur.
- Research these “forces”: Hitler’s power/Antisemitism/economic problems/break-through technology/propaganda/bureaucracy. (Ma explains these as dangerous weather systems, all gathering at the same time -- tsunami/earthquake/hurricane/tornado).

- Understand the different roles that human beings played in this tragedy: perpetrator, bystander, victim, rescuer, survivor.

ADDITIONAL GOALS:

- For students to re-examine their own prejudices and develop an ability to think critically about human behavior—their own as well as others; past, present and future.
- For students to demonstrate a desire to behave morally and a willingness to take a stand against prejudice and injustice, by speaking out as an individual or as part of a group—in the classroom, at home, and in society.
- For students to learn the value of resolving differences through peaceful rather than violent methods.
- For students to develop a shared vision of a world in which people are embraced for their similarities and appreciated for their differences.
- For students to recognize that “knowledge is power,” as Max teaches David; the power of knowledge is that it teaches us to use the lessons from the past to shape a better future. It teaches us to be on the alert and to act in the face of a gathering “storm.”

HOLOCAUST STUDY POINTS FOR YOU TO KEEP IN MIND:

“In the study of the Holocaust, it is essential to remember ‘who’ we lost in this historic period. First, we need to rescue the individual, then the family and then the history. If we look only at the ‘victim’ in the Holocaust, we deny the person he or she was. If we look only at the ‘survivor,’ we neglect those who did not survive. If we look only at the ‘perpetrator,’ we negate the ‘righteous’ who risked their lives to save others; and if we ignore the ‘ones who stood by and watched,’ we too become bystanders. If we do not look at a life in context with all of its aspects, we then fail to educate.”

--- Ann Miracle, Holocaust Educator

1. Human beings, regardless of perceived or actual differences, are fundamentally alike.
2. To avoid stereotyping, it is important to understand that diversity exists even within a specific community. (For example, Jews observe their beliefs and traditions in different ways.)
3. Communities contain the potential for acceptance and/or rejection of their members, and study of the Holocaust provides a context for exploring the consequences of prejudice, apathy, use and abuse of power.
4. Families within communities performed important functions that helped many. Some people risked their lives and the lives of their family members to help rescue Jews.
5. Study of the Holocaust provides a context for exploring the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations and/or policies of genocide.
6. During the Holocaust, people had roles that were either assumed or thrust upon them. (Victim, perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer.)

7. Bystanders during the Holocaust closed their hearts and minds to the suffering of others. Bystanders exist today. Children can learn about the risks and rewards of taking action against injustice.
8. Students can empathize with people who have survived hardship by listening to the stories of those who survived the Holocaust.
9. Children can reassess their own personal values and behaviors as well as those of others—in the classroom, at home, and out in the larger world.
10. Knowledge gives children the power to recognize signs of a gathering storm. Children can be taught to learn from the past, take action in the present, and protect their future.
11. While it involved millions of people, every story connected with the Holocaust is an individual one.

Ten-Question Study Sheet for *David and Max*

These questions are designed to facilitate discussion, and assess student's comprehension of the story and its relation to the Holocaust.

- 1. What does David's mother mean when she says, "No matter where on the planet an elf is born, that elf is still related to the chief elf?"**
 - *Why do members of the human family kill other members?*
- 2. Describe what emotions you think David experienced when his name did not appear on the basketball league list.**
 - *What does it mean to be accepted/rejected?*
 - *What are some of the similarities and differences between Max and David's experiences of being excluded?*
 - *What means did the Nazis use to mark and exclude the Jews?*
- 3. Why did David's grandfather not tell him about his experience during the Holocaust?**
 - *Why did David's family conceal the truth about his grandmother?*
 - *Why did Candy conceal the truth about her father?*
- 4. How/why do you think the relationship changed between David and his grandfather?**
 - *Why was it fascinating for David to imagine Max as a kid?*
 - *How does David see his grandfather after their conversation?*
- 5. How did hearing his grandfather's story change David's view of the Holocaust?**
 - *How has your thinking about the Holocaust changed?*
 - *What happens when we understand that "six million people" were really six million individuals?*
- 6. Are there any comparisons to be made between life 60 years ago and today?**
 - *What are some of the similarities and what are some of the differences?*
 - *What are some of the headlines we read or hear about today that relate to the issues in this book?*
- 7. Why was it important for David to tell Candy about Rachel?**
 - *How did Candy react when she found out about Pinky?*
 - *Can you make any comparisons with those who have lost family members in the Holocaust?*
- 8. Why did B.B. hide from his past?**
 - *How was B.B.'s way of dealing with his experiences different from Max's coping methods?*
- 9. What was passed on to David after his grandfather's death?**

- *How do you think his life was changed?*
- *Why is it important to remember the past?*

10. What opportunities do we have to care for and repair the world?

- *Why was it important for Max to let B.B. know he was forgiven?*
- *What actions can we take to reduce discrimination in our home, school, and neighborhood?*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO ASK OF THEMSELVES:

- 1. How does learning about the Holocaust help me become a more responsible person in my relationships with other people?**
- 2. How can my study of the Holocaust help me become a more responsible participant in the world around me and the wider society in which I participate?**
- 3. What does my study of the Holocaust encourage me to face about myself that can help me become a better human being?**
- 4. How can I explore the following two statements?**
 - **Knowing the history of the Holocaust is not enough.**
 - **Not knowing the history of what happened during the Holocaust is irresponsible.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Analyze how prejudice is formed.
2. Where do we still see signs of discrimination? (Ask students to look for current stories in the news.)
3. Evaluate the impact of prejudice on individuals, groups, and society.
4. Develop a personal plan to reduce bigotry and prejudice within yourself and others.
5. Find at least five Yiddish words used in *David and Max*, and create a new sentence for each word to illustrate the word's meaning.
6. Organize a trip to a Holocaust Museum.

PERSONAL HISTORY PROJECTS

1. Research your own family's background. Include historical events and create a timeline.
2. Conduct an interview a family member who is over 60 years old. Make an audio or video recording of the interview.
3. Look back at the history of your home town or city (over the past 100 years). How has it changed? Write a report or create a display of this history.

4. Write an essay explaining why it is important to remember the Holocaust/Shoah.
5. Read and discuss the following words of Pastor Martin Niemoeller, and have the students substitute words or create their own version of the poem.

*“In Germany, they came first for the Communists,
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews,
And I didn’t speak because I wasn’t a Jew.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists,
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics,
And I didn’t speak up because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me,
And by that time no one was left to speak up.”*
-- Pastor Martin Niemoeller

RESOURCES

Yad Vashem: www.yadvashem.org
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org

ABOUT ANN MIRACLE

Since 1981, Ann Marie (Spielman) Miracle, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been serving her hometown’s Jewish community. For ten years, Ann taught at Temple Israel Early Learning Center, and for 15 years at Heritage Academy Jewish Day School. During the years 2000 – 2006, Ann was actively involved in the Partnership 2000 Educational Bridge with Israel. And in 2004, she trained at the International School for Holocaust Education at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Ann has served as Holocaust Educator for the Tulsa Council for Holocaust Education, and as a board member for the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art and Holocaust Center. Currently, Ann is living in Geinhausen, Germany, where her husband’s work has taken the family. Ann teaches English as a Second Language for Rose College, continues her studies through Yad Vashem, and is conducting personal research on the Holocaust.