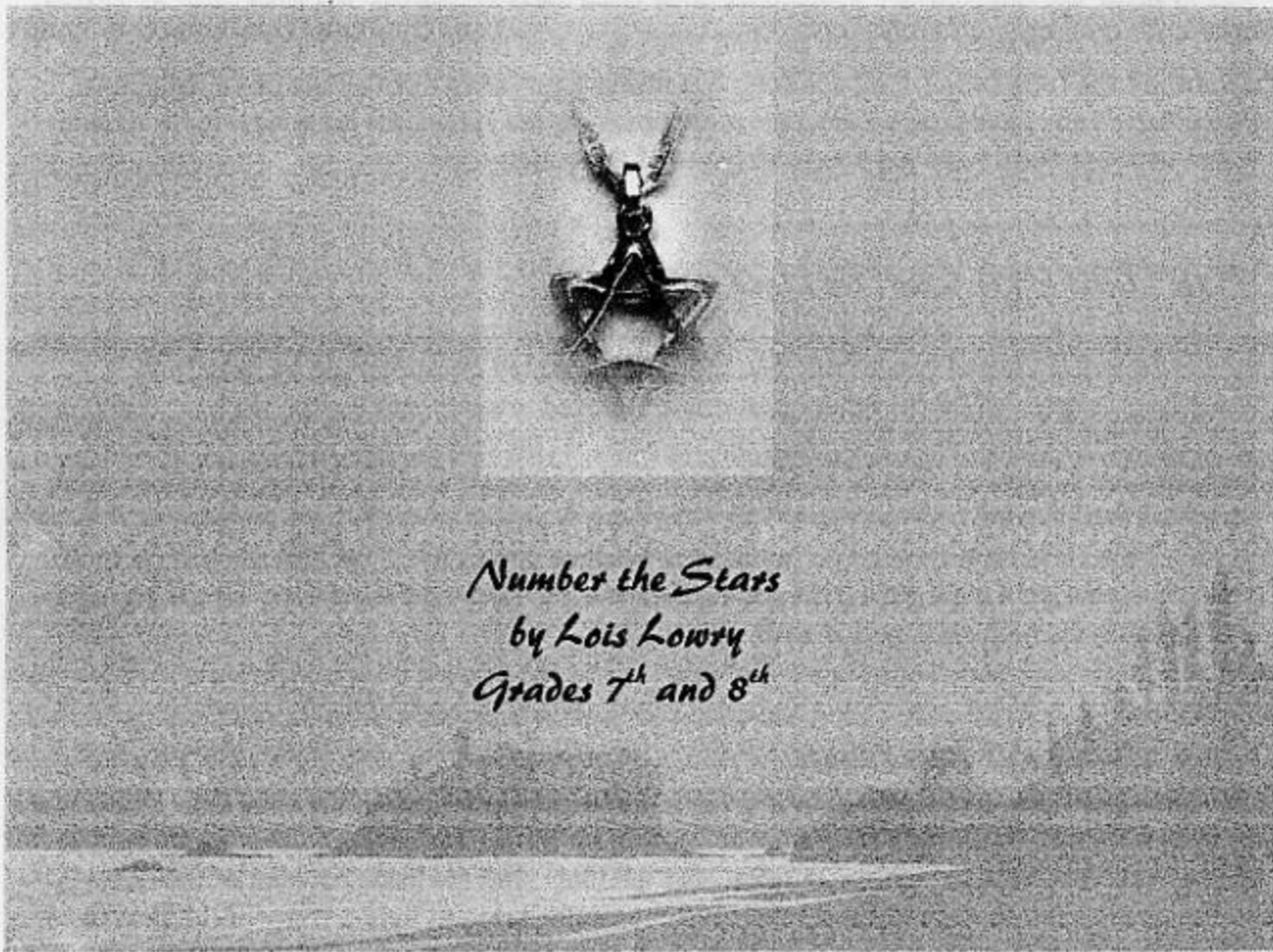


Teaching Unit for Ed 325
by Rachel Pfeiffer
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Number the Stars
by Lois Lowry
Grades 7th and 8th

assigned by:
Professor Joe Lau

Number the Stars Book Unit

The Plot

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry, is set in Nazi-occupied Denmark during World War II. It is the story of bravery and courage; the story of the life of a ten-year-old girl named Annemarie Johansen who once happily led a peaceful life in Copenhagen. Annemarie never thought she was brave, but when the Nazis begin rounding up the Jews, her best friend Ellen Rosen being one of them, for "relocation," Annemarie must learn what courage is, the hard way. In order to save her, the Johansens must now pretend Ellen is one of their daughters and since Denmark is swarming with suspicious Nazi soldiers, this makes everyone's lives all the more dangerous. Annemarie's adventures take them across Denmark, as the Johansens must now try to reunite Ellen with her family and get them safely out of the country.

