

THEMES FROM SHORT STORIES BY OSCAR WILDE

Thorne's Classic Short Stories.

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(suitable for Y7)

1. The Selfish Giant

Keeping what you possess for yourself; denying others any pleasure.

Winter all year-round results in a picture of the frozen soul and heart (the garden) through selfishness – and no fruitfulness.

Giant's act of kindness releases fruitfulness – love for children grows.

The little boy he helps turns out to be Christ.

The Giant is rewarded with heavenly paradise for sharing his earthly paradise.

Themes:

Selfishness how it brings a 'Spiritual Winter' and hardening of the heart.

Selfishness can be overcome.

Sharing and how it blesses the sharer and the receivers.

Kindness to the poor is kindness to God. **Proverbs 19:17**

2. The Happy Prince

Happy in his own world during his life, not caring about the needy world outside. Now has a heart of lead.

Now it is too late to keep the needs of the poor – reminiscent of Dives and Lazarus – **Luke 16:19-31.**

The swallow overcomes prejudices and hurts to help the poor, which results in him feeling warm inside.

He really has a 'good heart' so continues to help the needy.

Eventually the swallow gives up his own ambitions to serve.

Finally, the two most precious things to God in the city are the broken lead heart of the Prince (all he had left after giving to the poor) and the dead bird (the servant).

They enter into their reward in heaven.

Themes:

The blindness of a self-centred existence and hedonism

The power of using your riches to bless the poor

The joy of serving

The difference between what man values and what God values

3. The Devoted Friend

The nature of true friendship highlighted by negative contrast

The miller deceives himself that he is a true friend to Hans.

In fact, he is self-serving, controlling and manipulative.

He speaks about the nature of friendship he expects from Hans but gives nothing back – eventually contributing to Hans' poverty and eventual death.

Themes:

The nature of Friendship:

a. Types of Friendship:

Self serving

Intimidation

Controlling

Extortion

Demanding

b. Self – deception

Empty words not backed by action.

c. Humility – Hans

Contrast:

True Friendship **John 15:13**

Study Jesus' friendship for His

disciples: serving, giving, sacrificing

List the principles of friendship the

Miller articulates.

4. The Remarkable Rocket

Themes:

Pride and superiority

Self-centredness

Refusal to listen to advice.

THEMES

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1. SIXPENCE

Main Theme: Discipline of Children, out of conviction, with understanding.

Hebrews 12, Proverbs (extra sheet).

Contrast biblical standard of Spears' family with Mr and Mrs Bendall's lack of training of Dicky.

2. THE DOLL'S HOUSE

Themes: a) Class distinction: the devaluing or valuing of people according to their finance, possessions or clothes. See **James 2: 1 – 7**.

b) Rejection, exclusion, pride.

Explore what God feels about such prejudice.

He has a heart for the poor and resists the proud.

Proverbs 11:25; 18:11 etc. 1 Peter 5: 5b – 6.

3. HER FIRST BALL

Theme: Innocence versus worldliness. **Galatians 5: 13 – 26.**

In what way does God want the more mature and experienced to encourage the young generation?

4. A CUP OF TEA

Theme: a) Worldviews and perspectives: seeing things only from our own point of view; blindness to other aspects.

b) Condescension of the rich to the poor and how it backfires.

James 2: 1 – 7

5. LIFE OF MA PARKER

Theme: Poverty: the life of the poor, oppression and grief contrast with the stinginess of the man.

Galatians 2: 10

Discuss/explore: do we value our comfortable lifestyle – gratitude.

Colossians 2: 7