

Teacher's Guide: Grownup Children

Preparatory Class Discussion:

Questions to be discussed in class:

- Define the term **child**: What characterizes the life of a child? What do they do? What are the characteristics of childhood? (Instead of these questions it is possible to hold an association exercise: Write the word **child** in the center of the blackboard and ask students to list all the words they associate with the word in the center. Through this activity a list of childhood characteristics is assembled.)
- Define the term **adult**: What are the roles of an adult? (It is possible to use the association exercise here too.)
- When does a child become an adult? (**Teacher's note:** Is the transition to adulthood dependant on age or reality?) **Teacher's note:** The goal of the discussion at the beginning of the lesson is to define the terminology: **child** and **adult**, to clarify their meanings and define each of their roles.

After students define the differences between children and adults, they will have a better understanding of the role reversal, which took place within the family in the ghetto, and the children's transformation into "adult-children."


- Distribution of worksheets: **Closure and Isolation and Grownup Children.**

- Visit the **Children in the Ghetto** website <http://ghetto.galim.org.il/> and click on **Entrance** icon 

Upon entering, you will see an imaginary street in front of you. This street represents the ghetto. You can navigate around the street with the arrows found on its sides.



- The highlighted drawings are portals to sections on various subjects regarding the world of the ghetto.
- Each section can also be viewed by clicking on the matching icon at the bottom of the street.

With the help of the arrow on the left side of the street  navigate to the end of the street.


At the end of the street, you will find a drawing of a barbed wire fence. By clicking on the fence you will enter the **Closure & Isolation** section.

(At the bottom of the street there are icons through which you can view the various sections.

The **Closure & Isolation** section can be accessed by clicking on the icon



at the bottom of the street).

1. Read the explanation and watch the testimonies in this section (**Testimony** icon ).
2. How do the children describe their deportation to the ghetto?

- Something to think about:
 - a. What changes occurred in the children's lives as a result of their deportation to the ghettos?
 - b. What are the difficulties brought on by such changes?


We will try to answer these questions at the end of the tour of the section.

3. Look at the materials found in the following sections: **Photograph, Artifact & Drawing**



and answer the questions below:

- a. What item is found in each of the sections?
- b. What thoughts and feelings do you have when you see a wall?
- c. What purpose did the ghetto-wall serve?
- d. Why did some of the parents give their children drawings and other artifacts with reference to the wall?

4. Click the **On Paper** icon  and read the excerpt from Yitzchak Rodashevski's diary:

- a. How does Yitzchak describe life in the ghetto?
- b. What does he feel?
- c. What does he miss?

5. Look at the drawing (**Drawing** icon ) and read the explanation:

- a. What do you think is in the suitcase that Tommy is standing on?
- b. What does the suitcase represent?
- c. Why is Tommy standing on the suitcase?
- d. What do you think Tommy is feeling as he looks out the window?

Note to the Teacher: Questions 5a-5c invite the students to deal with questions concerning the transition to the ghetto:

What did the deported people take with them? What were they forced to leave behind? Were the things they took necessary for their survival, such as food, medicine and clothing? Did they take objects for their spiritual and emotional existence, such as books, photo albums, and religious texts? Could the children take their favorite toys and games with them?



Question 5b presents the suitcase as a representation of the home that was left behind and the familiar world from which Tommy was deported.

Question 5c: The suitcase that Tommy is standing on represents, as mentioned above, the home from which he was deported, with its values and the stability it once offered. This stability allows Tommy to stand firmly on the suitcase: "The home" is what supports Tommy and allows him to look outside, to what is beyond the walls¹.

6. Now, let's return to the questions we saw at the beginning of the tour of the section and answer them:
 - a. What changes occurred in the children's lives as a result of their deportation to the ghettos?
 - b. What are the difficulties brought on by such changes?



Return to the street (link on the bottom left hand side of the screen [Back to the street](#)).

- Scroll left with the assistance of the arrow  until you reach the end of the road. By the lamppost there are two children holding hands. click on the children and enter the **Adult-Children** section. (This section can also be accessed by clicking on the icon  at the bottom of the street).



¹ For further information, see Tommy – a guidebook for kindergarten teachers and school teachers, by Naomi Morgenstern, Yad Vashem, The International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem Publications, Jerusalem, 1999.

1. Read the explanation and look at the photograph next to it:

- Something to think about:

Why were the children in this period called “adult-children?”

We will try to answer this question at the end of our tour of the section.

2. a) Look at the photographs and the drawing in the section (**Photograph** icon  and **Drawing** icon ) and complete the tasks at hand.

Pay attention that in each of the sources the children are by themselves, with no adult around.

b) Describe the relationship between children as seen in each of these sources.


Note to the Teacher: Among the children found in the various sources, bonds of support, worry, assistance and care for one another are evident. These are seen through actions such as holding hands, feeding each other, etc. These sources teach us of the responsibilities taken by the more mature children toward the younger children, in the reality which was forced upon them in the ghetto.

3. a) Read Hanush Hechenburg’s poem (**Poem** icon ) and the testimonies of Israel Hadar and Israel Ernest (**Paper** icon ). Perform the tasks at hand.

