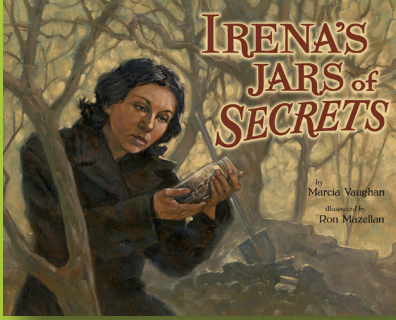


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Irena's Jars of Secrets

written by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan

About the Book

Genre: Historical Fiction
(Biography)

***Reading Level:** Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 3–7

Guided Reading Level: R

**Accelerated Reader®
Level/Points:** 5.9/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 1040L

*Reading level based on the
Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Biography,
Holocaust, Heroism and
Bravery, War, Human
Rights, World War II,
Jewish Interest

SYNOPSIS

Irena Sendler, born in 1910 to a Polish Catholic family, was raised to respect all people, regardless of their race or religion. As an adult she became a social worker, and after the Germans occupied Poland during World War II, Irena knew she had to help the Jews who were packed into the Warsaw Ghetto. She began by smuggling food, clothing, and medicine into the ghetto, then turned to smuggling children out of the ghetto. Using false papers and creative means of escape, Irena risked her own life to rescue Jewish children and hide them safely in orphanages, convents, and foster homes. Hoping to reunite the families after the war, Irena kept secret lists of the children's identities, which were buried in jars under an apple tree.

Motivated by her humanity and armed with compassion and a belief in human dignity, Irena Sendler proved to the world that an ordinary person can accomplish extraordinary deeds.



BACKGROUND

Afterword

Irena Sendler was twenty-nine years old when World War II began in 1939. As a senior administrator in the Warsaw Social Welfare Department, she helped care for the growing numbers of poor people. The Jews, especially, were in great need because the German occupying forces had taken their homes, their money, and their belongings. Defying German orders, Irena and her coworkers registered Jewish families under Christian names so they could receive aid.

When the Jewish population was imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto in October and November 1940, few knew that almost all these men, women, and children would eventually be sent to Treblinka, an extermination camp being built in northeastern Poland. When it became clear what the Germans intended, Irena joined the underground organization Zegota, the Council for Aid to Jews. Using the code name Jolanta and a pass from the Contagious Disease Department, Irena gained entry into the ghetto to check sanitary conditions. This gave her and her network of social workers and rescuers a chance to sneak in food, medicine, and money. Even though the work was extremely dangerous, they also managed to smuggle children past the Nazi guards and out of the ghetto.

“We would go to the ghetto and try to get as many children as possible because the situation would worsen every day,” Irena Sendler said later.

Irena and her Zegota workers told the

foster families and organizations that the Jewish children they agreed to care for must be reunited with their parents or relatives when the war ended. She kept careful records of each child's Jewish name and false identity on two identical lists. They were kept in glass jars and buried under an apple tree in a friend's garden across the street from the German soldier's barracks. The secrecy of this information was vital to the survival of the children and all who helped them.

World War II ended in 1945. Germany had been defeated, but not before millions of people in Europe had been murdered, including six million Jews. One and one-half million of those were children. This systematic killing by the Germans and their allies is known as the Holocaust.

When Irena's lists were dug up for the last time, they contained the names of approximately twenty-five hundred rescued children, although the exact number is not known.

For many years Poland's Communist government ignored Irena's story and the stories of other brave Polish people who helped Jews during the war. But Irena's selfless deeds were recognized in 1965 by Yad Vashem, the Jewish people's memorial to the Holocaust. Irena Sendler was honored as Righteous Among the Nations, a title given to non-Jews who risked their own lives to save Jewish people during the Holocaust. In 1991 she was made an honorary citizen of Israel. After the fall of Poland's Communist government, in 2003 Irena was awarded by the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest honor.



That year she was also given the Jan Karski Freedom Award for Valor and Compassion by Freedom House and the American Center of Polish Culture. And in 2007 Irena Sendler was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. When her photograph appeared in the newspapers, people began to call, “I remember your face,” the callers said. “It was you who took me out of the ghetto.”

