

Session 2: Love and Separation

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do we remember people, places, or things from which we are separated?
- How might we feel if we were separated from people, places, or things we love?

Overview: In this session, families will interact with the picture book, *Hold On to Your Music: The Inspiring True Story of the Children of Willesden Lane (Hold On to Your Music)* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen, adapted by Emil Sher. The themes for the activities are love and separation while the focus literacy skill is using a picture walk to encourage conversation while reading.

Component	Materials	Digital Materials
Children's Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book: <i>Hold On to Your Music</i> • Paper and writing materials • Chart paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Illustrations from <i>Hold On to Your Music</i></u> • Optional audio recordings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ <u><i>Clair de Lune</i> (performed by Mona Golabek) (5:27)</u> ◊ <u><i>Grieg Piano Concerto in A Minor, 2nd Movement (Excerpt)</i> (performed by Mona Golabek and the Chicago Youth Symphony) (2:57)</u> ◊ <u><i>Moonlight Sonata</i> (performed by Mona Golabek) (5:20)</u> ◊ <u><i>Rachmaninoff Prelude in C# Minor</i> (performed by Mona Golabek) (3:34)</u>
Parent Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book: <i>Hold On to Your Music</i> • Chart paper • Writing materials • Creations from first session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clip of Testimony: Vera Gissing https://bit.ly/VGissingTestimony (2:07) • <u>Brief History of Kindertransport and Map</u> • <u>Facilitator Resource: Vera Gissing bio</u>
Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book: <i>Hold On to Your Music</i> • Chart with model questions for caregiver reference during picture walk activity • Paper and writing materials for letter writing, including stamps/envelopes • Prompts for letter writing written on chart paper • Handout: Letter Writing Template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Brief History of Kindertransport and Map</u>

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Learning Goals

- Use a picture walk to predict what will happen in a story using details from illustrations.
- Help children make connections between historical events, stories, and their own lives.

Welcome and Introductions.

Welcome children to the workshop. Remind them of any expectations for the space (sitting vs. moving around, noise level expectations, etc.) and make introductions.

CONSIDER:

Opening Activity

1. Remind children that in the last session, we shared about music we loved and how it made us feel. This time, we are going to think about other things (and people) we love. We are going to take a picture walk for a story about a girl named Lisa who loved music.
2. Draw a heart on the chart paper. Ask children to think about the many different things that this symbol represents. Invite children to share their ideas with the group. (Examples could include love, friendship, family, Valentine's Day, love for pets, caregivers, etc.)
3. Ask children: What do you love (e.g., people, pets, toys)? What kinds of things do you love to do? (Offer examples like sports they enjoy, food they like to eat, their favorite subject in school, what they like to play on the playground or with friends). Does anyone love to play an instrument like Lisa?
4. Have them take turns sharing with a partner three to five things that they love.
5. Ask children to think about people they love. Have they ever been separated from them—even for a short time? How do they remember loved ones when they are not together? What would they like to tell their loved one?
6. Let children know that later they will have a chance to write a letter or draw a picture to a loved one.

COLLECT:

Literacy Skill: Picture Walk

1. Explain to children that later, they will be reading a book about a girl named Lisa who loved a lot of things like they do. She loved her home, her family, and playing the piano.
2. Show children the cover of *Hold On to Your Music* and explain that they will read this book with caregivers later, but now they are taking a picture walk to see what the book might be about.
3. Let children know they will start the picture walk with just a few pictures. Show children the front cover of *Hold On to Your Music* and ask children what they think the book might be about based on the title and pictures.
4. Show the title page and ask if the picture on the title page adds any information to what was learned from the cover.
5. Next, share the picture of Lisa and her parents at the train station. Use the familiar question words—who, what, where, when, why, which, how—to ask questions about the pictures, such as:
 - a. Who are the people in the pictures?
 - b. Where do you think the story is taking place?
 - c. What is happening in the story?
 - d. When did the story take place?
 - e. How do you think the story is going to end?
 - f. What other books or stories do you think it might be like?
 - g. How do you think this book might talk about love?
 - h. How might it talk about being separated from someone—or something—you love?
6. Remind children to support their ideas with evidence using key details from the book's illustrations and model this by giving an example of how you might support one of your own ideas using key visual details as evidence. (Example: "I think she is saying goodbye to her parents—she and her parents both look sad, and she is the only one with a suitcase and there is a train behind her.")

