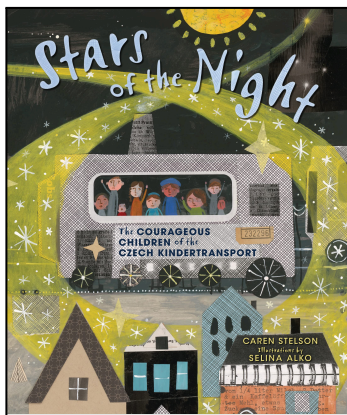

Discussion and Activity Guide



Book Title: *Stars of The Night: The Courageous Children of the Czech Kindertransport*

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Illustrated by: Selina Alko

Publisher: Carolrhoda Books, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group

Year: 2023

ISBN #: 9781541598683

Age Range: 7–11

About the Book

Children rely on their families to feed, nurture, and protect them, but sometimes circumstances, like war, divide families. In this exceptional book, we learn how one man, Sir Nicolas Winton, saved the lives of 669 Jewish children from Prague by arranging for their safe transport to welcoming families in London at the beginning of World War II. Narrated in a collective first-person voice, the story conveys the children's fear, uncertainty, and strength as they travel across Europe to find safety in England. This book explores themes such as heritage, migration, loss, hope, and gratitude, offering an eye-opening account of one man's act of bravery and the courage of children that changed the course of future generations.



Teacher
Resource
Guide

See also Carol Stelson's [Teacher Resource Guide](#) from Carolrhoda Books.

Essential Questions for Courageous Children

- What does the word courage mean to you?
- How can courage show up in everyday life experiences?
 - What are some ways that children show courage?
- Think about a time when you or someone you know showed courage.
 - How did that experience feel for you?
 - What were you able to learn from that experience?

Before Reading

Activities to Engage Students Before Reading

Introduce the book to students

This book tells the true story of Jewish children from Prague, in the Czech Republic, who begin their lives surrounded by love, community, and peace—until war changes everything. Forced to leave their homes for safety, they must learn a new language, adapt to a different culture, and grow up far from their families. Through it all, they carry the memories of their families and homeland in their hearts. As you listen, think about times when you’ve had to adjust to new experiences, people, or big changes in your own life. How did you feel, and what helped you through it?

Introduce key vocabulary

- **Kindertransport Movement:** A unique humanitarian rescue program that ran between November 1938 and September 1939 to save children from Nazi-occupied areas. Approximately 10,000 children, the majority of whom were Jewish, were sent from their homes and families in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic to Great Britain.
- **Passport:** An official document issued by the government of a country to one of its citizens, authorizing travel to foreign countries and proving the person’s identity, citizenship, right to protection while abroad, and right to re-enter their home country. Passports vary from country to country.
- **Foster Home:** A household in which a child is raised by someone other than their biological or adoptive parent.

Engage students in reflective writing using these Journal Prompts

1. The back pages of the book have a timeline detailing the Kindertransport Movement. If you were to create a timeline of your life, what major events would you include on your timeline?
2. The book opens in the city of Prague with everyone happy and enjoying their lives. Write about the place you live and the activities, foods, and drinks you enjoy with people in your community.

During Reading

Questions to Foster Discussion During the Read Aloud

1. Before the story begins, we see a picture of a ring with the words, *"Save one life, save the world."*
 - a. What do these words mean to you?
 - b. Can you think of a time when helping one person had a big impact on others?
2. What changes did the children notice taking place before their parents met with the man who would save their lives?
3. The children's parents took drawings their children made to give to the man who would save their lives. Why do you think the parents did this?
4. When it was time for the children to be sent away, their mothers told them, *"There will be times when you feel lonely and homesick. Let the stars of the night and the sun of the day be the messenger of our thoughts and love."* What do the mothers' words mean to you?
5. How do you think this message made the children feel about the journey ahead?
6. Before the children boarded the train, their parents strung signs around their necks, yet didn't tell them why they were being sent away.
 - a. How do you think the children felt as they boarded the train?
 - b. Why do you think the parents didn't tell the children the reason they were being sent away?
5. Who are all the helpers in the story?
 - a. Why do you think people risked their own safety to help the children?
6. What are some ways the children in this story showed courage?

