



The Hiding Place

Study Guide

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For the novel by Corrie ten Boom
with John and Elizabeth Sherrill

Bonus: mini study guide for
“The Power of Light”

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Synopsis

*“You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word . . .
Hold me up, and I will be safe . . .”
Psalm 119:114, 117*

The year is 1937. The place is Haarlem in the south of Holland. Our story, *The Hiding Place*, opens as the ten Boom family celebrates 100 years of watchmaking in their home, a place called the Beje (pronounced bay-yay).

Corrie, a middle-aged woman, is our central character, along with her sister, Betsie, seven years her senior. This is a true account of God-given courage. These women lived in the time of the German Nazi invasion of Holland during World War II.

As Christian people they reached out to offer assistance to the Jews being persecuted and often put to death by the Nazis. Their compassion extended to providing a secret room in their home in which the Jewish people could hide during Nazi raids. Thus, Corrie becomes steeped in the underground activity of protecting Jews in Holland during a perilous time in world history.

With danger, suspense, and dire consequences, Corrie and Betsie follow God’s leading. They struggle with difficult moral questions and find there are no easy answers.

The Hiding Place is more than the story of two sisters who end up in a concentration camp. It is an account of life’s struggles—of overcoming evil, of forgiving and loving enemies, and of finding security amidst great insecurity. Can God actually be a hiding place for those living in great pain and insecurity? Is there truly a safe place when all around is danger? Corrie ten Boom not only knew the answers to these difficult questions, she lived them out.

Chapters 13 & 14

Vocabulary:

Circle the one of the three words that best defines the vocabulary word. Check the dictionary to ensure a correct answer.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. notorious | famous, fake, fumbling |
| 2. vista | conviction, view, purple |
| 3. deluge | stable, quart, flood |
| 4. quarantine | scent, workshop, isolation |
| 5. contemptuous | scornful, grateful, willful |
| 6. grotesque | stormy, simple, hideous |
| 7. sequestered | selected, hidden away, taken |
| 8. aristocratic | witty, noble, wearisome |
| 9. acrid | acreage, pungent, triangular |
| 10. surveillance | guard, incline, survey |

Questions:

1. When the women first see Ravensbruck, Corrie uses two *similes* (descriptive comparisons using “like” or “as”) to describe it. What do these descriptions tell you about Ravensbruck?

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Write two similes of your own to describe the extermination camp.

2. Several events occur in Chapter 13 that appear to be unexplainable. (The guard does not take away the sweater, vitamins, or Bible; the change in attitude of the women of Barracks 28; the bottomless vitamin bottle.) How does Corrie account for these things? How do you explain them? Give evidence for both answers.
3. What did Corrie mean when she observed that “life in Ravensbruck took place on two separate levels”?

List at least three events or things for each of these two “levels” to characterize them (show what they were like).

Making it Personal:

Have you ever found yourself in difficult circumstances and yet having peace on the inside?

What gave you that peace?

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Read Colossians 3:12–17. What things does this passage encourage us to do?

4. In Chapter 13, Betsie encouraged Corrie to thank God for the fleas in their barracks, but Corrie could find no good reason to. What did they discover in Chapter 14 that changed Corrie's mind?

5. What happened to Corrie when she began trying harder to take care of Betsie and protect the two of them?

What did Corrie realize about her own power to change things?

6. What are some things the blue sweater may have symbolized for Corrie? Would these have been good or bad for Corrie?

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Answer Key

Chapters 1 & 2

Vocabulary: 1. damp, 2. favorable or fortunate, 3. fellow workers, 4. Continuously, 5. uneducated, 6. deeply and sincerely, earnestly, 7. large, 8. harmful or disastrous.

Questions: 1. Father was wise, kind, compassionate, full of integrity in character. Father expresses wisdom when he answers Corrie's question about sexism and knowledge. Also when Corrie experiences fears regarding death.

2. Answers will vary.

3. Yes, Tante Jans did believe heaven depended upon how much we accomplished on earth. May want to have students check out: Acts 16:31, I John 5:1, John 11:40, Acts 15:11, John 3:16, John 5:24, John 1:12.

Chapter 3 & 4

Vocabulary: b, e, j, c, h, f, a, i, d, g, l, k.

Questions: 1. Answers will vary. Tante Bep depended on her circumstances for happiness and yet was miserable. Mama knew an inner peace and found happiness in all circumstances.

2. As she faced death she experienced a realization that all her clubs, writings, etc. were "emptiness" before the Lord. She depended on the Cross of Christ, his saving grace rather than her works.

3. Yes, Karel did seem to indicate more in his relationship with Corrie. He never actually said the word "marriage" but alluded to it. Corrie's entire family came to her rescue at her shock of meeting Karel's fiancée'. Mama made quick coffee. Tante Anna passed cakes. Betsie conversed with the young woman and Father with Karel. Father offered love, comfort, and wisdom. Corrie asked God to give her a new and stronger love for Karel.

4. Father fired Otto.

5. Corrie and Betsie discover they not only enjoy their new roles but are much better fitted for the specific tasks involved in each new role. Answers will vary.

6. A flashback often fills in needed information and sets the stage for what is to come.

Chapters 5, 6 & 7

Vocabulary: Answers will vary. Use a standard dictionary to check answers.

Questions: 1. Father believed the Prime Minister was giving the people false hope regarding war. Father believed there would be war.

2. Corrie reacted in fear, Betsie in faith.

3. An anti-Semite is a person who intensely dislikes Jews, individually and as a people.

4. After the German invasion of Holland, there were German soldiers everywhere, a curfew was set, identity and ration cards issued, newspapers no longer carried news, and radios were to be turned in to the Germans.

5. If Corrie had stayed in bed she would have been badly injured or killed by a piece of metal. Betsie's response is full of faith believing the only safe place was in being in God's will.

6. The NSB was an organization of Dutch that embraced the Nazi philosophy for varying reasons.

7. Corrie's nephew, Kid, introduced her to the underground. "How should a Christian act when evil was in power." Stealing, lying, murder, deception were part of underground activities.

8. Fred Koonstra brought extra ration cards to the home and kept Corrie in communication with the underground.

9. Smit was the last name given every man in the underground.

10. Answers will vary.

11. Answers will vary. Perhaps the peace and security of the ten Boom's was contagious. They had a hiding place: in the Beje, in Christ, in his Word.

Chapters 8 & 9

Vocabulary: 1. paralyzed, 2. sprawling, 3. brainstorm, 4. carefully, 5. badge, 6. distrustfully, 7. loitered, 8. secret,

9. charm, 10. shaking, 11. accusing, 12. group.