How This Unit Can Be Used

Each lesson contains vocabulary words, discussion questions, and suggested activities. As you see, the questions are of two types. The more fact-oriented questions can be used for a worksheet or quiz, while the other questions are geared towards making the students really think and hopefully inspire some interesting discussions. At the end of each lesson, one or more activities are suggested. Not all of them are intended to be used every lesson, and they can be modified and decided upon as you see fit. This unit is geared towards students around 7th or 8th grade. These lessons presented do not have to be done one a day. They can be split up so that you take a chapter a class period, or you could cover the story and vocabulary words one class, and then use the next class period to do an activity.

The Value of This Novel

The setting of *Number the Stars* alone gives it ample reason for use in the classroom. Life in an occupied country in World War II Europe lends itself for further study in other areas, such as history, culture, creative writing, religion, and the like. And the basic concept of the novel is sure to intrigue almost any student. This novel can also bring to light a study of the Jewish religion and how it differs from Christianity and goes against Scripture. The more the student is aware of these failings of Judaism, the more prepared he will be to combat it in the world, using the sword of the Spirit and truth found in the Word. There are also some more controversial moral issues involved that can lead to discussion with your students such as the concept of the Resistance against the German government. I hope you enjoy using this novel as much as I enjoyed working with it.

Pre-Reading Activities

Make a Cluster Map to discover the students' previous knowledge about World War II. Write "World War II" in a circle in the middle of the board and then branch off of that to the students' various ideas. For example, "Allies" might be a circle branching off of one side with the various countries like England, France, the United States, etc., and the "Axis Powers" on the other side, with those countries branching off of that circle.

Divide the students into groups and have them define the word freedom. Then bring them back together and discuss their answers as a class.

Have the students answer the following questions:

- Have you ever had to keep a secret?
- Have you ever been very afraid?
- Have you ever been called upon to be very brave?

Vocabulary Activities

These activities can be done with any, but not necessarily all, of the following lessons to provide some variation from what can become rather tedious and boring work.

- Vocabulary concentration: each of the students writes a portion of the vocabulary words on a pair of index cards, with the vocabulary word on one and definition on other. Then they flip all of the cards face down and create the concentration game. They can flip over two cards at a time, and the point is to try remember where they were so you can match a word with its definition.
- Vocabulary charades: write a list of the vocabulary words on the board and have the students try to act out one of the words to the other students.

Chapters One and Two
"Why Are You Running?"
"Who Is the Man Who Rides Past?"

Vocabulary Words

civilized
lanky
rucksack
sulking
defiantly
sabotage
solemn
trousseau
intricate
crocheted
embroidered
lingered

Discussion Questions

Look at the title and cover of this book. What do you think this book is about and what do you think happens in it?

Why were Annemarie and Ellen running?

One of the Nazi soldiers said Kirsti reminded him of his own little girl. What does this do to the image of the soldier? What is the author trying to say about soldiers in general?

How long had the Germans occupied Denmark?

What does *De Frie Danske* mean and what was it?

Why was Mrs. Rosen so frightened about the incident?

What were some of the things the Resistance did to the Germans?

Where and what is Amalienborg and who lived there?

Pretend you were King Christian at the time of the Nazi's invasion of Denmark. Would you have made the same decision as he did? Why or why not?

Tell the story about the king that Annemarie's papa told her when she was seven.

What happened to Lise and why do you think her parents never spoke of her?

How had both Papa and Peter changed?

Suggested Activities

Research the Danish Resistance fighters in World War II and report on what they did for Denmark along with your feelings on the moral aspect of resisting the Nazis.

Read some of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and pick your favorite one to read with the class.

Annemarie speaks of how the people loved King Christian X. Find out about the real King Christian and compare what you research about him with what Annemarie tells us in the book.

