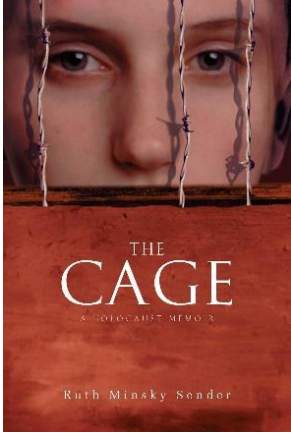


Resistance, Hope, and Remembrance: Ruth Minsky Sender Reflective Writing Projects

Community Service Credit Opportunity

Ruth Minsky Sender (1926-2024), a Three Village Writer and Holocaust Survivor, spoke at the Emma S. Clark Memorial Library in 2022. Her program, “Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust,” was recorded for posterity and is now being made available for our patrons to view online. Patrons in grades 6-12 have the opportunity to reflect deeply on the content of Ruth’s first memoir, *The Cage*, as well as her talk at the library, and write thoughtful responses for community service credit.



Reflective Writing Project #1: *The Cage: A Holocaust Memoir*

How to Participate: Fill out the Writing-Based Community Service Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/EtXZ7cNK86V3tbYF9>, then read *The Cage: A Holocaust Memoir* by Ruth Minsky Sender (found in the YA Non-Fiction section of Emma Clark Library, or as an eBook on Libby), then respond thoughtfully (in paragraph form) to the five questions listed below. Email the completed reflection to Teen & Tween Services Head Librarian, Emily Ostrander, at teens@emmaclark.org. Accepted responses will earn 3 hours of community service credit and may be posted on the library’s website and/or social media.

Reflection Questions:

1. Ruth Minsky Sender’s mantra, instilled in her by her mother, was “As long as there is life, there is hope.” What does this mantra mean in the context of Ruth’s story? Can you apply this mantra to your life? Why or why not?
2. While in the Lodz ghetto, Riva and her family had the opportunity to be adopted out individually to families, which would have allowed them better conditions, food, and care. They refused to be adopted, preferring to stay together as a family even if it meant more strife for them. Do you think Riva’s family made the right decision staying together? Why or why not?
3. While in the Lodz ghetto, Riva and her family committed several “sins,” including lying and stealing. When confronted with her lying, Riva reflected that her mother said “Always speak the truth. But if the truth will kill another human being, lie.” When her brother Motele stole wood to keep the family warm, Riva admonished him, but Motele replied, “I had to do it. They may call it stealing. I call it helping my family survive.” Are there situations in which lying, stealing, and other such actions are justified? Why or why not?
4. While in one of the concentration camps, Riva wrote poetry. One of her first poems begins:
When my tormented heart can’t take any more
The grief within rips it apart;
My tears flow feely – They can’t be restrained
I reach for my notebook – my friend.
Riva saw her “notebook” (writing) as a “friend” (coping mechanism) to survive her horrendous conditions. What other coping methods have you personally used, or seen others use, to get through difficult situations? Did they work? Why or why not?
5. At the end of the memoir, Ruth spoke to her daughter Nancy, saying “If we forget the past, it could happen again. We must learn from these horrors. We must learn what happens when people remain silent while others are persecuted. We must learn, my child, not to ignore the ugly signs, the danger signs, as my family – as the people of my generation – did.” Do you believe that remembering the past helps people to learn not let similar things happen? Are we, today’s generation, doing a better job of fighting for persecuted people? Why or why not?