Irena Sendler spent the last years of her life in a nursing home in Warsaw. She was cared for by Elzbieta Ficowska, who as a baby had been smuggled out of the ghetto in a carpenter’s box hidden under a load of bricks.

In 2008, at the age of ninety-eight, Irena Sendler was one of the last surviving members of the children’s department of Zegota. Although she passed away on May 12 of that year, her story of caring and courage moves on.

Additional LEE & LOW Women’s Biographical & Historical Fiction Titles:

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by London Ladd
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher>

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone written by Katheryn-Russell Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/little-melba-and-her-big-trombone>

In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage written by Alan Schroeder, illustrated by JaeMe Bereal
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/in-her-hands>

The Storyteller’s Candle written by Lucía González, illustrated by Luu Delacre
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-storyteller-s-candle-la-velita-de-los-cuentos>

Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Lin Wang
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/shining-star>

Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree written by William Miller, illustrated by Cornelius VanWright & Ying-Hwa Hu
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/zora-hurston-and-the-chinaberry-tree>

Catching the Moon written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students.

Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

Warsaw, Poland, typhus epidemic, Jewish, Adolf Hitler, World War II, Nazi Party, Europe, Warsaw Ghetto, social worker, Treblinka, extermination camp, Zegota, Gestapo, Pawiak prison

Academic

intended, eliminate, inferior, smuggle, deception, betrayed, collaborator, execution

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you know about World War II? What were some of the most important events in World War II? What was happening in Germany and Europe? What are some of the legacies of the war?
2. What do you know about the Holocaust? Who was targeted in the Holocaust? Who led the persecution and murder of the Jewish people and other groups? What are some of the legacies of the Holocaust?
3. What do you think courage means? How would you demonstrate and show courage? How have you seen others being courageous? What are some examples of courage, both in your own life and in the world?
4. What does compassion mean to you? What does it mean to be compassionate? How do you show and demonstrate compassion to others?
5. What female historical figures do you admire? How did they change history? Why is it important to learn about them? What are their accomplishments?
6. What does it mean to be persistent? How do you demonstrate persistence even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be persistent? Do you think persistence can be learned? How so?
7. What does it mean to stand up for what's right? What are some instances in history where people have had to stand for what they believe in even though they encountered adversity and opposition?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book,



Irena's Jars of Secrets. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

2. Read Author Marcia Vaughan's Biography: Read about Marcia Vaughan on the back page of the book. Marcia Vaughan was inspired to tell Irena Sendler's story after reading her obituary in 2008 and discovering her work through Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project, an organization dedicated to bringing Irena Sendler's story to the world.
3. Read Illustrator Ron Mazellan's Biography: Read about Ron Mazellan on the back. After reading the book, encourage students to think about how they would describe Ron Mazellan's artistic style? Students can also look at other pieces in Ron Mazellan's collection at his Indiana University Wesylan Faculty Artwork page: <https://www.indwes.edu/undergraduate/division-of-art-and-design/faculty-artwork/ron-mazellan>.
4. Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
5. Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what inspired Irena Sendler to help Jewish children during World War II
- how Irena Sendler saved thousands of Jewish children during World War II

- how Irena Sendler used her creativity and problem-solving skills to avoid German guards
- how Irena Sendler demonstrates persistence and bravery
- what impact Irena Sendler had on the children and their families
- why Irena Sendler is a World War II hero and how her legacy has changed the world

Encourage students to consider why the author, Marcia Vaughan, would want to share with young people this story about Irena Sendler and how she saved Jewish children during World War II.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Where was Irena Sendler born?
2. What did Irena's parents raise her to believe?
3. What happened when Irena was seven years old?
4. What was unique about Irena's father?
5. How did Irena's father die?
6. What were Irena's father's last words to her?
7. What happened in 1939?



