

Yellow Star

Guide for Teachers and Book Groups: Discussion Questions

- 1) Why is the book titled *Yellow Star*? What does the yellow star symbolize?
- 2) How does Sylvia's imagination help her through the hard times?
- 3) What is the meaning of the saying, "Live for today, for tomorrow we may fry in the pan!"? (38)
- 4) Discuss the use of color throughout the book. Give specific examples.
- 5) What do these foods mean to Sylvia?
 - green beans (34)
 - apple (153)
 - soup (155-7)
 - the "Chef's" recipes (159-60)
 - pear (168-73)
 - chocolate (216-7)
- 6) How does Dora change as the book progresses. Why? Is this typical of sibling relationships?
- 7) Which character is most like you? Why?
- 8) If you could go back in time and talk to Sylvia, what would you say?
- 9) Discuss the use of rumor in the verse "Women's Work" and contrast it with the last paragraph of the verse (15)
- 10) Discuss the use of imagery and metaphor in "love" (49)
- 11) In "Goodbye, Children!" the Nazis use what is known as "spin" when they make an announcement. How would you – as a parent or child – feel about this announcement?
- 12) Discuss how the author seems to make time slow down from p. 73-8. How does this section make you feel?
- 13) What does Dora mean when she says "They think we killed their God"? (90)
- 14) Is there an answer to "Another Question"? (103-4)
- 15) Interpret Sylvia's dream. (120-2)
- 16) In your own life, what warms your heart? (151) "that even soup can't touch?"
- 17) Discuss "Nobody Special" (102), where Sylvia compares herself to others. Is she accurate? Do you know anyone who might think of him/herself as "invisible"?
- 18) What does Sylvia mean when she thinks "the twelve of us, in a way, were their children too." (182)

- 19) Sylvia and her family are close to starving and freezing to death, when something happens. How is the timing of the bombing helpful to Sylvia both physically and emotionally? (202)
- 20) What does Papa mean by “the language of our history”? Why is he crying? (209)
- 21) Discuss the liberation, the Russian soldier, the yellow star, the chocolate. (Even the author was amazed that this was all true!)
- 22) Did you like or not like this book? Why or why not? Did you learn anything from it?
- 23) How does reading a book in verse differ from reading regular prose?