

Using *Hold On to Your Music* to Understand Emotions

Overview

In this activity, families will identify, define, and act out facial expressions for different human emotions. Then they will read excerpts from *Hold On to Your Music* to explore the story of Lisa Jura, a talented young musician who dreams of becoming a concert pianist. They will identify different emotions Lisa may have felt at various points in the story and create a picture book to reflect on their own experiences with various emotions.

Note: For additional resources and more information about Lisa's story, please visit www.holdontoyourmusic.org.

Starting the Conversation at Home

Hold On to Your Music is a powerful biographical narrative of music, hope, and survival set in Europe during the Holocaust. In this book, adapted for a younger audience, authors Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen tell the story of Lisa Jura, Golabek's mother. In 1938, 14-year-old Lisa was a talented young musician who dreamed of becoming a concert pianist. When Hitler's army invaded the family's hometown of Vienna, Austria, Lisa's parents made the difficult decision to send her to London as part of the Kindertransport, a rescue mission that took nearly 10,000 Jewish children to safety in Britain. There, separated from her family, Lisa built a community with other refugees in a children's hostel on Willesden Lane and fought to realize her dreams against a backdrop of war, loss, and despair. Because Lisa's story involves loss, fear of the known and unknown, and triumph, it provides families with an ideal reference point for discussing different emotions and their connection to building empathy.

Below are short tips for getting your child and family engaged and connected:

- Lean into your child's experiences and knowledge. Even at a young age, children connect with concepts that are universal, like love, family, loss, and resilience. As you read through the story, ask what else they might want to know and then read or research together.



- Be sure to investigate unfamiliar words to build vocabulary. Depending on the age of your child, they may need extra support to understand words with context and meaning. This is a great practice to model in and out of school.
- When discussing the story, continue to consider emotions that Lisa and others in the story might have felt and help students recognize how characters reacted to those emotions. This is an opportunity to also discuss how your family reacts to, and manages, emotions.

Discuss

Discuss with your child the meanings of various emotions, including happiness, fear, sadness, anger, and surprise. Do so by identifying recent occasions when you might have felt each emotion (“I sometimes feel angry when I see garbage left behind in the park”) and demonstrate facial expressions for each. Then, using the *Emotion Flashcards*, ask your child to describe occasions when they experienced each emotion and act out facial expressions for each.

Note: *An additional blank card has been included if you want to add an additional emotion. If needed, children can use mirrors to practice and view their own facial expressions for each emotion. Older children can brainstorm synonyms for each basic emotion word, possibly making a list of as many words as they can think of for each.*

- **Emotions and Emojis:** Using an electronic device, examine various face emojis and work with your child to identify and explain emotions associated with each. For a simplified version of this activity, use the simple emojis on the emotions flashcards.

Read

One way to help your child and family make connections between historical events and individual experiences with emotions is through use of a story. As you read the suggested excerpts from *Hold On to Your Music*, have a discussion with your family about the specific emotions and feelings that Lisa may have experienced at key moments in her journey. If desired, use the Emotions and “*Hold On to Your Music*” graphic organizer to document emotions for each selected event in Lisa’s story.

As you read, consider paying close attention to the following terms to help provide a language for learning and understanding.

- **Resilience:** The ability to recover quickly from difficulty
- **Perseverance:** Continuing to do something despite difficulty in achieving success

Watch

The events of Lisa's story and the stories of others who were rescued on the Kindertransport can sometimes seem challenging for children to connect with. One way to help your child and family make connections between historical events and individual experiences is using testimony. To help students connect events from Lisa's story, the Kindertransport, and strengthen their understanding of emotion and empathy, begin by watching the following clip from [Ruth Westheimer \(1:55\)](#), a Holocaust survivor who was rescued by the Kindertransport. In this clip of her testimony, Ruth describes leaving her family and the emotions that she was feeling as they said their goodbyes.

After watching and listening to Ruth describe her experience, consider the following questions as a family:

- How does Ruth's experience seem similar to Lisa's story in *Hold On to Your Music*?
- How did Ruth and her family demonstrate bravery and perseverance in the face of adversity?
- What emotions do you think Ruth was experiencing as she told her story?