Chapter Three

"Where Is Mrs. Hirsch?"

Docabulary

dawdled
frustration
hesitated
haughtily
kroner
sarcastically
swastika

Discussion Questions

What were some of the things the Johansens and other Danes didn't have or were rationed?
Why was Annemarie worried she had said the wrong thing?
Who is Mrs. Hirsch and what happened to her?
Why did the Germans use a swastika as their symbol?
Why do the Danes have a curfew and how would you feel if our government made a similar curfew for us?
Why do you think the Nazis picked the Jewish people to torment?
Annemarie speaks of how Denmark was the bodyguard for all the Jews living there. If you were put in the same position, would you agree with her and be willing to die to protect them? Why or why not? What does the Bible say about this?
There is some *foreshadowing* at the end of chapter three. Find out what foreshadowing is and how it is used at the end of chapter three.

Suggested Activities

Write a short story about what you would do if you were a Jew living in Denmark during its Nazi occupation and what happened to you.
Research Hitler's great hatred for the Jews and write a short essay on why you think this came about.
Research the "relocation" of the Jews in Denmark and find out what happened to them.
The Jews, of course, weren't the only ones the Germans tried to extinguish. Find out what happened to the gypsies, the Armenians and the Poles.
Interview your family and ask them what they would take if they were running away and could only take a few things.

Chapters Four and Five
"It Will Be a Long Night"
"Who Is the Dark-Haired One?"

Vocabulary

sprawled
glowering
exasperated
disdainfully
Sabbath
synagogue
automatically
blackout curtains
harsh
unwavering

Discussion Questions

Why did Kirsti hate her new shoes and how did Ellen get her to wear them?
What was Tivoli and why do you think the Germans destroyed part of it so it was no longer open?
What was the fireworks display Kirsti saw on her fifth birthday?
How is Judaism today different than that of the Old Testament and why is it now a false religion?
Why did Ellen have to stay with the Johansens?
In light of what you know about World War II, what was the "relocation" Papa spoke of?
Why did the city have to be completely darkened at night?
What was on Ellen's necklace and why is that significant for her?
How does Annemarie think Lise died? Do you think this is true? What can you find from the story to support your opinion?
Ellen says that being taken someplace else to live is not as bad as being dead. Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
How were the men that searched the apartment different from the soldiers that stood on the street corners?
How did Papa convince the officers that Ellen was his daughter Lise?
Why did Papa tear the photos out of the album?

Suggested Activities

Find out what you can about *Gone With the Wind* from your parents or relatives or friends. Who were the characters that Annemarie and Ellen were acting out with their paper dolls? What was the story about?
See if you can find out how "fish shoes" were made during World War II in Denmark.
Research the Jewish New Year (when it is celebrated, how it got started, how it is celebrated even today, etc.) and then explain why we do not celebrate it too, in light of Scripture.

Chapters 6 and 7
"Is the Weather Good for Fishing?"
"The House by the Sea"

Vocabulary

suspicious
tentatively
reluctantly
fascination
exasperation
chrysanthemums
flower-sprigged
appliquéd

Discussion Questions

What was strange about Papa's conversation with Uncle Henrik and what were "cigarettes?"
Why do you think they spoke this way over the telephone?
How do you feel about Ellen's statement, "Whatever happens, I must get an education" in light of her circumstances?
Who is Trofast and why is the meaning of his name important?
Describe Henrik's house and its surroundings
Why had Ellen never seen the "real sea?"
Explain what Sweden signifies to the girls.
How long were Scandinavian winter nights?
What did Mama always tease Henrik about?
What was missing that first night when Mama and Henrik caught up on news?

Suggested Activities

Using the description in the story, make up a pretend map of the path they took from the train station to Uncle Henrik's house, including what they passed along the way and looked at. Investigate life in a fishing town on the coast of Denmark and tell about a family's typical day. The Danish culture and history adds a non-threatening avenue of approach for discussion and research. The children in the novel talk about Tivoli Gardens and how they used to see fireworks from there every night. Find photographs and descriptions of it and other landmarks in Denmark and make them into a videotaped travelogue such as the travel channel might show.

Chapters 8 and 9
"There Has Been a Death"
"Why Are You Lying?"