Note to the Teacher: Students can be given a choice of the written testimonies found in the sub-section: “**On Paper,**” or the video testimony of Halina Birenbaum found in the sub-section “**Testimony.**”

b) In light of what you have read: What transformed the children into “adult-children?”



- Return to the street (link on the bottom left hand side of the screen **Back to the street**).
- Scroll right with the assistance of the arrow  until you reach the end of the street.


Through the building's first floor windows, children at work can be seen. Click on the link and enter the **Children at Work** section. (This section can be accessed by clicking on the icon



at the bottom of the street).

1. Read the explanation and look at the photograph next to it:

- Something to think about:
Why were children forced to work in some of the ghettos?


2. a) Look at the photographs in this section (**Photograph** icon ) and perform the tasks at hand.

b) What jobs did children have in the ghetto?


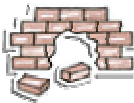
3. a) Watch the testimonies of Hassia Ben-Dov and Israel Aviram (**Testimony** icon ) and read the words of Sara Plager Zyskind (**On Paper** icon ):

b) What were the difficulties the children faced in their work in the ghetto?



Note to the Teacher: The children in the ghettos were forced to work in a variety of jobs, some of these required training which they were not provided with. The tools and instruments available were unsuitable to their abilities and size. In addition, the children were required to work long hours every day.

c) How do the drawings in this section (**Drawing** icon ) depict these difficulties? (Make use of the explanations found by the drawings to assist you).

Note to the Teacher: In picture number 1 the sewing tools, the sewing machine, and the scissors are much larger than the children. In picture number 2 there are imps sabotaging the girl's work. The text adjacent to the picture emphasizes the hardships faced by the girl and her feelings of helplessness.

- Return to the street (link on the bottom left hand side of the screen **Back to the street**).
- Scroll left with the assistance of the arrow  until you reach the end of the street. In the middle of the wall, are children helping their friends crawl through a gap in the wall. Click on the link and enter the **Children Smugglers** section. (This section can be accessed by clicking on the icon  at the bottom of the street).



1. Read the explanation and look at the photographs in the section (**Photograph** icon ) and watch the testimonies of David Ephrati and Shmuel Gal (**Testimony** icon ):

- Something to think about:

- a. Why was it that the young children in particular became smugglers in the ghetto?



Note to the Teacher: Many children smuggled food into the ghetto, because their small build enabled them to pass through cracks in the ghetto wall. In addition, children are generally quick which facilitates smuggling. Furthermore, there were cases where children were the sole providers and therefore they took it upon themselves to care for their families.

- b. What, in your opinion, did children who were engaged in smuggling food into the ghetto feel during these acts?

Note to the Teacher: From excerpts of the written sources found in this section, one learns of feelings of fear, a sense of responsibility to their families and pride for having provided for their families.

- c. How did the parents of children smugglers feel?


Note to the Teacher: There is no mention in this section of the parents' feelings regarding their children's work as smugglers. This is raised as food for thought rather than a question to be answered. Its purpose is to have students consider the role reversal which occurred in the family framework and which stemmed from, among other things, the fact that sometimes parents in the ghetto could not provide for their families and this basic role was inadvertently passed onto the children, as there was no alternative.

2. a) Read the poem **Hershek** by Stefania Nei (**Poem** icon ) and Hannah's testimony (**Paper** icon ) and perform the tasks at hand.

- b) Were Hershek's and Hannah's experience of smuggling the same? Why?

Note to the Teacher: Hershek and Hannah experienced the smuggling differently from one another as their levels of awareness of the significance and possible consequences of smuggling differed. Hannah was a young girl, only 6 years old, and was unaware of the dangers involved in smuggling. When she went out to smuggle she did not feel fear. "I did not understand that it was dangerous, I was six years old."

Hershek, on the other hand, was already a young man, 12 years old, and was aware of the dangers involved in the act of smuggling. Hershek smuggled because he had no choice. In the poem, it is clear that he was afraid and aware that smuggling was life-threatening behavior. The poem ends with a prayer he carried with him whenever he departed on a smuggling mission: "God, may I return safely from this road!"

3. a) Look at the drawing in this section (**Drawing** icon ) and perform the tasks at hand.
- b) In your opinion, how does the drawing describe the feelings of the children smugglers?

Conclusion:

In looking at the website, we encountered children whose normal course of life and childhood was interrupted. In your opinion, why are these children called "adult-children?"

In-class Summation:

Questions for in-class discussion:

- Why were the children during this period dubbed "adult-children?" (The children were asked to answer this question during the coursework, but it is recommended to raise this question for discussion at this point.)
- What becomes of children who are forced to become adults prematurely?

In light of the testimonies and the sources found on the website, how did the children in the ghetto cope with the quickened maturity forced upon them? (**Note to the Teacher:** It is possible to discuss the way children actually coped. There was a quick adjustment to change, an acceptance of responsibility and integration into the adult world. Additionally, the children coped emotionally, as expressed in diaries, poetry, drawings, games, etc.)