

11 & 12 Summer Read 2023

The Hiding Place

By Corrie ten Boom

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be prepared to turn these in on Thursday, August 3. Also, be prepared to discuss the novel on that day.

1. Corrie writes in the first chapter, "Today I know that such memories are the key not to the past, but to the future. I know that the experiences of our lives, when we let God use them, become the mysterious and perfect preparation for the work He will give us to do."

A. How was this true in Corrie's life?

B. Take time to reflect on your own experiences. Share ways in which this has been true in your life.

2. On the train as a child, when Corrie asks her father what "sexsin" is, he responds by asking her to lift his watch case, and she replies that it is too heavy. "Yes,' he said,' And it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It's the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger, you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you." As an adult, in the face of unspeakable suffering, Corrie remembered this response and allowed her Heavenly Father to carry the burden, finding contentment despite not understanding.

A. Do you think there is wisdom in this? Explain.

B. Is it something you can or desire to do, or is it hard for you to be content without answers? Explain.

3. Father also told a young Corrie, "our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need -- just in time."

A. How was this true in the book?

B. Is this something you've seen in your own life? Explain.

4. Were there any characters in the book who you particularly liked or were drawn to? Explain why.

5. Why do you think Corrie's experience with Karel was important to the story?

6. During the Ten Booms' work with the underground, they had to consider lying, stealing, and even murder in order to save lives. Different members of the family came to different conclusions about what was OK.

A. How do you think Christians can discern how to honor God when His commands seem to contradict a greater good?

B. What did you think about Nollie's refusal to lie?

C. What did you think of Corrie's refusal to kill?

7. One of the best known Holocaust memoirs is *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Wiesel was a devout Jew before his experience in the Nazi death camps, but his experience destroyed his faith. Wiesel wrote, "Why, but why should I bless Him? In every fiber I rebelled. Because He had had thousands of children burned in His pits? Because He kept six crematories working night and day, on Sunday and feast days? Because in His great might He had created Auschwitz, Birkenau, Buna, and so many factories of death? How could I say to Him: 'Blessed art Thou, Eternal, Master of the Universe, Who chose us from among the races to be tortured day and night, to see our fathers, our mothers, or brothers, end in the crematory?...This day I ceased to plead. I was no longer capable of lamentation. On the contrary, I felt very strong. I was the accuser, God the accused. My eyes were open and I was alone -- terribly alone in a world without God and without man. Without love or mercy.'"

Contrast this with Corrie and Betsie's reaction to the same horrors and especially Betsie's dying words: "...must tell people what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been here."

A. What do you make of their different interpretations of God in the midst of extreme suffering?

B. How do you decide which interpretation to embrace as your own?

C. Is this a struggle in your own faith? Explain.

8. What do you make of the "visions" in the book -- Corrie's of being led away and later Betsie's visions of the house and rehabilitation camp?

9. Corrie's father tells her that he pities the Nazi's: "They have touched the apple of God's eye." What does he mean by that statement? Consider the strength of character it takes to feel pity for a people and a system that means to do harm to fellow beings.

10. What are the various hiding places, real and symbolic, to which the title of this book refers?

11. Talk about the incident after the war in which Corrie comes across one of the former SS men at Ravensbruck.

A. How did she respond to him at first...and how did she change?

B. What does this say about the principle of forgiveness - its difficulty and its healing power?

12. A. What did you find most surprising...or inspiring in this account of the Nazi era?

B. Did this book change you in any way? Explain.

C. Did you come away having learned something...about history...about faith...or about yourself?