

Recommended Reading List for Children

Holocaust and European Jewish History

An Annotated Bibliography

Our philosophy is that the Holocaust is a sensitive topic that should be taught in a thoughtful and responsible way. It is our strong recommendation that young students should not be introduced to Holocaust history, as the content can be difficult for them to process.

We suggest that young readers explore the vibrant Jewish culture and traditions that existed before the Holocaust and exist today. Students in elementary school are also encouraged to read books with themes present in Holocaust education – tolerance, “the Other,” respect, diversity, etc. – that do not yet delve into the violence of Holocaust history.

* Available to read at the Tauber Holocaust Library. Please call 415-449-3717 to make an appointment.

NOTE: The suggested reading ages below reflect the above philosophy. As a result, these suggestions may not reflect the publishers’ suggested reading level.

Way Too Many Latkes

by Linda Glaser; illustrated by Aleksandar Zolotic

Suggested reading age: 3-8 (grades Preschool-3)

Faigel makes the best Hanukkah latkes in Chelm, but somehow one year she forgets how to make them! She sends her husband, Schmuel, to ask the rabbi for help. And in Chelm, the village of fools, this becomes a recipe for disaster!

A cute holiday story set in a fictional pre-war Jewish village, this book is a fun way to introduce young readers to Jewish holidays. With Yiddish-punctuated dialogue and beautiful illustrations, the whole family can enjoy this lighthearted tale.

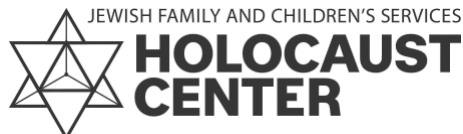
Here is the World: A Year of Jewish Holidays

by Lesléa Newman; illustrated by Susan Gal

Suggested reading age: 3-8 (grades Preschool-3)

A joyous celebration of the Jewish holidays throughout the year for young children. Beginning with the weekly observance of Shabbat, readers join a family through the holidays and the corresponding seasons. Through each poem and beautiful illustration, the joy and significance of each holiday come to life. In addition to the narrative text, there is a description of each holiday in the back matter along with an easy craft or recipe.

Although it is not Holocaust-related, this book is a great way to introduce young readers to Jewish holidays and culture. For any age group, it is important to know about and celebrate vibrant Jewish culture, both before and after the Holocaust.



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A Bear Called Paddington

by Michael Bond

Suggested reading age: 6-9 (grades 1-4)

The Brown family first meets Paddington at the train station, where he sits alone with a tag around his neck that says "Please look after this bear." Having come from 'Darkest Peru,' Paddington must adjust to a new way of life and a new family.

The Paddington series is not strictly related to the Holocaust; however, it was inspired by Jewish refugee children fleeing the Nazis on the Kindertransport. It is a suitable way to introduce young children to refugee stories, which feature prominently in many Holocaust experiences.

Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*

by Eve Bunting

Suggested reading age: 6-9 (grades 1-4)

An allegory of the Holocaust in which the forest animals are taken away by the non-descript Terrible Things. This unique introduction to the Holocaust is a good way to teach children to be upstanders.

Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust

by Loic Dauvillier; illustrated by Marc Lizano; inked by Greg Salsedo

Suggested reading age: 8-10 (grades 3-5)

Dounia finds herself suddenly shunned by teachers and classmates the first time she wears to school the obligatory yellow star identifying her as Jewish. After the police take her parents away, neighbors hide Dounia in their apartment. When that becomes too dangerous, Dounia escapes to a farm in the French countryside, where she stays for the duration of the war.

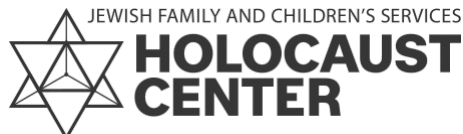
This graphic novel details the experience of a hidden child. It does a good job at following Dounia's story without going into the more horrific details of the Holocaust. Please note: Dounia's father does not survive, which can be upsetting to the child.

Brundibar*

Retold by Tony Kushner; pictures by Maurice Sendak; after the opera by Hans Krása and Adolf Hoffmeister

Suggested reading age: 9-11 (grades 4-6)

Based on the opera performed by the children in the Terezin concentration camp, *Brundibar* tells the story of two children trying to earn money to buy milk for their ailing mother. When the villain Brundibar chases them away, they receive the assistance of three talking animals and three hundred school children that help to defeat him.



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This tale is illustrated in the typical Sendak style, and on the surface is a colorful tale; however it is also a story about surviving tyranny. There are visual references to the Holocaust throughout, including yellow stars and scenes from the Terezin Ghetto. Parents and teachers should be prepared to answer questions about this imagery when sharing this book with children.