Facilitators' Note:

A Picture Walk is a literacy strategy that can be used to help children make predictions or introduce new vocabulary. The strategy is typically used with an unfamiliar picture book. Children look at all or some of the pictures in the book and have conversations about the illustrations with a more experienced reader. Children are encouraged to discuss what they see and what might be happening. The text in the book is not read during a picture walk.

7. Introduction to Historical Context: Explain to children that Lisa's family sent her on the train to London to keep her safe. This rescue effort was called the Kindertransport or Child's Transport. A brief history of the Kindertransport is provided in this guide for the facilitator's background knowledge.
8. After the picture walk, reemphasize Lisa's love of the piano. Point out that Lisa is holding sheet music and is shown with her piano. Encourage children to discuss where and how they see music in their lives and to draw something they love about music. (Facilitators' note: Consider selecting a piece of music suitable for your audience to play in the background while children are drawing.)
9. If time permits, allow children to share their pictures with the group or post them in a gallery corner.

PARENT TIME

Goals

- Help caregivers understand why and how to use picture walks to preview and predict stories and build interest before reading.
- Encourage caregivers to talk to children about books before, during, and after reading together.
- Help caregivers build their children’s reading comprehension skills.

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome caregivers to the workshop. Allow time for participants to introduce themselves again. Invite questions or comments about the previous session or anything that came up between convenings. Encourage families to talk to a partner about a text they looked at since the previous session and how they discussed it with their child. Introduce the concept of a picture walk and that we will be trying this technique with children later.

CONSIDER:

Opening Activity

1. Begin by taking a gallery walk around the space to view the artwork that families made during session 1. Invite caregivers to think about a picture walk in a similar way—they will be “walking” through a book and thinking about the illustrations.
2. To prepare for reading *Hold On to Your Music*, ask them to think about the themes of love and separation.
3. Invite them to share:
 - a. Have you ever been away from or separated from someone you love?
 - b. If so, how did it feel? If not, how do you imagine it might feel?
 - c. What did you/what would you do to make yourself feel better?
 - d. How did/would that help you?

COLLECT:

Introduction to the Historical Context—Kindertransport

1. Explain that the main character in *Hold On to Your Music* was separated from her family during World War II when she escaped Austria via the Kindertransport.
2. Display the [Kindertransport Routes & What was the Kindertransport](#) document. Read aloud to caregivers and invite participants to share their reactions.
3. Introduce participants to the testimony clip from Vera Gissing, who had to leave her home in Czechoslovakia and travel by train on the Kindertransport to reach safety in Great Britain. Explain to participants that Vera was saved by the Kindertransport. She shares her personal story from the Kindertransport and the subsequent separation from her family.
4. Play the video clip of Vera Gissing’s testimony. <https://bit.ly/VGissingTestimony>
5. Discuss how Vera and her family coped with separation. How did they “hold on” to each other?
6. Let caregivers know that we will listen to this testimony again during PACT Time and discuss with children.

Literacy Skill: Picture Walk

Explain to caregivers that picture walks are a way to encourage children to talk about books and build their understanding of texts. They can help build interest in the story before beginning to read. It’s an important way to improve their child’s reading comprehension, and picture books and picture walks can be used with children of any age!

1. Introduce the book *Hold On to Your Music*. Emphasize to caregivers that this book tells a true story and that reading books about historical events builds children’s knowledge of the world around them.
2. Explain to caregivers that we are going to take a picture walk. Ask them to focus on the pictures, not words, as they talk about what they see.
3. The facilitator should go through the book page by page, asking questions and noticing the illustrations and what they might tell us about the book.
 - a. Focus on things like facial expressions, body language, characters, setting (time/place), etc.

Facilitators’ Note:

Emphasize to caregivers that picture books are useful for people of all ages. Older children, especially reluctant readers, often connect better to visual imagery while reading, and many picture books include subject matter that older readers can relate to. Picture books can also be helpful for English language learners of all ages! Being able to read the meaning behind images is also an example of practicing digital literacy, as discussed in the previous session.

- b. Encourage participants to make predictions. For example, what does the cover illustration tell them about what the book might be about?
 - c. Also, encourage participants to make real-world connections between what they see in the illustrations and their own lives.
 - d. Continue the picture walk of the book with caregivers.
4. Lead discussion among caregivers:
 - a. What were you thinking as we did the picture walk together?
 - b. What would your children think of this picture walk activity activity?
 - c. How might picture walks work in your home?
5. Remind caregivers that in our previous session, the focus was on digital literacy and having conversations with children about a variety of texts—including visual and audio media. Families can make predictions about other types of media similar to what we did today in the picture walk.
6. Wrap up the activity by reminding caregivers of the value of picture walks in encouraging conversations about books and building their child’s reading comprehension skills. This interaction makes reading more enjoyable for everyone!

