

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 #2:

Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust

How to Participate: Watch Ruth Minsky Sender’s Author Talk, *Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust*, presented for the Emma Clark Library in 2022, (click here to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=os4dNEF4ldg>) 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.



Photo Credit: Yiddish Book Center, 2015

Reflection Questions:

1. Ruth stated that when she was a child in Poland, “We had newspapers, we had schools, we had libraries, we knew what was going on around us”... “[But] the adults would say ‘Eh, we don’t have to be afraid. Germany Austria are far away from us. And besides, Poland keeps assuring us Poland is strong’”... “Through history we know, it only took 3 days, 8 days, and there was no Poland.” Why do you think the adults around her were so sure that Poland could not be overtaken? Have you experienced a similar situation with the adults in your life?
2. Ruth was approached by a historian who yelled at her, claiming the Holocaust was a hoax. Ruth said, “The reason I bring it up now because we have now people who, when the survivors are disappearing (they’re dying of old age and of worn out), those who are denying the Holocaust are raising their heads higher, [saying] ‘the Jews are liars, there was no Holocaust,’ and that scares me”... “It scares me that we close our eyes to [these claims].” Have you ever met someone who holds a belief that is patently false? What sort of emotions did it raise in you? How did you interact with that person?
3. When Ruth visited the Holocaust Museum, she confronted a docent who was giving a false narrative of the background to a picture. Ruth urged viewers, “Please remember if you look at pictures in museums or anyplace, history’s being accidentally changed.” Give another example of a piece of historical media that’s context was erroneously changed after the fact. Do you think the change was accidental or deliberate, and why?
4. Ruth met a lady at one of the camps “Running around back and forth and screaming, ‘Girls, your families are being murdered here!’ And I was so shocked; why is she lying? I couldn’t imagine if it’s not true. And I went over and yelled at her ‘What are you doing this for? Why are you scaring us?’”... “But she was telling the truth and I called her a liar.” Ruth was wrong; the lady was not a liar. Have you ever believed something that was not true and tried to convince others of your stance? How did you feel when you realized you were wrong?
5. Ruth told the story of meeting her husband: “I knew he was Jewish and he’s a survivor”... “6 weeks later we were married, and we were married for 60 years. He was going around looking for family, I was looking for family, and we found each other there at the water pump.” Ruth is describing a form of “Found or Chosen Family.” Do you have family of this kind? What do they mean to you?