“Vaughan tells the story without embellishment, employing stark, unadorned syntax that never wavers into pathos, sentiment or myth... Mazellan’s very dark, deeply shadowed oil paintings capture the unabated terrors and sorrow... Powerful.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Mazellan’s dramatic oil paintings—mostly in appropriate dark, somber grays and browns—cover most of each spread, leaving a buff-colored strip to hold the succinctly written, yet descriptive, text that can be understood even by those who have little or no knowledge of World War II or the Holocaust.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Vaughan and Mazellan have created a fine piece of historical storytelling, with brisk, reportorial prose and shadowy, impressionistic oil paintings that offer gripping testimony to the full horror and high stakes of the times.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

8. Who was the leader of the Nazi party? What did he intend to do?
9. Where did German soldiers force Jewish people living in the Warsaw area?
10. Why was Irena able to enter the ghetto?
11. What was the ghetto like? What did Irena observe inside?
12. How long did Irena keep going to the ghetto? What did she bring?
13. What happened in 1942?
14. What organization did Irena join? Why did she become a member?
15. What did Irena become in Zegota?
16. What did Irena have to convince families to let her do? How was this difficult? What did Irena say to the families?
17. Where did Irena say she would keep a record of the children’s real names?
18. How did Irena save the children in the ambulance from the guards?
19. What did Irena tell the children to do when she takes them out of the ghetto in the ambulance? What were the techniques she used to deceive the guards?
20. What were other ways that Irena smuggled children out of the ghetto?
21. Where were children taken once they were out of the ghetto?
22. Where did Irena place her lists of children’s real and false identities?
23. What happened to Irena in October 1943? What did the guards demand of her in prison? What was her sentence?
24. How was Irena able to avoid execution? How did members of Zegota help her?
25. How did Irena continue to work for Zegota?
26. How many names were on Irena’s lists after World War II ended in 1945?
27. Where did Irena give the lists of the names? What happened to the children?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Irena’s Jars of Secrets* mean to you after reading? Why did your perceptions of Irena Sendler change after reading the story?
2. How did Irena Sendler use her persistence and perseverance to help Jewish children? What were some of the ways that she helped children escape, and how did she use her problem solving and critical thinking skills in critical times?



3. How did Irena's father inspire her mission in life? How did she use his words throughout her work during World War II? Why do you think the way that Irena was raised, to respect all people regardless of religion or race, affected the way she helped people?
4. Why do you think Irena was so honest with parents and families who she was helping? Why do you think she was upfront with them when she told them that she had to take their children away?
5. How did Irena demonstrate composure in tense periods? Why do you think she acted the way she did whenever she was approached by guards? How did she make other children act when she was taking them out of the ghetto?
6. How would you describe Irena Sendler to a person who had never heard of her before? What are some of the qualities that you would use to speak about Irena? What are the most important things to say when explaining Irena Sendler's life and legacy?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Irena's Jars of Secrets*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
6. What does courage and bravery mean to students after reading? After reading *Irena's Jars of Secrets*, how does your view of being brave change? What does it mean to be courageous even though you're afraid, especially when it means helping someone in need?
7. Why did Irena risk her life to save thousands of Jewish children? Despite obstacles and the possibility of death, how did Irena continue her mission to save children from the Nazis and concentration and extermination camps?
8. How has a family member impacted your life? Irena Sendler was inspired by some early lessons from her father, who was the only doctor in her area who would treat poor Jewish patients with typhus. How has a family member or teacher's words inspired you to pursue an important cause in your life?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about Irena's dedication to saving Jewish children from concentration and extermination camps. How did she show her dedication to her mission throughout World War II, and the rest of her life?
2. What do you think the message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Marcia Vaughan's intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Irena's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:



- Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about how Irena's story inspired them and how she demonstrated bravery and persistence throughout World War II.
 5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Have students make a list of the times that Irena had to save children in the face of fear and the guards. Students can look in the text for the different events that Irena had to save children from the German guards. Then students should make a graphic organizer: Problem/Confrontation; How Irena Solved the Problem. Students can refer back to this list when thinking about how Irena faced so many different obstacles and life-threatening situations and how she saved children when confronting the Nazis in Poland. What qualities does she demonstrate in each of these instances? What earlier in her life or background may have prepared her to react the way that she did in these moments?
2. Have students write an essay or reaction to Irena's quote, "Every child saved with my help and the help of all the wonderful secret messengers, who today are no longer living, is the justification of my existence on this earth, and not a title to glory." What do students think of when they read this statement? Have students talk about Irena's humility and her loyalty to her mission to help others. What does it mean to be humble? How do Irena's words inspire them in their own lives? Ask students to think about what Irena might think about having a book written about her and a book that is written for the audience of young people.
3. Provide students with excerpts from the text about how Irena's father inspired her: "he held his daughter's hand and told her that if she ever saw someone drowning, she must jump in and try to save that person, even if she could not swim" and "The Jewish people are drowning, she thought, and she knew that she had to help them." How is this the word "drowning" in both excerpts an example of a metaphor, and what did both Irena and her father mean by "drowning?" How does this word demonstrate what was happening to Jewish people during World War II and in the ghettos? Why did they use