Vocabulary

specter
timidly
bouquets
poised
splintery
deftly
dismayed
hearse
reluctantly
sulking
gnarled

Discussion Questions

What was Kirsti trying to do with the kitten, Thor, that morning?
What is the Kattegat?
What did Mama do through most of their first day at Henrik's?
Uncle Henrik was not happy when he mentioned that "tomorrow will be a day for fishing."
 What did he mean and why was he unhappy about it?
Who died and why did this confuse Annemarie?
Why did Uncle Henrik and Mama lie to Annemarie? Do you think this was the right thing to do?
The night that "great-aunt Bertha" was in the living room, Annemarie decided not to tell Ellen the secret Uncle Henrik had confided in her. If you were in the same situation, would you have told Ellen?
How did Annemarie and her mother become equals?
What differences did Annemarie notice between that night and when Lise died?
Why do you think Peter and the people he brought were there?

Suggested Activities

Research occupied countries during World War II and explain how the soldiers' presence affected the everyday life of the people living there, besides the obvious fact that they were under a different government (for example, think of Annemarie and the morning butter).
If Uncle Henrik asked you how brave you are, how would you answer him? In a short essay, write your response and what bravery means to you.

Chapters 10 and 11
"Let Us Open the Casket"
"Will We See You Again Soon, Peter?"

Vocabulary

surge
sheer
recurring
staccato
condescending
typhus
mantel
protruding
commotion

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Annemarie felt as though her friendship with Ellen would never be the same?
How did Mama convince the soldiers not to open the casket? Can you think of any other way?
What was in the casket?
What did Peter give the baby and why?
Why didn't Mr. Rosen ask what was in the packet and why didn't Peter tell him?
Once again Annemarie noticed that Peter had changed. How?
What does it mean when it says that Peter "wished the Rosens Godspeed?"
Why does Annemarie think it strange that Mama used the word "pride?" What are the "other sources of pride" that she speaks of?
Where is Uncle Henrik taking them?

Suggested Activities

By using a Concordance or having your parents help you, find the Psalm Peter read, finish reading it, and try to figure out what the psalmist meant. Then answer the questions Annemarie asks herself about it. Do you think the world is too cold, too big, and too cruel? Why or why not?
Find out about the disease typhus and why it scared the soldiers to the point that they wouldn't want the casket to be opened.
Read the stories of Jews who actually lived through World War II and their accounts of the Nazis. Look at Rachel's story at <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/excerpts/rachelg.html>

Chapters 12 and 13
"Where Was Mama?"
"Run! As Fast As You Can!"

Docabulary

exhausted
pried
faltered
wincing
sprawling
wry
vast
discolored
stricken

Discussion Questions

When you read the beginning of chapter 12, why did you think the author mentioned Mr. Rosen tripping? What happened when he did?
What do you think will happen to the Rosens? Is there more foreshadowing here?
What time was it when Mama left and what time did Annemarie think she would be back by?
Why is it harder for the ones that are waiting?
What did Annemarie see from the window?
How could Annemarie have been "forcing her eyes to understand, needing to understand, not wanting to understand" all at the same time?
What happened to Mama?
How does Mama describe Annemarie as she reached for Annemarie's arm and why is that significant?
What is Annemarie supposed to pretend to be?
Do you think it was a good idea that Mama did not answer Annemarie's questions about the packet? Why or why not?

Suggested Activities

Write a postcard to Papa while he is alone in Copenhagen. Using the descriptions in the book, draw the countryside, the farm of Uncle Henrik, the seashore, or a fishing boat. Write a message to Papa telling him of the trip to Uncle Henrik's. Remember that the Nazis might intercept the mail, so you will need to write anything about Ellen in code.
Using a globe or map of Europe, prove that the author's description of the sunrise is correct. Find maps of prewar and postwar Europe and map the routes escaping Jews took from each country to where would they have been safe.

Chapters 14 and 15
"On the Dark Path"
"My Dogs Smell Meat!"

Vocabulary

donned
latticed
populated
vivid
wiggle
churning
brusque
tantalize
taut
consumed
withering
intently
caustic
lunged
subsided
quavering

Discussion Questions

How can dawn be cold?
How did Annemarie distract herself as she made her way through the dark woods?
Why do you think Annemarie made the morning of her story full of sunlight and bird song?
Throughout chapter 14, Annemarie continues her story. How is the story of Little Red Riding Hood similar to what Annemarie was experiencing herself that morning?
Who specifically did Annemarie will herself to pretend to behave like? Why?
How did Annemarie react when the soldiers found the packet?
What was in the secret packet?
How could a hemmed handkerchief be so important? What do you think it really is?

