

CORRIE TEN BOOM'S
THE
HIDING
PLACE

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE
BY A. S. PETERSON

PRODUCTION NOTE: The autobiographical book, *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie Ten Boom (with John & Elizabeth Sherrill), was published in 1971. A film adaptation of the book premiered in 1975, starring Jeanetta Cliff George.

This stage adaptation was commissioned by A. D. Players (founded by Jeannette Cliff George) and premiered at the George Theatre in Houston, Texas, in 2019. It was re-written and re-staged for the Rabbit Room Theatre production in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2022. The film of the production was released in cinemas in August of 2023.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

1. Before seeing the film, how familiar were you with the events of the Holocaust? With the Ten Boom story?
2. Do you know of anyone who is a descendant of Holocaust survivors? How does that part of their story inform their day-to-day lives?
3. How was the time and place in which the Holocaust occurred different from our own? How was it similar?

THE HIDING PLACE
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the opening, Corrie says, “Listen. We are in the silence now, the silence between moments.” Why is the silence significant at the beginning of the show, and why does Corrie point it out? What are we being asked to “listen” to? How does the theme of silence recur throughout the story? How is the silence filled? And why does Corrie choose to end it?

2. What is the purpose of Corrie’s perspective shifting back and forth from present to past? How do Corrie’s memories influence her thoughts and actions in the present? Do you think these memories are always literal or accurate? Do you think your own memories are always accurate? If not, how does this affect your experience of them?

3. How does being a watchmaker affect Papa’s faith? How does it affect his view of the world around him, or his view of suffering and evil? How does it affect the way he lives and the choices he makes?

4. Was Papa right to hire a German apprentice in the midst of the war? Does his explanation justify it? Do you think he would make the same choice if he knew what it would cost? How do you navigate such choices in your own life? How do we balance risk with security when we are called to love our enemies?

5. Why is Otto’s comment about flowers and their uselessness telling of his character? How does the idea of usefulness and efficiency play out through the rest of the story? Is efficiency a virtue?

6. How does the usage of memory shift the meaning and impact of the story? How might the narrative feel different if it were strictly chronological? Does your experience of the world follow a purely chronological trajectory? Does your memory affect the way in which you act, feel, and react? What do you make of Corrie's statement that we exist in all our times and places at once?

7. Why were Jewish traditions important during the time the refugees hid in the Ten Boom shop? How is the scene of the Jewish passover mirrored by Corrie and Betsie in the concentration camp? What role do traditions and rites play in human experience?

8. How does Betsie's attitude about the Nazis challenge your view of those who are hateful towards you or others? Does it deepen or challenge your view of Christ? How might you have reacted to someone like Betsie if you were in a concentration camp? Was Betsie right that Papa is a martyr? Is Betsie?

9. The communion scene is based on actual survivor accounts from Ravensbruck. What is the significance of the man being tortured? How does the idea of communion in a concentration camp challenge your perception of survivor's experiences? How does the scene alter the way we might think of suffering? Of communion itself?

10. What do you make of the moment that Betsie is put into the crematorium? What does the light represent? How does this moment transform Corrie?

11. Near the end, why does young Corrie appear alongside Betsie and Papa when they are telling Corrie to listen and watch? If your past self told you to listen, to watch, what might you hear, see, or learn?

12. Is Corrie's conclusion about her experience ("He was there too...Christus Victor.") satisfying to you? Why? Or why not? Do you resonate more with her conclusion of Christ victorious? Or with her charge in the camp that "there is no god here" and she will not "get onto his train?"

13. The final scene in which Corrie shakes the Nazi's hand is based in fact. What would your reaction have been in her place? Was Corrie right to forgive? Was Otto right to ask? What does Corrie mean when she says that "forgiveness must be a scandal for it to have any power at all?"

14. What is the significance of the silent moment between Papa and Corrie at the end? What is the significance of Corrie boarding a train as the final moment of the play? What does the light represent?