Benno and the Night of Broken Glass

by Meg Wiviott; illustrated by Josee Bisailon

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

A neighborhood cat observes the changes in German and Jewish families in Berlin during the period leading up to Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. This cat's-eye view introduces the Holocaust to children in a gentle way that can open discussion of this period.

A Tree in the Courtyard

by Jeff Gottesfeld; illustrated by Peter McCarty

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

Told from the perspective of the tree outside Anne Frank's window, this book introduces her story in a gentle way to a young audience. It also includes information about the real chestnut tree that once stood outside the Franks' hiding place, and where its saplings have been planted around the world.

The Whispering Town

by Jennifer Elvgren; illustrated by Fabio Santomauro

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

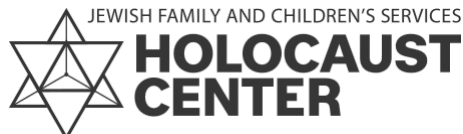
Residents of a small town in Nazi-occupied Denmark work together to provide a hidden Jewish mother and son safe passage to neutral Sweden. This book is good for younger readers, as it does not go into graphic detail. Nazi guards appear throughout the story, so parents/teachers will likely need to explain who the Nazis were to readers that have no prior knowledge.

Anne Frank*

by Josephine Poole and illustrations by Angela Barrett

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

The story of Anne Frank, told through a simple narrative. Includes a chronology and brief history of what happened to the diary after the war. This illustrated book is a good introduction to the story of Anne Frank for younger children, as the Diary of Anne Frank should not be read until middle school.



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The Doll with the Yellow Star *

by Yona Zeldis McDonough and illustrated by Kimberly Bulcken Root

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

When France falls to Germany at the start of World War II, nine-year-old Claudine must leave her beloved parents and friends to stay with relatives in America, accompanied by her doll, Violette.

This story tells the story of emigration and loss. It does a very good job at following Claudine's complete story without illustrating the mature details of the Holocaust. Please note: Claudine's mother does not survive and that can be upsetting to the child. This would be a great book to read together as a family or a class.

The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*

by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond

Suggested reading age: 10-12 (grades 5-7)

A biography of famed authors Margret and H.A. Rey, authors of Curious George, and their remarkable escape from France to the United States during World War II. The book includes illustrations and photographs of the Reys and a partial bibliography of books by Margret and H.A. Rey.

This book follows the history of the familiar Curious George author, who was well known and loved by children. It tells the story of flight and emigration, but does not go into the horrors of the Holocaust. This is a great book for the family to read together.

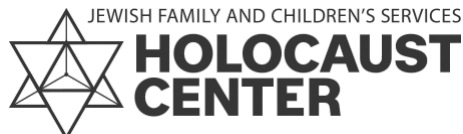
The Number on My Grandfather's Arm*

by David Adler

Suggested reading age: 11-13 (grades 6-8)

A conversation between a grandfather and his granddaughter regarding the number tattooed on his arm leads him to explain how he received it in a Nazi concentration camp. The text is accompanied by photographs of the granddaughter and grandfather in addition to photographs from World War II.

This book is written from the perspective of a young girl and might be a helpful resource if the Holocaust is part of your family history. It is written in the style (font size and reading level) for young readers; however, the content of the story contains mature subject matter, as it broadly talks about the extermination of the Jewish people and great loss.



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Appel is Forever: A Child's Memoir*

by Suzanne Mehler Whiteley

Suggested reading age: 11-13 (grades 6-8)

The author describes her experiences during the Holocaust between the ages of five and nine, in Amsterdam, as a prisoner in the Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps, and eventually

in the United States.

This book serves as a great memoir for a middle school student to read on their own. However, the book does cover the details of the concentration (not death) camps. This should not be the student's first introduction to the deportation and internment of the Jews.

Clara's Story*

by Clara Isaacman

Suggested reading age: 11-13 (grades 6-8)

The author describes her family's experiences during the three years they spent in hiding in Antwerp, Belgium, during World War II. This book serves as a great memoir for a middle school student to read on their own. It is similar to the Diary of Anne Frank, but with more historical background.

Hana's Suitcase: A True Story*

by Karen Levine

Suggested reading age: 11-13 (grades 6-8)

A biography of Hana Brady, a Czech girl who died in the Holocaust. The story is told in alternating chapters that include an account of how the curator of a Japanese Holocaust center learned about Hana's life after her suitcase ended up at the center.

This book is written in the style (font size and reading level) for young readers, however the content of the story contains mature subject matter, as the book covers deportation to Auschwitz and death.