Suggested Activities

Throughout these two chapters, Annemarie gives a very detailed description of the path she took from the house to the harbor. Using that description and keeping your map as true to the book as possible, draw a map of her route including what she saw and encountered along the way.

Chapters 16 and 17
"I Will Tell You Just a Little"
"All This Long Time"

Vocabulary

warily
concealed
bleak
raided

Discussion Questions

Why did Annemarie think she wasn't brave? What is bravery, according to Uncle Henrik? What was Peter a part of that surprised Annemarie so? Had you figured this out already? If so, how and when?

Here we find out what Peter had really given the baby and why. Were you correct in your previous guess? Explain what it was and why in both cases.

Why was the handkerchief in the secret packet important? Why do you think Uncle Henrik decided to tell her even though he felt so strongly about people not knowing too much?

The book speaks of all the "ifs" whirling around in Annemarie's head. Pretend you are a Christian author writing this same book. How would you have finished that paragraph?

What does Annemarie sadly wonder about and what is Uncle Henrik's answer and reasoning? When did the war end?

What had the Jews' neighbors done for them while they were away? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?

How had Kirsti changed?

What had happened to Peter? What did his letter say? How did you feel about his death and his letter? Would you have gone to his grave?

What was the truth about Lise's death? Looking back on your guess from chapters four and five, explain how close you were to the truth and why you were or weren't closer.

Mama mourns Lise's death because they were "all so young . . . with so much hope." What would be a better way of looking at it, from a Christian's standpoint?

Where had Annemarie hidden Ellen's necklace and what does she plan to do with it now? What do you think about that decision?

Suggested Activities

Uncle Henrik was one of many who helped the Resistance get the Jewish people out of Denmark and to freedom. The Danish Resistance managed to smuggle almost its entire Jewish population to safety, nearly 7000 people. Research how and why they did it when so many other countries under Nazi control did not.

Uncle Henrik also says, "For reasons of their own, the Nazis want Sweden to remain free. It is very complicated." Try to discover, through your research, why Sweden had not fallen under German control.

Afterword

Vocabulary

deprivation
permeated
orchestrated
idealistic
sabotage

Activities Across the Novel

Throughout the entire book, all the main characters change in one way or another, whether it is from before the war to during the war, or through the course of the war. Looking back, explain how Annemarie, Ellen, Kirsti, Papa, Peter, and the Danish people in general had changed but how some things had remained the same.

Write an extension of the story, telling what happens to Annemarie and if she ever finds Ellen again.

On a map of Denmark, trace all of Annemarie's adventures as she and her family try to get the Rosens to safety. Include your own pictures that indicate what happened in the book at each of the geographical locations.

The characters and action in *Number the Stars* can be used to create poetry. (Diamante)

Line 1-one noun

Line 2-two adjectives describing subject

Line 3-three participles, ending in "ing", telling about subject #1

Line 4-four nouns (first 2 relating to subject #1, and the second 2 relating to subject #2)

Line 5-Three participles, telling about subject #2

Line 6-Two adjectives describing subject #2

Line 7-One noun (subject #2)

After reading the afterword, tell about the real circumstances that surround this fictional novel (how much of the story really happened). Research the historical aspect of the novel and report your findings. (*Note to the teacher: this activity can be used to close out the novel in place of the other activities along the way that dealt with the historical aspect of the novel.*)

Compare and contrast the following characters: Annemarie, Ellen, Kirsti, the Giraffe. Write several phrases describing them. Then draw pictures of two of the characters, and write a paragraph underneath your pictures describing ways they are alike and different.

Keep a reading response journal to record your thoughts and reactions as you read.

Keep a diary as if you were one of characters in the novel.

Show the action of the story by making a comic strip about it.

Everyone creates a major event on an index card by drawing it and writing a sentence or two about it. Then hang them all on a clothesline in sequential order.

Act out a part of the story.

Pretend to be one of the characters in the story and have a fellow classmate interview you. Then switch roles and interview your classmate.