

Strategies for teaching *The Children of Willesden Lane*

(by Amy Spinks)

Goal / Purpose: (As created by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL)

- Introduce students to the study of World War II and the Holocaust.
 - Examine powerful historical themes related to identity, moral responsibility, courage, survival and resilience
 - Help students connect these themes to their own lives and to issues in today's society.
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Tips and Ideas

Only 2-3 days to spend on this topic ?

- Form student discussion groups and have pertinent questions as a guide. Spend one day in group discussions and one day in class discussions. Follow with project.
- Assign students to chapter designated reading circles and have them prepare a mini lesson. Then, allow them 6-8 minutes to “teach” the pertinent information to the rest of the class.
- Prepare essay questions using specific passages and have them write about the reading.
- Add a day by using a passage as a grammar lesson!! (i.e.: Circle the verbs, etc.)

Think you can get 5 days? Consider pairing it with your Civil Rights Unit.

- Use the Southern Poverty Guide as your main resource.
- Begin the Unit with a Google Earth Search of 243 Willesden Lane.
- Do an in-class project in small groups allowing each group to create a Powerpoint presentation of their groups assigned portion of the book. Or have them create a photo board that tells the story.
- As is mentioned in the 2-day suggestions, have them form chapter-specific reading circles and prepare mini lessons using skits, music, and poetry.

No Time Constraints to follow? You have hit the jackpot!!

- Consider the Facing History Teacher's Guide as your main resource.
- Have students learn an overview of the history of the Holocaust by giving them topics that coincide with the events of the book. Have them research and create mini lessons to “teach”. Assign the book in portions and as you come to the historical event, have students present their mini lessons.
- Teach the pre-reading exercise “Universe of Obligation.”
- Talk about Refugees/Outsiders/Outcasts.
- Watch part or all of “Into the Arms of Strangers.”
- Read the first chapter aloud to grab students' interest. Then assign the book in chunks as homework/in reading circles/etc.
- Include musical examples in the introduction and/or closing.
- Allow students to read memoirs/journal entries from other child Holocaust victims/survivors (ie: *Salvaged Pages*, *Diary of a Young Girl* (Ann Frank), *My Dog, Lala*, etc.) – write comparison/contrast essays.

Link to all resources mentioned is provided at Birmingham Holocaust Education Center Website:
<http://www.bhamholocausteducation.org/the-children-of-willesden-lane.htm>