Facilitators’ Note:

A Picture Walk is a literacy strategy that can be used to help children make predictions or introduce new vocabulary. The strategy is typically used with an unfamiliar picture book. Children look at all or some of the pictures in the book and have conversations about the illustrations with a more experienced reader. Children are encouraged to discuss what they see and what might be happening. The text in the book is not read during a picture walk.

PREPARE FOR PACT TIME

1. Each family will receive a copy of *Hold On to Your Music* so they can do a picture walk together during PACT Time.
2. Explain to caregivers that they do not need to ask the same questions that the facilitator did, but that they should ask open ended questions about illustrations on each page. For example:
 - a. What do you notice?
 - b. What might be happening here?
 - c. How might the person on this page feel?
 - d. Where are they?

3. Ask participants to break into pairs and practice doing a picture walk together. They can focus on three pages: front cover, title page, family at train station. Facilitators can shadow participants and support their practice. Answer any questions that come up.
4. Let caregivers know that when they finish taking the picture walk and discussing the story, they can read *Hold On to Your Music* aloud.
5. Explain to caregivers that after everyone completes the picture walk, children will write a letter to a loved one or someone they are separated from.
6. Explain to families that caregivers can help children think of who to address the letter to and brainstorm ideas of what to say. If the child gets stuck when writing, some prompts might be:
 - a. “I miss doing _____ with you.”
 - b. “Something fun I did recently was _____.”
 - c. “I remember you by _____.”
 - d. Ask caregivers to brainstorm other prompts.
7. Keep prompts posted for PACT Time.
8. Offer alternatives/supports for letter writing:
 - a. Participants should feel free to write in their heart language.
 - b. Participants should feel free to use phonetic spelling instead of emphasizing correctness.
 - c. Children can also draw a picture to a loved one instead. If choosing to draw a picture, think about prompts for drawing:
 - i. An activity you like doing with your loved one.
 - ii. Something you did recently.
 - iii. Something you’d like your loved one to know about (playing a sport, making friends, etc.).
 - iv. A memory with your loved one.
 - v. Ask caregivers to brainstorm other prompts.

Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®

CONSTRUCT:

Literacy Skill: Picture Walk

1. Remind caregivers and children that they are taking a picture walk through the book, *Hold On to Your Music*. Point out the resource chart with sample questions that caregivers can use. Other questions might include:
 - a. Who are the people in the pictures?
 - b. Where do you think the story is taking place?
 - c. What is happening in the story?
 - d. When did the story take place?
 - e. How do you think the story is going to end?
 - f. What genre do you think this story is?
 - g. How do you think it connects to the ideas of love and separation?
 - h. What connections can you make to the pictures in the story?
2. After families complete their picture walk, remind them to begin reading the book together.
3. Make sure families know where to gather when the activity time is over.
4. Facilitators can shadow families and support their picture walk activity.

Alternate: Facilitators can direct families to use just the three illustrations: front cover, title page, and illustration of the family at the train station, instead of going through the whole book.

Introduction to Historical Context: Testimony

1. Display the Kindertransport Routes & What was the Kindertransport document used in Parent Time.
2. Explain to families that the main character in *Hold On to Your Music* was separated from her family during World War II when she escaped Austria.
3. Introduce the testimony clip of Vera Gissing, a Jewish survivor who was born on July 4, 1928 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic.) In her testimony, Vera describes saying goodbye to her school, friends, and her family to travel on the Kindertransport.

4. Explain to participants that, like Lisa from *Hold On to Your Music*, Vera was saved by a special program called the Kindertransport that protected Jewish children who were in danger. She shares her personal story from the Kindertransport and the subsequent separation from her family. Point out that Lisa was from Vienna while Vera was from Prague.
5. Play the video clip of Vera Gissing's testimony. <https://bit.ly/VGissingTestimony>
6. Discuss how Vera and her family coped with the separation. How did they "hold on" to each other?

CONSTRUCT:

Write a Letter

1. Let families know that children are now going to write a letter/draw a picture for someone they love or someone they are separated from. Offer writing instruments and paper, including handouts of the [letter writing template](#).
2. Remind families that caregivers can help children think about who to address the letter to and brainstorm ideas of what to say. Direct families to the prompts created during Children's Education/Parent Time. Remind caregivers of alternatives for writing letters.
3. Shadow families and offer support for letter-writing and drawing.

