

**Children's Literature for Teaching about the Holocaust (& Related Themes)
Annotated Bibliography K-5**

K-2/3

Bunting, Eve. *So Far from the Sea.*

A somber picturebook in which a Japanese American family returns to the place where the father was interred as a young boy during WW2. This is an important, oft overlooked, part of US history.

---. *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust.*

This picturebook features animal characters living peacefully in the forest until the Terrible Things come and begin taking groups of creatures away one by one. It is based on Martin Niemöller: "First they came for the Socialists ..." This book encourages young readers to not be bystanders.

Cali, Davide and Serge Bloch. *Enemy: A Book about Peace.*

This book features two soldiers on opposing sides who contemplate the senselessness of their ongoing fight against one another. It highlights the ways in which countries and militaries dehumanize the "enemy" to sustain war. The soldiers realize they have much more in common than they were made to believe.

Collins, Suzanne. *Year of the Jungle: Memories from the Homefront.*

A picturebook by the author of *The Hunger Games* series in which she recalls when her father went to Vietnam to fight in the war. Through the focalization of six-year-old Suzy, young readers learn gradually about the realities of war in Vietnam and its effects on soldiers and families, even those who return home.

Dauvillier, Loic. *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust.*

In this graphic novel for young readers, a grandmother recounts the story of her being hidden by neighbors and friends in Paris after her parents were taken to concentration camps. It shows early discrimination against Jews, family separation, helpers, and intergenerational memory.

Del Rizzo, Suzanne. *My Beautiful Birds.*

This brightly colored, heavily textured picturebook introduces young readers to the plight of refugees fleeing Syria's current civil war while remaining hopeful about the future.

Eggers, Dave and Shawn Harris. *What Can a Citizen Do?*

This book introduces young readers to all the important ways one can be an engaged citizen. It portrays a diverse society full of differences where people work together and look out for one another to facilitate meaningful social change.

Elvgren, Jennifer. *The Whispering Town.*

The muted colors in this picturebook create its somber tone, but the story is one of helpers. The Danish fishing village works together to help their Jewish residents find their way safely to boats so they can escape Nazi persecution.

Hausfater, Rachel. *The Little Boy Star: An Allegory of the Holocaust.*

An introductory note from David A. Adler explains the contexts of WW2 and the Holocaust for young readers. The boy's star serves as a symbol of humanity and hope during the darkest times.

Herzog, Brad. *Wis for Welcome: A Celebration of America's Diversity.*

An ABC book that moves beyond token diversity and celebrates the vast number of cultures and people who make up the US, including a story about the Jewish man who wrote "God Bless America."

Hoestlandt, Jo. *Star of Fear, Star of Hope.*

This picturebook is from the perspective of a gentile girl who begins to question why her best friend, who is Jewish, is so afraid and being treated badly now that the Nazis have occupied France.

Hood, Susan. *Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World.*

Along with the stories of females like Ruby Bridges, Malala Yousafzai, and Pura Belpre, this picture book introduces readers to Jacqueline and Eileen Nearne who resisted Nazism and served as secret agents during WW2.

Innocenti, Roberto. *Rose Blanche.*

This gorgeously illustrated picturebook features a young German girl who wanders into the woods and finds a concentration camp full of Jews. She begins taking food to them until one day she is accidentally caught in the cross fire. One of the few books to depict child death, the sensitivity with which the story is told distances young readers from trauma and ends with hope.

Johnston, Tony. *The Harmonica.*

When a young Jewish boy and his parents are sent to different concentration camps, he plays the harmonica his father gave him to lift the spirits of the prisoners. Music was a form of resistance and holding onto Jewish culture.

Miller, David Lee. *The Cat Who Lived with Anne Frank.*

This is an early introduction to Anne Frank and her family and their lives in hiding told through the perspective of the cat who lived with them in the Annexe.

Nagara, Innosanto. *A is for Activist.*

A fun, brightly-colored alphabet book featuring human rights values like E for equal rights and P for peaceful protests. It features an array of characters from all ages, ethnicities, and races partaking in activism to make the world more equitable.

---. *Counting on Community.*

Another brightly-colored book for young readers featuring all the ways neighbors come together to create an inclusive community through sports, food, and music.

Oppenheimer, Shulamith Levey. *The Lily Cupboard: A Story of the Holocaust.*

A young girl has to be separated from her parents so she can hide from the Nazis when they occupy Holland.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Butterfly.*

This story features a young girl in hiding in France. She befriends the young girl who lives in the house where she has been hiding in the basement and when they are discovered, their families have to flee for safety.

Russo, Marisabina. *I Will Come Back for You: A Family in Hiding During World War II.*

This family story is told by a grandmother to her granddaughter about her childhood when she lived happily in Rome, Italy with her parents and brother. When Italy joined Germany in the war, the father is taken and the children and mother go into hiding. It is a story of loss, helpers, immigration, and reunification.

Sanders, Rob. *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights.*

This alphabet book highlights various ways young people can be involved in positive social transformation and highlights key figures throughout the historical struggle for human rights including Gandhi, MLK Jr., and Colin Kapernick.

Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey.*

Exceptionally illustrated story of a family forced to flee their homeland due to war, which is represented as a blackness that covers the pages. It introduces many tropes of displacement literature such as family loss, people smugglers, and crossing oceans, but it remains hopeful and encourages reflection on why borders divide human beings.

Seuss. *Horton Hears a Who!*

A fun story about a loveable elephant who hears the voices of Whos living on a speck. When others try to destroy the speck because they don't hear the Whos, Horton refuses to allow it and fights to protect them. This book is about our responsibility to protect and the importance of using one's voice.

