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Sample

Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Everyman

by Anonymous

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Everyman

Note to the Teacher

Everyman is characterized as a morality play, a type of drama popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, that strongly reflected the influence of religion in people's lives. A morality play is a play in which characters representing abstract ideas or universal types (in *Everyman*: Knowledge, Beauty, Five Wits, Goods, etc.) appear as human beings in order to reinforce a moral truth. The conflict is presented as an argument between different ideas about life—the contrast between vice and virtue in man's life, for example. *Everyman* also looks at the desire of man to retain his earthly existence and at the human fear of death.

The moral aspect of the play is embodied in the change and development of the main character—in this case, the character of Everyman. The lessons Everyman learns are to be used as guides for the lives of all; often, these lessons are a result of following the doctrines and the practices of the Church.

Life and death are experiences everyone must face, and Everyman is no different; he is the average man, confronting his life and dreading his death.

Nothing is known about the author of *Everyman*, and, while it was performed numerous times on stage following its completion, no performance records have ever been found.

All references come from the Prestwick House edition of *Everyman & The Second Shepherd's Play*, copyright 2007.

Everyman

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify the use of metaphor in character, setting, and events.
2. infer the author's views on certain abstract qualities by how they are portrayed in the play.
3. discuss character changes in some of the allegorical figures.
4. compare abstract allegorical characters to types of people, objects, and actions.
5. identify the moral or lesson of *Everyman*.
6. identify a morality play and its defining characteristics.
7. write a close prose analysis and interpretation of a portion of the poetic verse of *Everyman*.
8. list and discuss the "seven deadly sins."
9. discuss the importance of each character and why they are necessary to teach the lesson of the play.
10. define *allegory* and identify ways in which characters in the play are allegorical.
11. define *characterization* and identify how the entities are characterized based on their prescribed names.
12. recognize the importance and the place of morality plays in the overall context of English literature.

Everyman

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Discuss what makes *Everyman* a morality play, rather than a mystery or miracle play.
2. Identify and discuss the changes that take place in the character of Everyman from the beginning to the end of the play, including the events that bring these changes.
3. Write an essay that shows how *Everyman* is an allegory, making use of abstractions or generalizations for characters in the play.
4. Discuss what God means by:

I proffered the people great multitude of mercy.
And few there be that ask it heartily.
They be so cumbered with worldly riches, thereto
I must needs upon them justice do
5. Write an essay that discusses the moral or lesson embodied in the play.
6. Choose a ten-line section of poetry and translate it into modern prose, keeping the ideas intact.
7. Identify and discuss how one of these concepts contributes to the moral or lesson of the play:
 - Materialism
 - Altruism
 - The role of family and friends
8. Discuss the reasons Knowledge does not reach the end of Everyman's journey and what is implied about the attribute of knowledge.
9. In one page, identify two characters' role in the play. Choose from these characters:
 - Good Deeds
 - Knowledge
 - Confession
 - Discretion
 - Strength
 - Five Wits
 - Beauty

Everyman

1. What announcement does the Messenger make to the audience?

2. What does God see in the world of man?

3. What has God done for mankind? How has God been treated in return?

4. What adds to man's problems?

5. How is God going to deal with this problem of mankind?

6. What does God say has happened to man?

79. How does Good Deeds reinforce this idea?

80. Before Everyman descends into the grave with Good Deeds, what does Everyman say?

81. What does Knowledge say?

82. What does Angel say has happened to Everyman?

83. How does the Doctor reinforce the moral of Everyman's allegorical journey?