Facilitators' Note:

Testimony is a *primary source*. Primary sources are first-hand accounts of an event or subject. They might include diaries, letters, speeches, photographs, newspapers from the time, etc. Testimony is a primary source because people are talking about events that happened to them, that they witnessed or experienced.

COMMUNICATE:

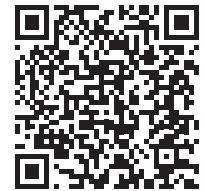
Share the Letter/Drawing

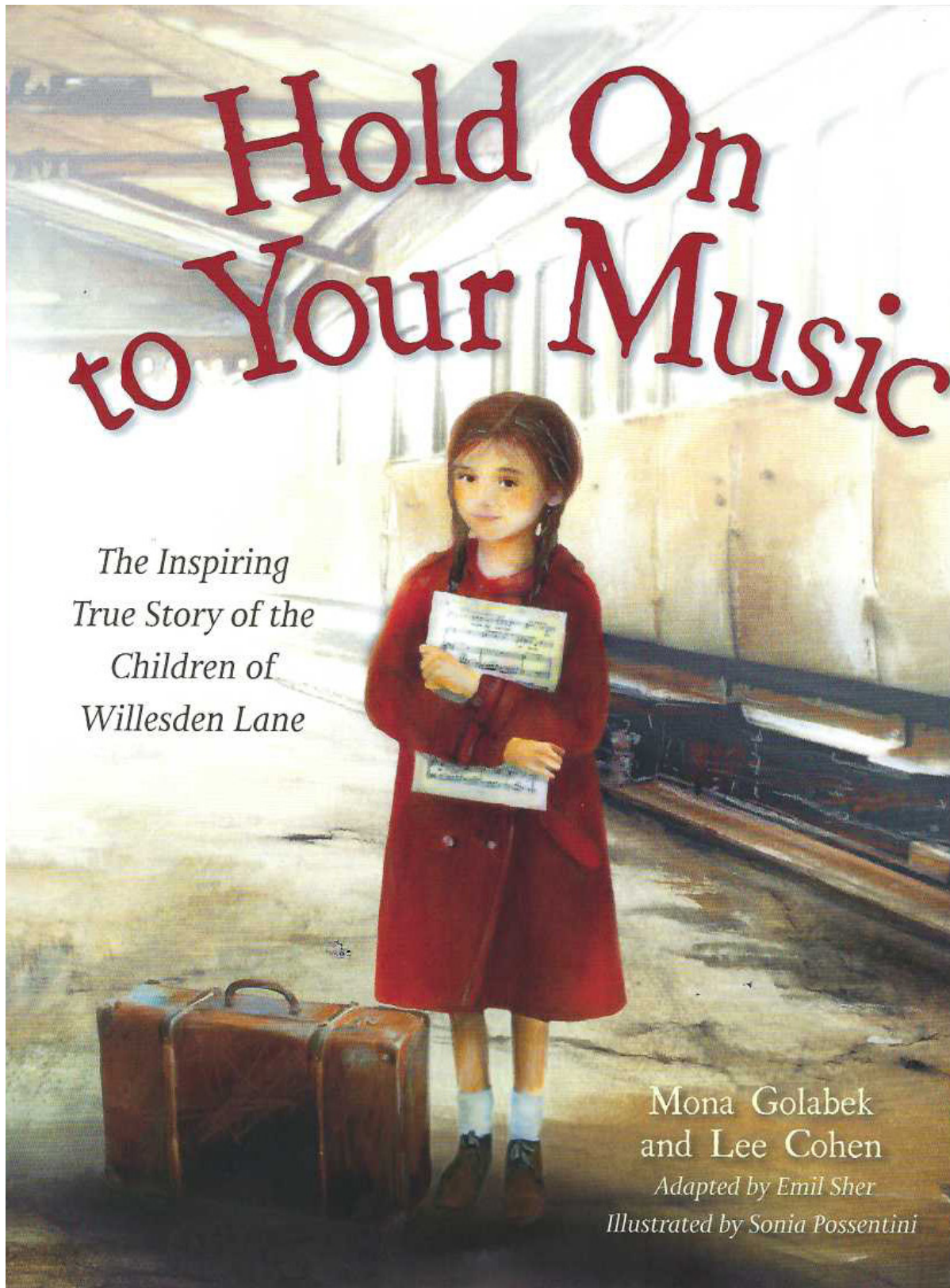
1. Invite families to send their letter or drawing (provide envelopes). Facilitators may suggest options like texting a picture of the letter/drawing to their recipient if they don't have their address.
2. Ask families if they would like to add their letter (or a picture of it, if they plan to send the hard copy) to their collection for the display at the end of the program.

