Hide-and-Seek in War

“It wasn’t safe to go out far from the house.”

Mirvat El Hamad

BEFORE YOU READ: Did you ever beg your parents for something? If so, share the story. Did you play hide-and-seek as a child? Describe how you played the game.

I come from Lebanon, and I have five sisters. When I was a kid, my favorite game to play with them was hide-and-seek. My parents did all they could to give us a happy life, but it was a time of war. It was not safe to go out far from the house, and kids couldn’t go to school. There was no government control, so our parents were afraid that we could be kidnapped.

So we played hide-and-seek inside. Most of the time we didn’t have electricity, so we played in the dark. We loved this game but we were very noisy, running and screaming a lot, which made my parents stressed. They were always stressed, not knowing about the future, and trying to protect us from war. Some days, my friends asked us to go out to play and my parents tried to prevent us. But we nagged and nagged them to be with our friends. When we came home, we had such happy faces, but my parents’ faces were different, full of worry and sadness.

When we moved to Germany, our lives changed and our games changed. Now we could play basketball on a school team and also ping-pong! There was always electricity, and I could play with new friends from many countries. Our parents’ faces were happy when we went out to play. To this day, ping-pong is my favorite game.

Mirvat El Hamad is a student at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA. She has been in Cambridge for two years and lives with her husband and young son.

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Take It Further

Read the stories about hide-and-seek on pp. 14-16. Compare and contrast the conditions for the game and the way the game is played in each article. Find the countries mentioned in these three articles on a map. Find out if your classmates played hide-and-seek. Which countries are represented in your class? Add them to the map.

Read another story about play during wartime by Vanso Lim from Cambodia. It is available with issue “extras” at <changeagent.nelrc.org/issues>.