

Living in Copenhagen during the German occupation of World War II affects Annemarie's family in predictable ways. There are strict food rations and curfews, and intimidating soldiers in the streets. But, Annemarie feels secure in the knowledge that she, just an ordinary person, will never be called upon to show real courage.

By the end of the story, she will do just that. She, like many real ordinary people throughout history, must decide how she will respond to injustice.

When the German forces begin to "relocate" all the Jewish residents of Copenhagen, Annemarie and her family embark upon a clever and dangerous plan. And there is one piece of the plan that Annemarie alone can complete. She is afraid; she knows the risks are great. She also knows that her friend Ellen's family, plus several other Jewish families, are counting on her to complete her task.

Which of us considers ourselves extraordinary? Yet, when the situation demands it, can we, the frightened, untrained, ordinary people, push past our fears and keep our minds focused on what must be done? Can we find the courage to protect what is important?

If your families are following and discussing politics, you might find yourselves naturally making parallels between Annemarie's story and contemporary activism. Or, you might discuss the ways we choose to be allies in our everyday lives, whenever someone needs our protection.

In the following pages, you'll find suggestions for how your March meeting could go.

**Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes**

As parents and girls arrive, allow some time for snacking and catching up. Snacks don't have to be fancy at all, it can be as simple as a picnic blanket in the backyard, or sitting around the coffee table eating popcorn and lemonade.

**Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes**

Start with a check-in about leadership goals. Did anyone practice a leadership skill since the last meeting? Did anyone try noticing and speaking up for injustice in your community?

If there's time, pairs might ask each other questions, such as: **"If you could choose to live in any historical period, which would you choose, and why?"** Give five minutes for discussion. (These could be parent-daughter pairs, or you could decide to mix up pairs.) Then, give 5-10 minutes for sharing each other's answers.

**Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so****Open-Ended Questions**

Open-ended questions are a good springboard to book talk because they allow readers to bring up any part of the book that made an impression, confused, delighted, or inspired them. If you started with an open-ended question in the first meeting, you might ask the same question this time or try a different one from the list below. Any question that gets parents and daughters sharing is a good question.

- What was your favorite part of the book? If you have the book with you, read a paragraph or two of your favorite part aloud. Why was that particular part so powerful or memorable?
- Which part of the book felt important or gave you a Big Idea?
- Was any part of the book confusing? Was your confusion cleared up by the end of the book, or not?

- How is the main character like you, and how is she different? Would you have handled the situations in the story differently than she did?
- What did the main character learn in this story, if anything?

### **Questions About *Number the Stars***

These questions about *Number the Stars* might help you begin your book talk. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups might pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to write your own discussion questions.

- Which words would you use to describe what kind of person Annemarie is? How does her character change from the beginning of the story to the end?
- How has the German occupation affected Annemarie's family? How has it affected Ellen's family? The townspeople?
- At the beginning of this story, Annemarie thinks she is just an "ordinary person, who would never be called upon for courage." What do you think about that? Is there any such thing as people who have to be brave and people who don't have to be brave?
- What did you think about Annemarie's mother's comments that her brother Henrik needs a wife to keep his house tidy?
- Annemarie says she is not brave, but Uncle Henrik says that brave means "just thinking about what you must do," even when you are afraid. Have you ever been brave in that way? Perhaps more brave than you realized you could be?

### **Leadership Goals, 15 minutes**

Pair off and talk about your leadership goals for this month. Annemarie put aside her fears in order to protect people who needed her help, even though she, like us, was just an ordinary person. What are some ways that we can protect others, even if it means going outside of our comfort zones?

Parents should set goals, too! Report back to the club next month.

**Closing, 5 minutes**

Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your April meeting (the last one of the year!). Happy reading!

**Further Reading!**

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd love to hear them! Please share them on our Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook page, so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

*Paper Wishes* by Lois Sepahban - Ten year-old Manami and her Japanese family are relocated to a Japanese internment camp during World War II. Leaving her home, and especially her little dog, behind cause Manami deep grief, but she never loses hope or stops trying to help those around her.

*Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin - Minli leaves her mountain village and goes on a fantastic voyage to seek help from the Old Man of the Moon.

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan - This historical novel set in the late 1800s tells the story of a farmer who advertises for a woman to marry him, take care of his two children, and help him on his Midwestern farm. The children, Anna and Caleb, have lost their mother, and don't know what to make of Sarah. Though she struggles to fit into their difficult life, they form tentative relationships. When she goes back home to Maine for a visit, the children worry they've lost her forever.