



## LESSON PLAN: The Experiences and Fate of Children During the Holocaust

**1** Introduce students to **Vladka Meed (bio)** and **Roman Kent (bio)** and then show their testimony clips. Follow with a discussion using the questions below.

- What do you learn from Vladka Meed’s testimony?
- What does Vladka’s testimony tell us about what life was like for some children in the Warsaw ghetto?
- What do you learn from listening to Roman Kent describe his experience during the Holocaust?
- What conclusions can you make about the fate of children based on Roman’s testimony?
- What are some other things that you have learned about the fate of children during the Holocaust? How have you learned this information?
- What is the connection between Nazi ideology and the fate of Jewish children during the Holocaust?
- What are your feelings after hearing these testimonies?

**2** Provide students with background information on children and the Holocaust outlined on the **Children and the Holocaust** handout.

**3** Divide the class into small groups of four students each. Distribute a copy of each of the **four photographs** to the groups and instruct each student in the group to randomly select one of the photographs. Have each student study his or her photograph individually and consider the questions below and develop four or five of their own questions about the photograph.

- What does the picture say to you?
- If this picture was part of a video, what do you imagine you would hear?
- What questions come to your mind as you look at the picture?

**4** After students have had ample time to study the photographs individually, instruct group members to share their thoughts and questions about the photographs with one another. Each group member should assume the role of discussion leader while presenting some of the questions he or she developed about a particular photograph. At the end of this activity, share information about the photographs in the corresponding **Note**.

**5** Introduce students to **Vladka Meed (bio)** (if she was not introduced earlier), play her clip of testimony, and discuss some or all of the questions below.

- What do you learn about Janusz Korczak from listening to Vladka Meed’s testimony?
- What kind of man do you think Janusz Korczak was? How does Vladka’s testimony help shape your thoughts about him?
- How would you characterize Korczak’s action of not leaving the children although he had the opportunity?
- Janusz Korczak believed that all children are good and if properly loved and cared for, all children would grow up to be great achievers. Do you agree with this philosophy? Why or why not?
- Do children’s rights need special attention? Explain your thinking.

**6** Distribute the **Janusz Korczak** handout. As a whole-group, read the biographical information and selections from Korczak’s “The Child’s Right to Respect.” Have a whole-group discussion using the questions below.

- How would you characterize Janusz Korczak’s philosophy as it pertains to the rights of children?
- Do you agree with his philosophy of what it means to respect a child? Why or why not?
- What specific passage in “The Child’s Right to Respect” is particularly meaningful to you and why?
- Do you feel that children in today’s society are respected in a way consistent with Janusz Korczak’s philosophy? Explain your response by giving specific examples from personal experience or contemporary events that you’ve heard or read about in the media.

**7** Without revealing the date of the Declaration, display the **Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child** handout and review together. Ask students when they think this declaration was written and adopted.

**8** Have students discuss what each of the five principles means and give examples of ways that the principles were violated during the Holocaust. Have students compare the Geneva Declaration to Janusz Korczak’s “The Child’s Right to Respect” and consider how the two documents are similar and how they are different. Ask students if they think the Geneva Declaration was drafted before or after the Holocaust and solicit reasons for their response. At the end of the discussion, tell students that the Geneva Declaration was written and adopted in 1924, following World War I.

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES**