

**Essential Questions:**

- Why did many Jewish parents choose to send their children into hiding during the Holocaust? What factors influenced this difficult decision?
- What challenges did hidden children face in terms of their safety, identity, and emotional well-being while living in hiding?
- What role did non-Jewish individuals and families play in protecting Jewish children during the Holocaust, and why did they risk their own lives to help?
- How can the stories of hidden children help us understand the importance of family, survival, and compassion in times of crisis?

**Subjects**

ELA  
Social Studies

**Grades**

5-8

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Students will understand the concept of "hidden children" during the Holocaust, particularly through the personal story of Maud Dahme.
- Students will analyze the emotional and psychological challenges faced by hidden children, including the impact of living under false identities and in hiding.
- Students will explore the decisions made by Maud Dahme's parents to protect her and her sister, considering the risks and sacrifices involved.
- Students will reflect on the role of rescuers during the Holocaust and discuss why some non-Jews chose to hide Jewish children at great personal risk.
- Students will investigate the importance of moral responsibility in making choices.
- Students will evaluate the moral and ethical choices individuals and groups made when deciding whether or not to help Jews.

**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT FOR THIS LESSON**

In this lesson, students will learn about the experiences of hidden children, a term used to describe Jewish children who survived the Holocaust by hiding, either physically or by changing their identities.

There were two main types of hiding for children– physical hiding and hiding in the open. Physical hiding required that the person hiding was totally concealed from the outside world. Anne Frank and her family, for example, managed to physically hide by living in a small apartment that could only be accessed through a secret door behind a bookshelf. Hiding in the open meant that the person had to assume a different identity. To do this, children had to assume new names, dates, family histories, and often had to learn the practices of Christianity. Both types of hiding were extremely difficult, and the fear of being detected was something that hidden children and their rescuers had to face every day.

Thousands of children were hidden during the Holocaust, and each has a unique story. *Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom* tells the story of Maud Dahme, a six-year-old Dutch girl who had to leave the comfort of her family and home to find help and safety in the arms of strangers. As a young victim of the Holocaust, her only hope for survival was as a “hidden child.” This story reveals how Maud and her sister Rita were hidden from the Nazis and saved from the death camps by various Christian upstanders who risked their lives by doing so.

**EXTERNAL LINKS**

- Facing History and Ourselves [Preparing Students for Difficult Conversations](#)
- USHMM [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)
- Echoes and Reflections [Timeline of the Holocaust](#)
- Chocolate, A Taste of Freedom [Teacher's Guide](#)

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Selection of images from *Chocolate, the Taste of Freedom*
- Copies of excerpts from *Chocolate, the Taste of Freedom*

**LESSON SEQUENCE****WARM-UP &  
DISCUSSION**

Display a selection of images of Maud and Rita during the time they were in hiding - these can be found in *Chocolate, the Taste of Freedom*. Have students discuss the following questions, either in small groups or as a class:

- What do you see in the photographs? Describe the setting, activities, etc.
- What comes to mind when thinking about the concept of childhood?
- What do you think children need to feel comfortable and safe?
- To what extent do the photos look like “normal” photographs of childhood?

After discussing the questions above, reveal the caption for each of the pictures, explaining to your students that the children in these photos were actually children who were being hidden from the Nazis. Ask the students the following question:

- Does knowing that these children were separated from their parents and hidden with strangers change the way we view the photos? Why?

**MINI LESSON**

Children were especially vulnerable to Nazi persecution. As many as 1.5 million Jewish children were murdered or died at the hands of Nazi officials or their collaborators. The vast majority of Jews never went into hiding since it meant leaving behind relatives, risking immediate and severe punishment, and the inability to find an individual or family willing to provide refuge.

Once the decision was made to go into hiding, parents, children, and rescuers faced a lot of challenges. Life in hiding was always dangerous. The Nazis made a concerted effort to locate Jews in hiding. German officials and their collaborators harshly penalized those who aided Jews and offered rewards to individuals willing to turn in Jews.

Life for children in hiding was very different depending on their situation. Some children could pretend to be non-Jews and live more openly, but they had to be very careful. If anyone discovered they were Jewish, they and their helpers could be in serious danger. They had to hide their Jewish identity from neighbors, classmates, and even police.

Other children couldn't pretend to be non-Jews and had to stay hidden in places like cellars or attics. They had to stay quiet, sometimes not moving for hours, because any sound could make people suspicious and bring the police.