Note: For additional resources and more information about the Kindertransport and other "Hold On to Your Music" activities, please visit www.teachingwithtestimony.com

Act

Work with your child to create a homemade picture book documenting the five emotions of happiness, fear, sadness, anger, and surprise. Each page spread should include the emotions label, pictures illustrating the meaning of each emotion, and captions describing each picture. Pictures could take a variety of forms, including child-drawn images of times when they feel each emotion, or magazine images/collages that illustrate the various emotions. For support use Creating a Homemade Emotions Picture Book instructions.

- **Expand Your Experience:** Discuss with your child the connection between emotions and feelings. Share with them that sometimes negative or harmful behaviors accompany different emotions. It might be helpful to use examples of occasions in which you could have responded differently to emotions and ask your child to do the same. Brainstorm a list of practices or strategies that people can use when they might feel strong emotions, such as taking a deep breath, asking someone else for help, using words to describe feelings or solve problems, or even taking a walk for some time.

Background on the Kindertransport

Kindertransport, a German term meaning “children’s transport,” was the informal name of a series of rescue efforts that brought thousands of children to Great Britain from Nazi-held lands between 1938 and 1940. After Kristallnacht, an organized massacre of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, the British government eased immigration restrictions to allow children under the age of 17 to enter Great Britain from Germany and German-annexed territories (including Austria and Czechoslovakia). Private citizens or organizations had to guarantee payment for each child’s care, education, and eventual emigration from Britain. In return, the British government agreed to allow unaccompanied refugee children to enter the country on temporary travel visas. It was understood that parents or guardians could not accompany the children, but once the war ended, the children would return to their families. In all, the rescue operation brought about 9,000–10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland to Great Britain. Some 7,500 of these children were Jewish. Many children from the children’s transport program became citizens of Great Britain or immigrated to Israel, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Most of them would never again see their parents, many of whom were murdered during the Holocaust.

The Willesden Project is a global initiative that expands the reach of Lisa Jura’s story of survival, resilience, and triumph as she struggles to come of age separated from her family during World War II, as originally shared by her daughter, author and concert pianist Mona Golabek, in *The Children of Willesden Lane* books and musical performances. [Learn more at The Willesden Project.](#)



happy

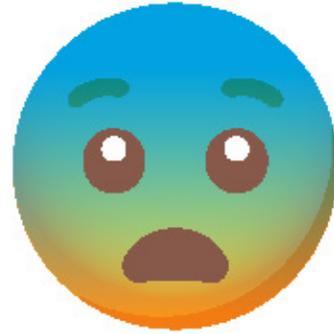


sad





afraid



surprised





angry



Emotions and Hold On to Your Music



Excerpt	What Emotions do you think Lisa felt... Why?
<p>Page 3 Lisa's piano teacher tells her he can't teach her anymore.</p>	
<p>Page 8 Lisa learns she will travel to England all by herself.</p>	
<p>Page 24 Lisa is accepted at the Royal Academy of Music.</p>	

Creating a Homemade Emotions Picture Book



STUDENT HANDOUT

Materials Needed:

- at least 5 sheets of paper (one per emotion page spread)
- crayons/markers/colored pencils
- stapler
- magazines (optional)
- scissors (optional)
- glue stick or paste (optional)

Directions:

1. Fold five sheets of paper in half lengthwise.
2. Combine four of the folded sheets, with the creased and open sides together, to form the inside pages of the book.
3. Open the fifth folded sheet. This will be the cover. With the open sides of the four combined sheets facing IN (to the left), place the inside pages of the book inside the cover. Close the cover.
4. Staple along the spine of the book to hold it together.
5. Devote each open page spread of the book to one emotion. Each page can include the emotion label. Children can draw pictures illustrating times when they feel each emotion, or draw faces depicting each. They also can write captions explaining their pictures, perhaps responding to the prompt "I feel _____ when I _____."
6. As an alternative, children can cut pictures from magazines to create collages illustrating their understanding of each emotion.