

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE FAIRY TALE SERIES

THE SELFISH GIANT

By Oscar Wilde 10 Minutes, Color

Produced by BENCHMARK FILMS and SHB FILMS

FOR USE IN

Language Arts: Literature (Fairy Tales)

Elementary

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

To help children become familiar with the literary form of the fairy tale.
To enhance enjoyment of literature.
To encourage creative expression through dramatics, drawing and writing.

BEFORE SHOWING THE FILM

Introduce the form of the fairy tale. They are make-believe. They usually begin with “Once upon a time” or “Long, long ago”. The numerals three and seven occur quite frequently (three wishes, three sons, three deeds, seven young goats, seven dwarfs, etc.). Often there is some magic object which performs tasks or grants wishes.

CONTENT OF THE FILM

Every afternoon, while the Giant was away on a long trip, the children used to play in his beautiful garden. One day, he returned, and to keep any children from playing in his garden, built a high wall around it. He was very selfish. Although spring came to the countryside, in the garden, winter still remained to the Giant’s dismay. Through a hole in the wall, the children came back and with them Spring. The Giant, now contrite, helped a boy too small to climb a tree, up into it. The Giant grew quite old. On a cold winter day, he was astonished to see the small boy again the corner of his garden under a tree in full blossom. “You let me play once in your garden”, the child said, who had nail prints on his hands and feet, “and today you shall come to mine, which is Paradise”. When the children later entered the garden, the Giant lay dead, covered with white blossoms under the tree.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Close your eyes and think about the story. What part of the story do you remember best? How did it make you feel? Why?
2. Why didn’t Spring come to the Giant’s garden?
3. What happened to change the Giant? What did he do to show that he was no longer selfish about sharing his garden?
4. Can you tell about a time when you shared something of yours? How else do you show love and kindness to someone?
5. What is your favorite season of the year? Why?
6. Where do you think the children played when they couldn’t come into the Giant’s garden? What games might they have played?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Have children draw a scene from the story that they remember best. Encourage them to add much detail. Have them write a few sentences describing that scene. Younger children will have to dictate theirs. Children might want to express their experiences with death (pet, sibling, parent, grandparent) or separation. As this is a very sensitive area, teacher discretion is advised. Depending on whether or not it is appropriate for the discussion leader to explore a religious connotation of the final scene between the Giant and the small boy, the discussion leader may wish to ask the children to explain possible

meanings of that scene.

Read fairy tales from other lands. Selfishness is a recurring theme.

Other Films in the Series: *The Brave Little Tailor*; *The Frog Prince*; *The Wolf and the Seven Little Coats*; *Mother bile*; *The Table, The Donkey, and the Stick*; *Little Red Riding Hood*; *Lucky Hans*; *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*.

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