After the war, many Jewish parents spent years searching for their children. Some were lucky and found them with the people who had helped protect them. But many parents had to use newspapers or search services to try to find their children. Sadly, for many families, the search ended in heartbreak, as they learned that their child had been killed or was missing. Hidden children sometimes found that their families were gone, and they had no one to go back to.

Discussion Prompts:

- Why do you think most Jewish families did not choose to go into hiding during the Holocaust? What were the dangers and challenges they faced in making that decision?
  - What are some of the risks hidden children faced while trying to stay safe? Why was it so important for them to keep their Jewish identity a secret?
  - How do you think living in hiding might have affected children mentally and emotionally? What kind of fears or challenges might they have experienced each day?
  - After the war, many parents spent years searching for their children. How do you think that search would have felt for both the parents and the children? What would it have been like to find out that your family was gone?
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**WHOLE CLASS  
DISCUSSION**

Read pages 12-17 of *Chocolate, the Taste of Freedom* as a class, explaining the decision Maud's parents had to make to send their children away for their own safety and how they explained this to the girls.

Discussion Prompts:

- Why do you think Maud Dahme's parents decided to send her and her sister into hiding during the Holocaust? What risks might they have considered, and what challenges do you think they faced in making such a decision?
- How do you think being sent into hiding would have affected Maud and other children in similar situations? What emotions or feelings might they have experienced?
- Maud Dahme's story is an example of how children had to live in secrecy and fear during the Holocaust. How do you think the experiences of hidden children like Maud shaped their lives after the war? What kinds of long-term effects might this have had on their sense of safety and identity?
- Imagine being in Maud's situation. How do you think you would have felt if your parents asked you to leave your home and live in hiding to stay safe? How would you have reacted to being separated from your family for an extended period?

**ACTIVE  
ENGAGEMENT**

Have students independently read pages 20-27 in *Chocolate, the Taste of Freedom* discussing the new identities that Maud and her sister had to adopt.

Discussion Prompts:

- Maud and Rita had to adopt new identities while in hiding. Why do you think it was necessary for them to pretend to be someone else? How did this affect their sense of who they were during this time?
- How do you think Maud and Rita felt about having to hide their true identity as Jewish girls? What challenges might they have faced in maintaining this secret, especially when interacting with others?

- In the story, Maud and Rita are helped by non-Jews who choose to risk their safety to protect them. What do you think motivated these individuals to make such a dangerous decision? What qualities do you think these helpers must have had?
- Imagine you were in Maud and Rita's shoes, needing to hide and take on a new identity. How do you think you would have handled the fear and confusion of being in hiding? What kinds of traits or actions would have helped you survive?

## EXIT TICKET

Display the following quote from psychologist Ervin Staub:

*"Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren't born. Very often the rescuers made only a small commitment at the start—to hide someone for a day or two. But once they had taken that step, they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps. What starts as mere willingness becomes intense involvement."*

- What do you think might have motivated non-Jewish people to hide Jewish children?
- What are some qualities that upstanders have?
- Do you agree with Staub's assertion that heroes begin their journey taking small steps? What actions can we take today when we witness someone being bullied or discriminated against?

## INTERDISCIPLINARY & EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Watch [The Hidden Child](#) documentary on Maud's life
- Have students create their own [identity chart](#) to help students consider the many factors that shape their own identity and that of groups, nations, and historical and literary figures.
- [Rescue and Survival in Hiding](#) USHMM lesson for grades 6-8 that focuses on the role that everyday objects play in our understanding of historical events. Using short videos about artifacts and photographs in the Museum's collections, students learn about the experiences of children and families who survived in hiding during the Holocaust, and they reflect upon how everyday objects

may reveal aspects of their own experiences to future historians.

- [Survival in Hiding](#) Facing History reading allows students to gain insight into the experiences of Jews in hiding during the Holocaust by reading entries from the diary of teenager Otto Wolf.
  - [Survival and Resistance: Hidden Children of the Holocaust](#) lesson from the Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education of North Carolina
  - [“The Hiding Place”](#) Curriculum and Resources from the Holocaust Museum of Houston - can be used in ELA and Art classes
  - [“Imagining A Better World”](#) Artwork created by hidden child [Nelly Toll](#)
  - [Why Did Some Choose to Rescue?](#) iWitness activity focusing on the choices individuals made in deciding to participate in rescue efforts with a special focus on the story of Anne Frank.
  - [Stories of Rescue](#) printable posters from USHMM that can be used for a gallery walk/digital analysis activity
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