

## The Hard Job Worksheet

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1

It's good to do the hard job, for it's good to play the man,  
For the hard job strengthens courage which the easy never can,  
And the hard job, when it's over, gives the man a broader smile ---  
For it brings the joy of knowing that he's done a thing worth while.

2

Oh, stand you to your hard job with the will to see it through,  
Be glad that you can face it and be glad it's yours to do;  
It is when the task is mighty and the outcome deep in doubt,  
The richest joys are waiting for the man who'll work it out.

3

Beyond the gloom of failure lies the glory to be won,  
When the hard job is accomplished and the doubtful task is done;  
For it's manhood in the making and its courage put to test ---  
So buckle to the hard job --- it's your chance to do your best.

### Vocabulary

In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

1: courage, broader

2: task, outcome, doubt

3: gloom, glory, accomplished, buckle

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

1: hard job

2: richest joys

3: gloom of failure, glories to be won, doubtful task, buckle to the hard job

**Mechanics** Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker?

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

1: What does the author say is “good” to do? Why? Do you agree/disagree with the author? Explain and discuss “For it brings the joy of knowing that he’s done a thing worth while.”

2: What does the author recommend the reader do in the first line? According to the author, why should the reader be glad? Explain and discuss the last two lines.

3: Why do you think the author used the phrase “gloom of failure”? Did you understand the author’s meaning by the use of this phrase? Have you ever had the “gloom of failure”? What is to be won? What is put to the test by a hard task? Explain and discuss “So buckle to the hard job -- it’s your chance to do your best.”

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

**What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the three stanzas.

Discuss the message of this poem in light of James 1:2-3, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

Does this poem have a message for the student? How can one apply this poem to math? science? history? grammar? literature? and other academic subjects? Discuss the message of this poem in light of 2 Corinthians 10:5, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

What does the Bible have to say about perserverance? Give Biblical examples of those demonstrating perserverance. Give historical examples, past and present, of those role modelling perserverance.

What is the opposite of perservance? Give Biblical and historical examples of same.

What does the Bible have to say about courage? Courage means to do the right thing even when one is afraid. Give Biblical and historical examples, past and present, of those role modelling courage.

What is the opposite of courage? Give Biblical and historical examples of same.

## **The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author's name for this poem is Edgar A. Guest (1881-1959). He was born in Birmingham, England, on 20 August 1881, and died 5 August 1959. The Guest family relocated to Detroit in 1891. Edgar started as a copy boy at the Detroit Free Press in 1895 gradually becoming a police reporter, exchange editor, and verse columnist. In 1904, Mr. Guest began a weekly column entitled "Chaff" that later became the daily "Breakfast Table Chat" syndicated to 300 newspapers throughout the United States. Between 1931-1941, he broadcast weekly from Chicago on NBC radio. By 1951 NBC broadcast "A Guest in Your Home" on television.

On 18 June 1906, Edgar Guest and Nellie Crossman married and had two children. Guest was a member of the Episcopal church and was given several honorary degrees. He wrote over 20 volumes of poetry and was referred to as "the poet of the people." It is estimated that Mr. Guest wrote over 11,000 poems in his lifetime.

## **Geography**

Locate England, Michigan, and Illinois on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Detroit (Michigan) and Chicago (Illinois) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast weather from England, Michigan, and Illinois with your own for one week.

Make a meal from either Michigan, Illinois or England for your family.

## **Activities**

- 1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each stanza. (Note: that will be three different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the poem and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.
- 2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.
- 3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the message of this poem.
- 4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals that reflect the message of this poem (e.g., your father/grandfather, Daniel Boone, Patrick Henry, George Mason, William Tell, Sir Francis Drake, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *You*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Edgar A. Guest and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.