Wrap-up

1. Have families gather together for debriefing.
2. Ask families to share their experiences during PACT Time.
3. Answer any questions that families have.
4. Provide reminders about how families can use the picture walk strategy with any picture book, at any time.

5. Introduce families to *Lisa of Willesden Lane: A True Story of Music and Survival During World War II (Lisa of Willesden Lane)*, an early chapter-book version of the inspirational story of fourteen-year-old Holocaust survivor, Lisa Jura, who dreams of becoming a concert pianist against all odds. This version of the story was adapted for children in grades 3–5. Chapter books introduce children to more content and more complex language that helps develop inferential reading skills. Chapter books also contain fewer illustrations that are usually in black and white so readers gain understanding from text rather than pictures.
6. Explain that families will be reading this book **together** to learn more details about Lisa’s life. Encourage families to read the first three chapters aloud together—in their own time and space. Remind them of the importance of discussing the story and practicing some of the strategies learned in the first two sessions.
7. Thank families for attending and remind them of your next session date and time. Share a teaser to let families know that in the next session they will be creating a piece of art about their family. Encourage families to continue learning about Kindertansport by exploring Wonder of the Day® 2144: “Was Curious George Almost Captured by the Nazis?” <https://bit.ly/WOTD-2144>





Hold On to Your Music

*The Inspiring
True Story of the
Children of
Willesden Lane*

Mona Golabek
and Lee Cohen

Adapted by Emil Sher

Illustrated by Sonia Possentini





Kindertransport Routes



What was the Kindertransport?

The Kindertransport was a plan to rescue Jewish children from Greater Germany by train to the safety of Britain following Kristallnacht, The Night of Broken Glass. The first Kindertransport—or “children’s transport” arrived in England on December 2, 1938, with about two hundred children on board. The last train left Germany on September 1, 1939, just hours before World War II began. Over 10,000 children—about 7,500 who were Jewish—were saved because of the Kindertransport. After the war, many of the children became citizens of Great Britain or emigrated to other countries. Most of them would never see their parents again.

Facilitator Resource

Hold On To Your Music— Love and Separation

Biography

Vera Gissing was born on July 4, 1928 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic). Vera attended a local Gymnasium (school) and had a sister, Eva, who was four years older. On March 15, 1939, the German armed forces took control of the city and subjected the family to brutal treatment because they were Jews. Without telling the rest of the family, Vera's mother put Vera and her sister Eva's names down on the list for Kindertransport: the organized movement of refugee children, mostly Jewish, from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to Great Britain. Leaving in June 1939, the sisters were separated: Vera was placed in a foster family in Liverpool, and her sister Eva went to a school in Dorset. When the war ended in 1945, Vera found out that her parents died (her father died during the Holocaust and her mother died of typhoid only two days after they were freed). After the war, Vera went back to Prague to study and became a literary translator. Eventually, she moved back to England and married Michael Gissing in 1949. At the time of her interview, Vera had three children and three grandchildren. The interview was conducted on October 25, 1996 in Marlow, England, United Kingdom.



Testimony Transcript

"When the moment finally came for us to leave, which was at the end of June, I had said goodbye to my school and my friends. Just before we left, our thoughtful parents gave me the most wonderful gifts. My father gave me a diary, it was a leather bound book full of empty pages. And he told me to write in it, when I was lonely or homesick, or when I was happy, when I had something of interest to say, so that when I came back home we could all sit down at the table and read the diary together. And my mother, she carried me on that last night at home to an open window, and I remember the night sky was full of stars. And she said there may be times when we can't write to one another, but even while we can let the stars of the night and the sun of the day be the messengers of our thoughts and our love, and in that way we always remain close. They couldn't have guessed what a godsend those thoughtful gestures would be not just to me but to my sister too. Because when war started and all correspondence ceased, we both poured our hearts into our diaries and I as a little girl every night prayed to God and talked to mother and father through the stars. And if a falling star suddenly appeared, I thought that must be a special messenger from mother you know, and it made all of the difference. I never felt abandoned by them, I always felt close to them."

- Vera Gissing, October 1996

date

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name