**Crowding in the Ghetto**

**Opening paragraph**

In the fall of 1939, the Nazis began making Jews live in ghettos in Poland and Eastern Europe. The ghettos were usually set up in the poor, crowded parts of the city. Thousands of Jews were transferred into a small, enclosed area, and overcrowding became one of the major problems in the ghetto. A number of families would have to share one apartment, with all family members sharing one small room. The crowding led to many diseases.

**Opening photo**

A street in the Warsaw Ghetto

**Synagogue photo**

Because of overcrowding in the ghetto, one room was sometimes used for many purposes.

Photo of a doctor visiting a room in the ghetto

Look at this photo and see if you can identify the following items using a magnifying glass

* Torah ark
* Laundry line
* Stove and kettle
* Coat rack
* Dishes
* Table

What purposes did this room serve?

The ghetto streets were overcrowded.

Photo of a market in the Warsaw Ghetto

Look at this photo. What problems do you think might result from such overcrowding? List three problems.

**Video testimony**

Genia Reznick 11:08-11:58

Genia Reznick was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1934. When the city’s ghetto was built, she and her family were sent to live there.

What sentence in Genia’s testimony points to her feelings about the overcrowding in the ghetto?

**Written testimony – Our room is so crowded**

Here are two testimonies – one by Michael from the Czestochowa Ghetto, and one by Benjamin from the Vilna Ghetto.

**“The Vilna Ghetto was very crowded. We were given a tiny room in an apartment. Four of us lived in it. The room was in a passageway between a large oven that stood in the apartment and another room. In that room lived the Lazbent family, who owned the apartment and had to share it with other families. In the other room lived another family, and in another room – two doctors with their mothers. Our room was so crowded that my brother and I had to sleep on the table.”**

Benjamin, Vilna Ghetto, in *Grownup Children: A Program of Study on Life in the Ghetto* (workbook for grades 7-8), prepared by Naomi Morgenstern and Carmit Sagi (Jerusalem: International School for Holocaust Studies, 1996), p. 44 [Hebrew].

**“In Czestochowa all the Jews were transferred to another part of the city, where a fenced ghetto was built. We couldn’t bring much because our father’s car had been confiscated and we had to carry our belongings. We left our furniture behind, taking only clothes and a few dishes. We moved from a five-room apartment to a one-room apartment. We were happy that we lived alone and did not have to share an apartment with other families.”**

Michael, Czestochowa Ghetto, in *Grownup Children: A Program of Study on Life in the Ghetto* (workbook for grades 7-8), prepared by Naomi Morgenstern and Carmit Sagi (Jerusalem: International School for Holocaust Studies, 1996), p. 40 [Hebrew].

<Glossary>

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In their testimonies, Michael and Benjamin talk about moving to the ghetto. The Jews usually moved from large, spacious apartments to small apartments, and in most cases a number of families had to share one apartment.

What sorts of things do you think the children had to give up when they moved into one room with all their family members?

Highlight the sentences in the testimonies that reflect the overcrowding in the ghetto.