---. *The Sneetches.*

This book allegorically highlights how arbitrary differences are used to divide people and create social hierarchies. The symbol of the yellow star on some Sneetches bellies directly links to the Star of David Jews were forced to wear and the book shows how the star doesn't change our common humanity.

---. *Yertle the Turtle.*

Though humorous, this book makes readers think carefully about unchecked power and why some people think they deserve to be on top while others suffer. When Yertle, the king, refuses to respond to the complaints of the turtles upon whose backs he sits, Mack brings his tower crumbling down. The book highlights the importance of standing up for those whose rights are not being upheld and bringing down fascist leaders.

Shem-Tov, Tami and Rachella Sandbank. *A Queen in Jerusalem.*

This story takes place leading up to the Jewish holiday Purim and introduces young readers to the man who established Bezalel, an art school in Jerusalem. It's a celebration of Jewish culture and contributions to society.

Temple, Kate and Jol Temple and Terri Rose Baynton. *Room on our Rock.*

A truly innovative book that is two different versions of responses to asylum seekers and refugees. Read front to back, the book suggests that the seals are not welcome on this rock; however, reading the book back to front shows a complete change in attitude - one where those forced to flee their homes are welcomed.

Wiviott, Meg. *Benno and the Night of Broken Glass.*

This picturebook highlights the events of Kristallnacht during which coordinated pogroms destroyed Jewish homes and businesses across German-occupied land. Set in Berlin, the story is told through a cat's perspective to distance young readers from the horrors of the event.

Wild, Margaret. *The Treasure Box.*

The pastels colors and collage illustrations portray a young boy and his father who must flee their home due to war. They bury a box that contains a book about the history of their home, and after the war, the boy returns to the book to his town.

3-5

Gratz, Alan. *Allies.*

This gripping novel tells the story of D-Day and follows the protagonist, Samira, a young French girl, through her involvement with the underground French resistance. It shows personal choices, child agency, and strategies of resistance.

Prisoner B-3087.

Based on a true story, Yanek is a Jewish boy who lives in Poland when Nazis take over. He has lost his family and is captured and put into a concentration camp. He must survive despite the merciless treatment he endures. This book highlights how Jews were treated in the camps and the endurance of the human spirit.

---. *Refugee.*

This historical fiction novel follows three parallel narratives set in different places at important historical junctures: the Holocaust, the 1980 Havana riots, and the current Syrian civil war. The writing keeps readers engaged as they learn about the factors that cause families to flee their homes for safety only to face choiceless choices and uncertain futures.

---. *Resist.*

This novel follows from *Allies*, and readers dig deeper into Samira's story as she journeys through Nazi-occupied France to try to find and rescue her mother.

Gleitzman, Morris. *Once.*

This work of historical fiction is set in during the Holocaust where a young Jewish boy who has been hidden in a Catholic orphanage flees to find his parents and instead finds himself running and hiding for his life and the life of Zelda, a young girl whose Nazi parents were killed by the Polish resistance.

---. *Then.*

Felix and Zelda continue their struggle for survival after jumping from a train on its way to the camps. They find refuge with a Polish woman who allows them to stay in her home. Felix learns he has a favorite novelist in common with a Hitler Youth boy, but it does not end well for everyone. This novel has themes of family, hiding in plain sight, helpers, resistance, and loss.

Kerr, Judith. *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*.

This is the true story of the author's life when her family is forced to flee their home and hide from Nazis. It is the first in a trilogy the author wrote to try to explain her own childhood to her children. She faces the identity struggles that accompany displacement.

Lobel, Anita. *No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War*.

This is the author's account of her own childhood when, as a five-year-old, she and her sibling were forced to flee into hiding with their nanny when the Nazis invaded Poland. She immigrated to the US as a teenager and has since worked as a children's book author.

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*.

This novel showcases the friendship between a gentile and a Jewish girl living in Denmark. Annemarie's family hides her best friend, Ellen, and eventually help her escape. The novel highlights the Danish resistance and tells the story of how the nation collaborated to help more than seven thousand Jews get to Sweden when the Nazis invaded.

Marsden, John and Shaun Tan. *The Rabbits*.

This bold, detailed picturebook is an allegory of the invasion and subsequent colonization of Australia by the British. The use of animal characters distances young readers from more traumatic aspects of colonialism but can spark conversations about land rights, imperialism, war, and environmental degradation.

Matas, Carol. *Daniel's Story*.

This book portrays the drastic change imposed by the Nazis on Jews living in Germany. Daniel and his family are forced from Frankfurt to the Lodz ghetto in Poland and then to Auschwitz. The permanent exhibit for young people at the USHMM is based on this book.

Moskowitz-Sweet, Gloria. *It Rained Warm Bread: Moishe Moskowitz's Story of Hope*.

Based on the Holocaust experience of the author's father, this story follows Moishe from Poland to the labor and concentration camps across which his family is scattered. It is a story of fear, kindness, hope, and survival.

Palacio, R. J. *White Bird*.

From the author of the *Wonder* book series, this story focuses on the early life of Julian's Grandmere who was forced into hiding in France when the Nazis invaded.

van der Molen, Janny. *Outside It's War: Anne Frank and Her World*.

This illustrated book provides contexts to *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. Where the *Diary* is limited to the Frank family's experiences in hiding, this book explains what was going on beyond the Annexe while still quoting from Anne's diary and sharing details about her life.

Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

In this timeslip narrative, a young Jewish girl is transported to the concentration camps where her grandmother was imprisoned. The book has themes of Jewish identity and why the past is always a topic of conversation.