**Grownup Children:**

**Opening**

During World War II and the Holocaust, life in the ghetto turned children’s world completely upside down – the house they lived in, the friends they played with, the school they attended – nothing was the same. In addition, children often had to deal with issues that only adults had dealt with before the war – finding food, going to work, being responsible for the family, and so on. The children from this time have come to be known “grownup children.”

**Opening photo**

Two children, Warsaw Ghetto, Poland

**Written testimony section**

1.

“Everything happened so fast, the speed was dizzying. Everything changed. That crowding, sleeping on the floor, suddenly not breathing, suddenly shutting up, not wanting. I learned immediately that crying is not allowed; suddenly I became an adult; our relations with the adults changed; no one told me; I learned how to do things so as not to interfere, so as not to stand in the way because it’s dangerous.”

Halina Birenbaum, Yad Vashem Testimonies Archive

Halina was born in Warsaw, Poland. In the testimony before you she describes how her life changed when she entered the ghetto, how she suddenly had to become an adult and act like one.

Highlight the words she uses in her testimony to describe the shift from acting like a girl to acting like an adult.

* “Suddenly shutting up”
* “Not wanting”
* “Crying is not allowed”
* No one told me
* I learned how to do things

2.

“There’s no childhood, none, it didn’t happen. Childhood ended. There are no friends and we don’t talk about it and we don’t look for friends and we don’t look for companions and we don’t look for anyone. We only look for food. That was the feeling of every person and every child – to look for food, to be able to exist, to be able to make it through this period…”

Testimony of Israel Ernest, from “Connections – Study Units for Heritage Lessons,” Subject: Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Jerusalem: International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, 2001-2002), p. 3. From the Yad Vashem Testimonies Archive [Hebrew]

In his testimony Israel tries to explain why, in the ghetto, there was no childhood of the sort they had known earlier. What was the main reason for this, according to him? Why do you think this led to the loss of childhood?

**Photo section:**

**[1]**

A boy feeding his sister, Lodz Ghetto, Poland

From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive

In this photo we can see a big brother taking care of his little sister and feeding her.

What emotions do you think the big brother is feeling?

Choose emotions from the answer set below and drag them into the frame:

Answer set:

pride, concern, joy, sorrow, jealousy, happiness, anger, fear, shame, responsibility, stress, security, independence, dependence

Two girls on the Aryan side, Krakow, Poland

From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive

<Questions>

Look at this photo:

Describe what you think is happening in the photo. What is the relationship between the two girls? What does the older girl feel?

**Poem**

This poem was written by a boy named Hanus Hachenburg in the Theresienstadt Ghetto in 1944.

…

Once I was a boy

Three years ago.

That boy dreamt of another world.

I was a child, three years ago.

But now I’ve grown up

And my soul has grown

It was not a child who saw the

Face of fear.

…

Highlight the verse that explains why Hanos changed from a boy to a lad.

<The final line or final two lines will be considered a correct answer.>

* “No one told me [what to do]”
* “I learned how to do things so as not to interfere”

<Not checked>

**Painting section**

**Children Alone**,1946, gouache on paper

Painting by Samuel Bak, from the Yad Vashem Art Collection

<Questions>

Look at this painting and try to describe it:

* What is the relationship between the two children in the painting?
* They are holding small bundles in their hands. What do you think is inside them?
* Where do you think they are going?