this word to demonstrate the impact of what was occurring? Have students write a reaction essay to both excerpts from the text and how the metaphor centered Irena's work. Then ask students to write a persuasive essay arguing whether they agree with Irena's father's statement or not. Is it applicable to current events today? Can young people contribute similarly? Why or why not?

4. If possible, provide students with copies of *The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-world-war-ii-hero-irena-sendler>), the chapter book counterpart to *Irena's Jars of Secrets*. Have students compare and contrast the experiences of reading and engaging with both texts. What did they learn from *Irena's Jars of Secrets* that helped them to prepare to engage with *The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler*? (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-car-engineer-soichiro-honda>) What did students learn in *The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler* that they didn't learn in *Irena's Jars of Secrets*? Have students write a reflection piece about the experience of reading both texts. Students can also examine how both picture books and chapter books are important for reading and learning.
5. Have students read the LEE & LOW interview with Marcia Vaughan and Ron Mazellan about *Irena's Jars of Secrets* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/irena-s-jars-of-secrets/interviews>). Have students write a journal entry in response to the interview. What did the interview make them think about? What new information did they learn about Irena Sendler, the author, and the illustrator? What resonated with students the most after reading the interview? In a letter to the author or illustrator, students can ask other questions they would like to ask both Marcia Vaughan and Ron Mazellan after reading the book.
6. After reading *Irena's Jars of Secrets*, encourage students to look at more

resources about Irena Sendler. Some additional sources of information include *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler project* (<http://www.irenasendler.org/>), PBS' *Irena Sendler: In the Name of Mothers* (<http://www.pbs.org/program/irena-sendler>), and Yad Vashem's "Women of Valor" (<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/sendler.asp>). Students can pick a photo, fact, or anecdote about Irena and write a reaction to it. What did they learn about Irena from this source that they hadn't learned in the book? Encourage students to critically think about and analyze the difference between reading an informational text and looking at facts and photographs. How did they learn differently? What did it make them think about?

7. Encourage students to select a resource from the Author's Sources from the back of the book. Students can examine the piece, whether it's a book, video, photograph, or website, and write a reaction to how they think the author and illustrator were informed by this information and how it helped to develop the book.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Help students investigate and conduct a research project on the Holocaust. There are many different resources that you can use to inform your unit on the Holocaust. Listed below are respected organizations that help educators teach about the Holocaust through a sensitive and rigorous lens:
 - Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center has a list of lesson plans broken down by grade and topic for elementary through high school (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/lesson_plans/index.asp)