After Reading

Activities for Deeper Connection

1. Journal and Reflect: *What Courage Means to Me* (all ages)

- Have students think about the word courage and what it means to them.
- Invite students to brainstorm a list of words they associate with the word "courage."
- Then have students create their own definition of courage.
- Students can share their definition of courage with a partner or in small groups.

2. Found Poems (all ages)

- Have students use any of the words from the story to create a [Found Poem](#) connected to the theme of Courage.
- It may be helpful to first model how to write a Found Poem for students before they write their own.
- Students may also work with a partner to write their Found Poem.



About
Found
Poems

3. Courage Looks Like Collage (for all ages)

- Have students use a variety of materials (magazines, stickers, drawings, etc) to create a collage of what courage looks like to them.
- Students can choose to highlight themes or moments from the story that symbolize courage.
- Have students share their collages by engaging in a Gallery Walk, with all the collages displayed on their tables or desks, with sticky notes available for students to leave affirmations for their classmates.

4. Examining Primary Sources Gallery Walk (grades 4-8)

- Print and Post Pictures – Compile and print pictures from Nicolas Winton’s scrapbook, one per piece of paper, [found as part of this CBS article](#). Write a short description for each. Hang them around the classroom.
- Set Up Reflection Papers – Next to each picture, place a large piece of paper with two columns labeled: “I notice...” and “I wonder...”



Pages from
Nicolas
Winton's
Scrapbook

-
3. Introduce the Activity – Explain that these photos are called Primary Sources—real items or artifacts from the time they were made. They help us learn what life was like and how people understood the events around them.
 4. Gallery Walk – Students will walk around the room, look closely at each picture, and write their observations and questions in the columns (or use sticky notes).
 5. Small Group Discussion – Divide students into small groups. Give each group one picture and its “I notice/I wonder” paper. Each group reads what their classmates wrote and discusses the picture.
 6. Group Sharing – Each group shares a short summary of their picture and the reflections with the whole class.
 7. Optional Deeper Questions – Use these prompts to guide a closer look:
 - What do you notice first?
 - What surprises you?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - What questions does this raise?
 8. Class Wrap-Up Discussion – Discuss together:
 - Why are Primary Sources important?
 - What can they show us that textbooks can’t?
 - What other sources might help us understand the Kindertransport?
 - What Primary Sources from today might help people understand our world in the future?

Connections to Anti-Bias Education and SEL Competencies

Stars of the Night

Anti-Bias Education

- **Empathy and Understanding**
- **Healthy Complex Identities**
- Respect Across Differences
- **Notice, Name, and Reject Bias**
- **Responsiveness and Action**

Social-Emotional Learning

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- **Social Awareness**
- **Relationship Skills**
- **Responsible Decision-Making**

What is Anti-Bias Education? *“Anti-bias education is a critical approach to teaching and learning that...helps children strengthen their identities as capable and empowered human beings. Through anti-bias education, children identify issues and inequities in their lives, ask*

questions, consider multiple perspectives and think about their lives critically, growing to actively resist prejudice and discrimination.” (Derman-Sparks et al. Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change. Teachers College Press, 2015.)

The AmazeWorks Anti-Bias Education (ABE) model promotes:

- Empathy and understanding for self and others
- Healthy and complex identity development
- Respect across and appreciation of differences
- The ability to notice, name, and reject bias
- Responsiveness and taking action against bias, prejudice, and discrimination

Infused within Anti-Bias Education is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). **Social-Emotional Learning Competencies are:**

- Self-awareness – Build awareness of one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.
- Self-management – Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one’s goals.
- Social awareness – Build awareness of one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.
- Relationship skills – Establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and effectively navigate diversity.
- Responsible decision-making – Make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

**Find more lessons in the
AmazeWorks Courageous Children
book set, available here:**

<https://amazeworks.org/product-category/book-sets/>

