

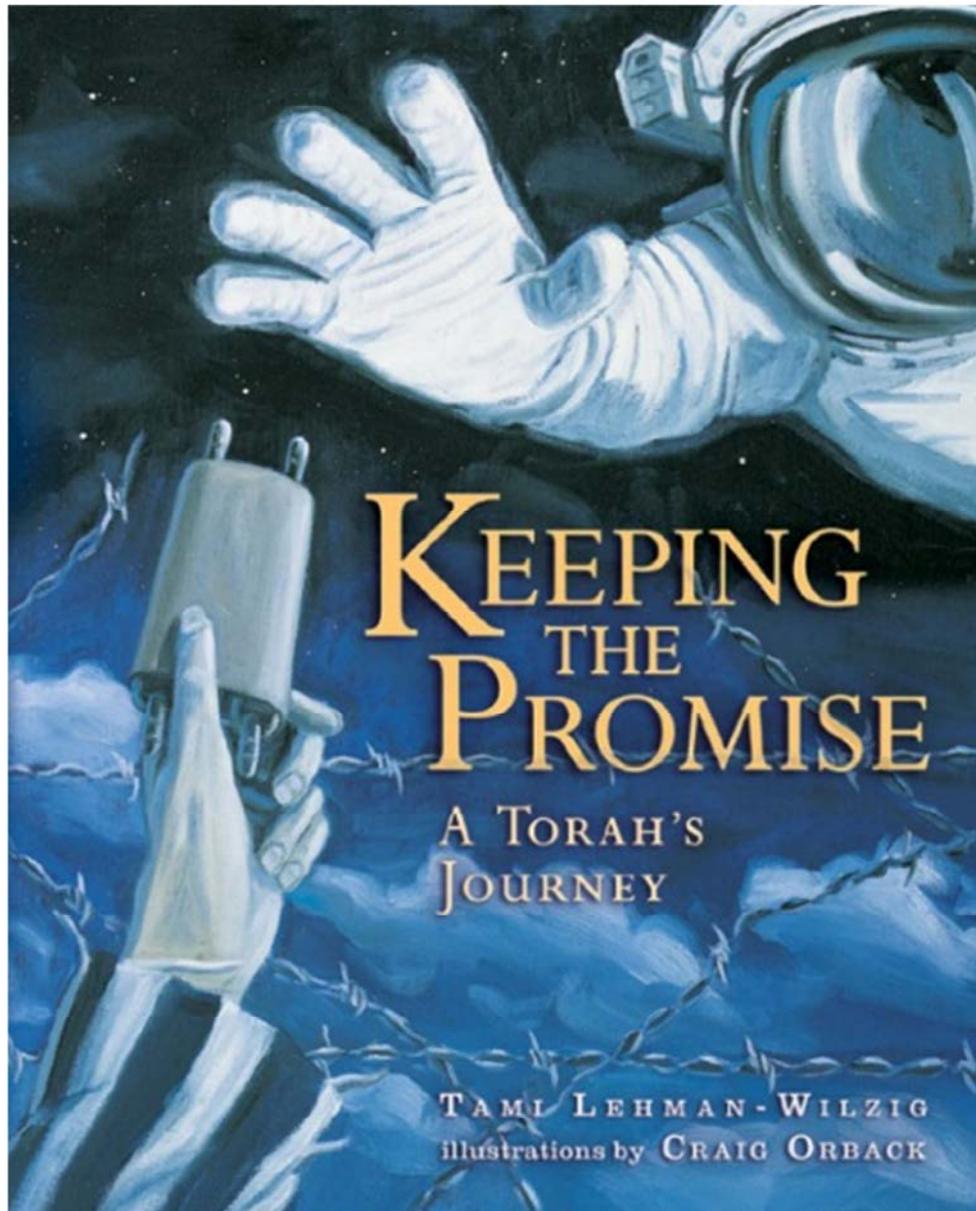
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Resources for Teachers and Students



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241 1st Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55401

HC: 978-1-58013-117-9
PB: 978-1-58013-118-6
EB: 978-1-58013-136-0
Ages 7-11 | Grades 2-5

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Why Teach About the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was the systematic and deliberate murder of groups, primarily Jews, disliked by the Nazis in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Hitler and his followers convinced Germany and its allies that the murder of innocent people was necessary to create a New World Order.

The study of the Holocaust provides one of the most effective tools to discuss prejudice and cultivate appreciation of diversity. A structured study of the Holocaust provides lessons for an investigation of basic morals and human behavior. Within classroom investigation of the Holocaust, students can realize that the Holocaust was personal, not just an historical event, and they can recognize the importance of democratic values and personal freedoms, as well as the responsibilities of citizenship in the world.

How to Use This Guide

As younger students learn about the Holocaust, it can be difficult for them to understand how this level of human tragedy occurred. The book's hopeful message that Joachim survived helps younger children cope with the atrocities of the Holocaust. The message of the book that the "promise" be kept is also a powerful one, which helps young students understand how and why they are the inheritors of Holocaust history, stories and personal narratives.