- Echoes & Reflections is dedicated to educating students about the Holocaust and changing the ways that teachers understand, process, and learn about events of the Holocaust (<https://echoesandreflections.org/teach/>). There are lesson plans, timelines, and resources to help you prepare to teach about the Holocaust.
 - The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a Resources for Educators page that has Lesson Plans, additional curricular resources, and Teacher Training Programs (<https://www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans>). If possible, plan a visit to this museum located in Washington, D.C.
 - The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center has Book Lists for young readers, a Holocaust Curriculum Guide, Educator Tours, and other resources about teaching and learning about the Holocaust. (<https://hhrecny.org/curriculum/>)
2. Yad Vashem has a section dedicated to “Women of Valor: Stories of Women Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust.” (<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/index.asp>) Students can pick another female, besides Irena Sendler, from the selection and work in pairs or small groups to research more about this individual. What did she do to help save Jewish people from the Holocaust? Consider having students compare and contrast her efforts to Irena Sendler. How were they similar? How were they different?
 3. As a follow-up activity, encourage students to research other female historical figures and how they affected history. What did they accomplish? How do these women transcend stereotypes associated with gender during the time period? Furthermore, have students compare and contrast how female historical figures are taught about in contrast to men during that time period in history. What kind of language is used? How are women portrayed in different historical texts and sources from that time period?
 4. Author Marcia Vaughan discovered Sendler’s story first as an obituary. Have students track down multiple obituaries of Sendler’s story from different media outlets. Compare these to each other and Vaughan’s descriptions of Sendler’s life. Have students analyze what aspects of Sendler’s life are highlighted and what her legacy is. Going further, encourage students to find someone in a featured obituary (written by a staff writer, not submitted by family) in a local, regional, or national newspaper. Based on the obituary and any additional research, students should write a story for young people about this person: What can we learn from this person’s life? As a class, reflect on what it is like to write about another person and their life and with the intention of sharing it with young people.
 5. Support students in researching additional people who contributed to the resistance of the Nazis and saving people from the persecution and extermination of the Holocaust. Students can read about Chiune Sugihara in *Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/passage-to-freedom>). Students can learn about people who risked their lives to rescue Jewish people from the Holocaust at The Righteous Among The Nation database (<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous.html>). Trees have been planted to commemorate the rescuers. See if any books for children and young people have been written about these heroic efforts and encourage students to try to create their own.



Science/STEM

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Encourage students to learn more about the Typhus epidemic and its history. Students can find out how it originated and what other populations it has affected. What are the symptoms of this disease, and what were the courses of treatment over time? What does typhus look like today and how is it treated?

Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Inspire students to think about the style of illustrations in *Irena's Jars of Secrets*. Why do students think the illustrator chose particular colors and styles for the illustrations in this book? How did it make them engage with the book differently? Students can select an illustration that resonated with them from the story. How does this illustration make them feel? How do the colors and style choices affect how they view the story?
2. Encourage students to select an illustration that resonated with them from the story. Have students write a reflection about that illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Provide students with a copy of LEE & LOW's *Irena's Jars of Secrets* or *The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-world-war-ii-hero-irena-sendler>). Encourage family members to read the chapter book version of *Irena's Jars of Secrets* at home. Have students and their families talk about how this story about such an important historical figure and how she impacted their view of World War II and the Holocaust.
2. Encourage students, family members, and guardians to research Holocaust memorials, museums, and resources. If possible, have families and children look at resources at home. Yad Vashem has a general Holocaust Resource Center for more in-depth information about the Holocaust (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource_center/index.asp). The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has resources for Survivors and their Families if relevant or applicable to students and families in the classroom. (<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/office-of-survivor-affairs/resources-for-survivors-and-their-families>)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcia Vaughan has written numerous books for young readers, including picture books, beginning readers, and both fiction and nonfiction series. She was inspired to write *Irena's Jars of Secrets* after reading Irena Sendler's obituary in 2008 and discovering more about her through the work of Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project, an organization dedicated to bringing Irena Sendler's story to the world. Vaughan lives in Tacoma, Washington.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Ron Mazellan is the illustrator of several award-winning picture books. He is also Professor of Art at Indiana Wesleyan University. Mazellan was drawn to this story by Irena Sendler's character and her multiple selfless acts of kindness and courage toward those who had little hope of survival. Mazellan lives in Marion, Indiana, with his wife and their three sons.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

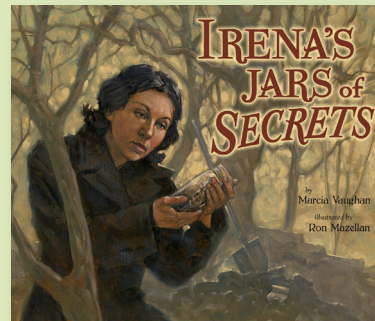
www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

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Book Information for *Irena's Jars of Secrets*



\$10.95, PAPERBACK

978-1-62014-252-3

40 pages, 11 X 9

*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 3–7

Guided Reading Level: R

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: Biography, Holocaust, Heroism and Bravery, War, Human Rights, World War II, Jewish Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/irena-s-jars-of-secrets>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.