

The Hiding Place Study Guide

by Carol Diehn

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



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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.

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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?

The Hiding Place Study Guide Answer Key

Note: Most of the questions in Progeny Press study guides deal with students' understanding and interpretation of issues in the novel; therefore, most answers will be individual to the student. Progeny Press answer keys are designed to be as inclusive as possible for the teacher and/or parent, giving enough background and information to judge whether the student has grasped the essence of the issue and the question. We try to point out some directions students' answers might take, which directions might be best, and some errors that may appear. Students are not expected to answer as completely as the answers provided in the Answer Key.

The Hiding Place 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.