Additionally, the book can be used with upper grades as supplemental material when teaching a unit about the Holocaust. Older students can benefit from thinking critically about the way a historically inspired story is presented. Students can read actively and deeply, making inferences and interpretations based on the text and visuals (and their interplay) in a picture book.

About the Book

About the Author



Born in the United States, Tami Lehman-Wilzig now lives in Israel. She has a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and an M.A. in Communications from Boston University. She is one of Israel's leading English language copywriters. Her children's books include *Tasty Bible Stories*, *Keeping the Promise*, *Passover Around the World*, *Hanukkah Around the World* and *Zvuv's Israel*. She lives in Petach Tikvah, Israel.

About the Illustrator

Known for his realistic yet painterly works, Craig Orback has illustrated a number of books in the On My Own series, as well as the the Kar-Ben picture book, *Hot Pursuit*, and the Millbrook picture book *Nature's Paintbox: A Seasonal Gallery of Art and Verse*.

Context

The book's action takes place during two different times, during World War II and during the early 2000s. Rabbi Dasberg, Joachim and others are imprisoned at Bergen-Belsen, a Nazi concentration camp, as part of the Nazi's persecution of the Jewish people. Many people suffered and died at Bergen-Belsen, due to terrible conditions, starvation and illness. Joachim is shown in the book as a thirteen year old boy and as a grown man many years later. His story inspires Ilan Ramon to bring the small Torah into space in 2003.

Vocabulary and Allusions

bar mitzvah: in Hebrew, means son of divine law. This is what a boy at age thirteen is called, as he reaches the age of religious duty and responsibility.

Torah scroll: the Hebrew Bible, as written on joined sheets of parchment and attached to handles.

Ilan Ramon: Israel's first astronaut. Prior to being an astronaut, Ramon was a fighter pilot in the Israeli Air Force.

Groningen: a city in northern Netherlands.

Jood: Dutch word for Jew, as inscribed on the star patches that the Nazis forced Jewish people to wear.

Concentration camp: a Nazi prison camp where Jewish people were sent to do manual labor. The Nazis treated their prisoners cruelly, and due to poor conditions, many Jewish people died of malnutrition and illness.

Bergen-Belsen: a Nazi concentration camp in Germany that began as a prison camp for French, Belgian and Russian soldiers. Eventually Jewish people were sent there and as World War II continued, the conditions at Bergen-Belsen worsened.

Baruch Atah: the beginning to many Jewish prayers, which translated roughly means "blessed are you" (often followed by *Adonai*, meaning "our Lord").

Mazel tov: in Hebrew, it means good luck, and is used to convey congratulations

Spaceship Columbia: a space shuttle that flew twenty-eight missions into space to pursue scientific research.

Questions:

For before reading:

1. Why do people sometimes take risks? Is there a different between kinds of risks?
2. What does it mean to be a hero? Who do you think are heroes? Why?

For reading together:

1. How did the people of Groningen feel about the war? What did they believe would happen?
2. What actually happened to the Jewish people of Groningen?
3. What was life like for Rabbi Dasberg at Bergen-Belsen?
4. What does Rabbi Dasberg teach the Joachim?
5. How did the others help Joachim celebrate his bar mitzvah?

6. What is Joachim's reunion with his mother like?
7. What does Rabbi Dasberg give Joachim? What does he ask Joachim for in return?
8. Does Joachim keep his promise? How?

For post-reading discussion:

1. In what order is the story told? What is the first information that you learn? Does this matter?
2. How do the illustrations help tell the story? Do they illustrations convey joy and sadness at the same time? How?
3. What risks do different characters in the book take? Would you take those risks, too?
4. Why do you think it is important to Rabbi Dasberg that Joachim celebrate his Bar Mitzvah?
5. Why do you think Ilan Ramon was interested in Joachim's story?
6. Why is sending the Torah scroll into outer space symbolic? How does it relate to the restrictions of life in Bergen-Belsen?
7. How is freedom an idea in this book?

Suggested activities:

My Hero:

Interview someone you believe is a hero. Before your interview, create five different questions that you can ask. Your questions should ask about what they do, how they find courage to do it, and what they want people to know about what they do.

Freedom:

In *Keeping the Promise*, some characters like Rabbi Dasberg and Joachim have very little freedom. Ilan Ramon experiences the freedom of being in outer space at zero gravity. Write a poem that expresses what freedom means to you. In your poem use metaphor, a way of describing something by calling it something else. For example: freedom is soaring through outer space or freedom is the wind or freedom is a shelf of books.

Taking Risks:

Think of a time that you took a risk. Draw a picture of what you did. In a brief paragraph, write about why you took the risk. Some examples might be trying a new sport, apologizing to your sibling, playing a more difficult piece on the piano, asking for something and so on.

Into Space:

Ilan Ramon took Rabbi Dasberg's Torah scroll and some other Jewish objects into outer space with him and showed them off to the world on television. Pretend you are an astronaut. What special objects (not food or clothes or equipment) would you bring with you into space? Draw a picture of your items.