



Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

Book Title: *Summer of My German Soldier*

Author: Bette Green

Interest Level: 7th - 8th grade girls

Lexile: 800L

Length: 208 pages

Guide developed by: Keller Monet L. Davis

Summary

Patty Bergen is a twelve-year-old Jewish girl living in rural Arkansas during World War II. Patty's parents, owners of a small department store in town, favor Patty's younger sister, Sharon. The only person who seems to care about Patty is her housekeeper, Ruth, until Patty befriends a German prisoner of war who has escaped from the local prison camp. Patty's brief friendship with Anton, the former Nazi soldier, teaches her the true meaning of trust, hope, compassion, and love while also teaching her the stinging consequences of racism and prejudice.

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: humane relationships

Other Key Concepts: prejudice, compassion

Essential Understandings:

- All people want to be treated with compassion.
- Prejudice hinders a person's ability to have humane relationships.

Essential Questions:

- How do compassion and kindness differ?
- How does prejudice impact humane relationships? Does prejudice hinder compassion?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

All people wish to be treated humanely. On a deeper level, people appreciate compassion. However, when people are not treated fairly due to prejudice and other reasons, compassionate and humane relationships cease to exist. We all want to be treated with love so that we can trust in others, have hope for the future, and can also love in return. In your journal, make a word map of other words that pop into your head when you hear the word “prejudice.”

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

Identification:

- How do Patty’s parents treat her?
- Why doesn’t Patty’s father like her playing with Freddy Dowd?
- In what ways does Anton show his true feelings for Patty?
- How does meeting Charlene Madlee change Patty’s life?

Catharsis:

- How does Patty feel toward her parents?
- How does Patty feel about Freddy Dowd? How does she feel about the way her father wants her to deal with the friendship?
- How did Patty first feel when the prisoners of war arrived in town? How did this change throughout the story?
- How did Patty feel after her sentencing?

Insight:

- How do you feel when you are treated unfairly?
- How do you feel when you know people are not being treated fairly but there seems to be nothing you can do?
- How can you work to eliminate prejudice?

Universalization/Follow up Activity

With your group, create a public service announcement which discourages prejudice. Be sure to tell why prejudice is negative and include ways to combat prejudice. Record the public service announcement with a video camera so that the class may view it.

Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

Before Group Discussion (Activities for students to complete independently)

A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

Knowledge Questions

- Who are Patty's family members?
- Who is Ruth?
- What is Patty's unusual hobby?
- What is the Bergen family's heritage?
- What is Anton's heritage?

Comprehension Questions

- Why does Patty imagine so many different outcomes for her life?
- Why does Patty not get along well with her peers?
- Why does Anton leave his hiding place in the garage?
- Why does Patty make up the story about the old man?
- Why does Patty attend the Bolton Reformatory?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

Vocabulary Words

- formidable (p. 9)
- fastidious (p.9)
- reproachfully (p.30)
- saboteurs (p.72)
- palatable (p.84)
- imminent (p.86)
- acquiescence (p.91)
- presumptuous (p.214)

Group Discussion: Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

Higher-Level Questions (using Bloom's categories):

1. Application:

- Patty is aware of the Nazi soldiers' actions towards Jews. In spite of this, Patty is protective of Anton and helps him hide. Imagine that you are Patty. Would you have helped Anton? Is her compassion toward him logical?
- Patty's parents favor Sharon over Patty. How would you act toward Patty's parents if you were Patty?
- Patty enjoys learning new words and their definitions. If Patty were creating a dictionary, how would she define "love"?
- Patty felt that she had nothing of value to give Ruth for Christmas, but Ruth tells Patty that she has "love to give" and "ain't nothing better'n that" (p.229). How is love the best gift?

2. Analysis

- Compare Patty's relationship with Ruth to her relationship with her mother. Who is more nurturing to Patty?
- What kind of person is Patty's father?
- After Ruth visits Patty at the Bolton Reformatory, Patty uses the image of a swimmer to share how she feels. She thinks, "Was it possible for a beginning swimmer to actually make it to shore? It might take me my whole lifetime to find out" (p.230). What does Patty mean by this statement?

3. Evaluation

- Do you agree with Patty's decision to befriend Anton? Why or why not?
- What does this story tell us about race relations and prejudice in the 1940s?
- Explain how Patty views people who are different than herself.

4. Synthesis

- How do you think Patty was received after she returned home from the Bolton Reformatory?
- How would the story have been different if Anton had not been killed?
- Discuss how Patty's life would have been different if she had been treated the same way that Sharon was treated.

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

A. Connections to the Curriculum: Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts-** Read the following quote by Anne Frank: "I think a lot, but I don't say much." Students will discuss how Patty thinks a lot about her parents but keeps her thoughts mostly to herself. Students will then write a brief essay resembling a journal entry that Patty would possibly write about her parents.

Patty says that she would like to write a newspaper article about the Bolton Reformatory. Write Patty's newspaper article. Then, create other stories that would appear in the same edition of the newspaper. After creating a few articles, create the front page of the newspaper on poster board including the articles.

- **Social Studies-** During the same time in history when Patty was hiding Anton, Anne Frank was hiding in the Secret Annex in Amsterdam. Students will research Anne Frank and create a timeline of her life. Students will then mark key places in Anne Frank's life on a detailed map of Europe.
- **Science/Health-** Patty's father has trouble controlling his anger. Students will research anger management techniques and conflict resolution strategies. Students will then work together to create pamphlets about anger management, including anger management techniques and conflict resolution strategies.
- **Careers-** Patty's family owns a small department store. Students will talk with local entrepreneurs to learn about the struggles of starting and owning a small business.

Patty aspires to be a journalist when she grows up. Students will talk with the editor of the local newspaper about some of the challenges and rewards of working in print journalism. Students will also research other forms of journalism, including photojournalism and television journalism. Students will then create products in their choice of journalism style.

B. Creative Reading: Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story