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Reflections: A Student Response Journal

The Hiding Place

Corrie Ten Boom

Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

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To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection–that is, stopping to think about what you are reading–that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

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Preface

1. In the preface, John and Elizabeth Sherrill speak of how practical Corrie ten Boom's memories have been, how they helped them deal with real problems and events in their own lives. Corrie's response to this was that "…this is what the past is for! Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see." Do you agree or disagree with Corrie's philosophy concerning the past? Write a letter to someone close to you that discusses a time in the past that has helped you deal with something in your present.

2. The preface tells the reader that *The Hiding Place* is the tale of Corrie ten Boom, a woman who exhibited incredible faith and courage amidst the suffering of the Holocaust. In a paragraph or two, write down everything you already know about the Holocaust. As you read *The Hiding Place*, refer to your list for confirmation of known facts and to add information that you learn.

3. There are several historical and social references in the preface: the Iron Curtain, Vietnam, communism, and Nazism. Look up these terms online or in an encyclopedia and jot down a few significant facts about each. As you read about these references, other terms may crop up that have similar themes—*anti-semitism*, for example, or *genocide*. Develop your own vocabulary list from these terms based on things you would like to know about the Holocaust and similar events.

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Chapter 2

7. We see some sibling rivalry in Chapter 2 when Corrie comments that "…Nollie was different from me; she was pretty and well-behaved and always had her handkerchief." In a few paragraphs, discuss an instance or instances of sibling rivalry in your own life. After doing so, switch your perspective and discuss the same instance(s) from your sibling's point of view. How did the telling of the event or the emotions involved change?

8. Corrie tells us that Tante Bep "with her perpetual, disapproving scowl, was the oldest of the aunts and the one we children liked least. For thirty years she had worked as a governess in wealthy families and she continually compared [their] behavior with that of the young ladies and gentlemen she was used to." This is a fairly unflattering description, although obvious love for her family radiates from Corrie's recollections. Consider your own family and select a member who, while dearly loved, has some obvious and sometimes entertaining character traits or flaws. Create, as Corrie did, a written caricature of this relative in a paragraph or two.

9. Corrie's father places a high value on education. Although he had had to quit school early to go to work in the watch shop, he was self-taught in such subjects as theology, history, and literature—in five languages, no less. Discuss your own theories regarding education. Do you feel it is as important as Mr. ten Boom did? Do you think it is more important for some people than for others? Are there any reforms you feel would benefit our educational system today? Explain your ideas in a petition you write for educational reform that is addressed to your school Principal.

10. When Corrie innocently asks her father about "sexsin" he provides an analogy for the burden of knowledge by asking young Corrie to carry his traveling case, packed heavily with his watches and spare parts, off of the train. When Corrie attempts to do so and learns that it is simply too heavy a load for her to bear, her father tells her that knowledge is much the same—that there are some things that would prove burdensome in their clarity. How can knowledge be a burden?

    Write a fable illustrating the burden of knowledge. Fables should be brief, should include animal characters, and should relate a moral lesson.

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Chapter 4

17. One ten Boom tradition spoken of is that of the older woman counseling the younger woman on the eve of her wedding. Corrie says that "one could no more have got married without it than one could have dispensed with the ring." Since her mother is unable, Tante Anna delivers "the talk." All families have traditions or rituals of some sort. In a letter, invite a friend to participate in one such family ritual or tradition. Describe the tradition, and give a few reasons why your friend should participate.

18. In this chapter, Betsie becomes ill and so it happens that she and Corrie must switch household responsibilities until she gets better. Corrie takes over the work in the shop, including watch repair, while Betsie takes care of the household affairs. They soon discover that they have been splitting up the work backwards their entire lives. Corrie loves the work in the watch shop, while Betsie is far more suited to running a household.

    Make a list of all of the different types of responsibilities that need to be taken care of around your house. Beside each one, write the name of the person in your family who you believe is best suited to carrying out that task due to some aspect of his or her personality. Explain why you have made the choices you made in a brief paragraph by describing the personalities of each person, and what you feel their strengths and weaknesses might be.

19. Corrie surprises herself by discovering a talent for watch repair. Three years after her mother's death she becomes, in fact, the first licensed woman watchmaker in Holland—no small accomplishment. Write a one-page essay that you might use for a resume or a college application that describes your own accomplishments, talents, and goals for the future.

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Chapter 6

27. Peter stuns his family when he defiantly plays Holland's national anthem in church, bringing the church congregation to its feet to sing the forbidden words. Pretend that you are in the same circumstances and have been forbidden to say the pledge of allegiance to the flag or to sing your country's national anthem. Write a letter to a friend in a foreign country, describing how you feel about this.

28. In this chapter, the secret room, the hiding place, is built into Corrie's bedroom. The addition of this room, of course, makes everything the ten Booms are doing even riskier than before. Pretend that you live in Holland at this time and you have decided that you would like to be a part of this same underground. Write a note that will be sent to the leader of the underground network describing your willingness to help, your understanding of the risk involved, and the skills and abilities you would be able to bring to the cause.

29. Imagine that you are one of the people being hidden away in the two-and-a-half foot wide space in Corrie's bedroom. How would you entertain yourself if you had to remain hidden for any great length of time? How would you pass the time spent cooped up in such a small space? Pretend that this occurred more recently in history and that you have been able to smuggle a wireless laptop computer into your hiding place. By chance, you are able to instant message a friend or relative during your confinement. Write out the instant message conversation that might take place at such a time. Be careful not to drop any clues as to your exact location—that might get your hosts in danger!

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