



Let the Celebrations Begin!

Author: Margaret Wild
Illustrator: Julie Vivas
ISBN: 978-0-7636-7013-9
\$16.99 (\$19.00 CAN)

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Text © 2013 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

These materials were developed for educators in Australia. They have been revised from the original and may not directly correlate to U.S. curriculum.

Summary

My name is Miriam, and this is where I live. Hut 18, bed 22.

The younger children think they have always lived in the hut, but Miriam knows better. She remembers her parents and her home, with her very own toys. In this place there are no toys. So Miriam and the women come up with a special plan to celebrate the day when the soldiers open the gates to freedom.

About the author/illustrator

Margaret Wild is the author of numerous books for children, including *There's a Sea in My Bedroom*, short-listed for the Kate Greenaway Medal. She and Julie Vivas have also collaborated on many books, including *The Very Best of Friends*. Margaret Wild lives in Australia.

Julie Vivas is an award-winning illustrator perhaps best known for *The Nativity*. She is also the illustrator of *Possum Magic* and *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, both written by Mem Fox. Julie Vivas lives in Australia.

How to use these notes

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide range of ages and abilities. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Grades 2–5
- Ages 7–10

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History

Example of:

- Picture book
- Historical fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Death
- Loss
- Hope
- World War II
- History

Please note

The content of this book may be disturbing to any child who has been in detention, a war zone, or somehow detained. Students who come from a significant social disadvantage may also find this book upsetting.

Though not explicitly stated, this book deals with Nazi concentration camps and the Holocaust. Please be aware of this when choosing the audience for the book.

For the purpose of these classroom ideas, page numbering will be in spreads and will begin on title page spread.

Discussion questions and activities

- Before reading *Let the Celebrations Begin!*, view the cover of the book. Identify the following:
 - The title
 - The author
 - The illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The summary
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?
- What is the purpose of this book (tell a story, give information, persuade, etc.)? Does it have more than one purpose? How can you tell? Who is the intended audience for this book?
- Why do some words have a capital letter when they aren't at the beginning of a sentence?
- Look at the scene on spread 1, particularly at the large fence. What do you think is happening in this picture? What are the buildings for?
- Do you think the people in this story can go where they want and do what they want? Why?
- Look at how the characters are drawn on spreads 2 and 3. What do the illustrations tell you about these characters? How are these characters feeling? Compare this to the illustrations on spreads 4 and 5.
- Imagine if someone locked the gates around your school and you couldn't get out. How would you get food? What would you do for fun?
- How do we know that these people are hungry? Look for clues in both the text and illustrations.
- Some of the children can remember what their lives were like before they were in the camp. How are their lives different from before?
- The women start collecting items to make toys for the children. Make a list of all the items they collect.
- Why were the women so excited about making toys for the children? Why were they willing to cut up their clothes and stay up at night to make them?
- How do you think the children feel when the soldiers come and open the gate? Do you think the children who remember life before the camp would react differently than those who don't?
- What do the children plan to do with the toys they receive?
- The toys are going to be very special for the children as they grow up. Do you have something that is very important to you because it holds lots of memories for you, such as a photo, something you found, or a gift you received?
- Look around your classroom, school, and home for small scraps of fabric, paper, buttons, string, or anything that could be used to make a toy. Create a toy using only found objects.
- Compare the completed toys on spreads 13 and 14 to the toys that Miriam remembers from her childhood on spread 6. Discuss the similarities and differences.
- On spread 7, Jacoba calls the women "dummkopfs." What does this tell you about where the story is set? What does *dummkopfs* mean?
- Research the author Margaret Wild and the illustrator Julie Vivas. What other books have they written and illustrated?