

Jehovah's Witnesses

Elizabeth Dopazo's parents were Jehovah's Witnesses. They were taken to concentration camp. Elizabeth and her brother were sent to their grandparents.

Elizabeth recalls:

"My grandparents were also Jehovah's Witnesses, but not as strong. They stopped going to meetings when we came because they felt they would be arrested too and then what would happen to us? So they kept a very low profile.

We had to quickly change our way of speaking so maybe we wouldn't be so noticeable. At school we had to raise our right arm and say "Heil Hitler" and all that sort of things, and then we didn't do it a few times. It was all right a few times. You can drop a handkerchief, you can do a little something, but quickly they look and they say, "Ah, you're different and you're new in school" so you're watched a little more closely. You might get one or two children who'd tell on you. The teacher would bring you to the front of the class and say "why don't you say Heil Hitler? And you were shaking..."

Later, around age 12 or 13, the Gestapo came to my grandparents' house, just like you've seen it in the movies with long leather coats. "Your grandchildren have to join the Hitler Jugend. If they don't by Thursday - we will take stronger measures".

As time went on, my brother, when he was thirteen or fourteen, sort of was swayed. You know. You have to believe in something. He wanted to be a German officer and said our father had been wrong all along...

(Facing History, p. 232)

Jehovah's Witnesses - 1

Discussion at the dinner table. Grandpa and grandma ask about school today.

Children: what do you choose to tell? What do you ask your grandparents?

Grandparents: How do you react? What do you tell the children?

Try to make the audience understand the situation without reading the full text.

Jehovah's Witnesses - 2

The Gestapos have just left. All four of you sit in the room and.... What? What goes on?

(What do you say? What do you do?)

Try to make the audience understand the situation without reading the full text.

Jehovah's Witnesses - 3

The last days of the war, the city is bombed every night. An unexpected encounter in the street between Elizabeth and her grandparents – and her brother, their grandson. He is in full HJ uniform and rushing on duty. He is recruited, and does not live in the house for some weeks now. The encounter takes you by surprise... What goes on?

Try to make the audience understand the situation without reading the full text.