

O Father, All Creating Worksheet

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Verse 1

O Father, all creating,
Whose wisdom, love, and power
First bound two lives together
In Eden's primal hour,
Today to these Thy children
Thine earliest gifts renew,
A home by Thee made happy,
A love by Thee kept true.

Verse 2

O Savior, Guest most bounteous
Of old in Galilee,
Vouchsafe today Thy presence
With these who call on Thee;
Their store of earthly gladness
Transform to heavenly wine,
And teach them, in the tasting,
To know the gift is Thine.

Verse 3

O Spirit of the Father,
Breathe on them from above,
So mighty in Thy pureness,
So tender in Thy love;
That, guarded by Thy presence,
From sin and strife kept free,
Their lives may own Thy guidance,
Their hearts be ruled by Thee.

Verse 4

Except Thou build it, Father,
The house is built in vain;
Except Thou, Savior, bless it,
The joy will turn to pain;
But naught can break the union
Of hearts in Thee made one;
And love Thy Spirit hallows
Is endless love begun.

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

Verse 1: O, primal, Thy, Thine, renew, Thee

Verse 2: bounteous, Vouchsafe, Transform

Verse 3: strife

Verse 4: Except, vain, naught, hallows

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, without drawing a picture of Christ, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: bound two loves together

Verse 2: most bounteous, earthly gladness

Verse 3: pureness

Verse 4: naught can break the union

Mechanics Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker? (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character? (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone? (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

Does the poem have a setting? (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

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? (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

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

What point of view or perspective is the speaker? (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time? (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

Verse 1: Who is all creating? What three attributes are ascribed to this Person (line 2)? What does it mean to “bind two lives together”? Explain and discuss: “Today to these Thy children, Thine earliest gifts renew, A home by Thee made happy, A love by Thee kept true.” Why do you think the author used the terms “O,” “Thy,” “Thine” and “Thee”? Why are they capitalized?

Verse 2: Who is the Guest? How is the Guest described (line 1)? Why is Guest capitalized? Where is this Guest from? Explain and discuss: “Their store of earthly gladness, Transform to heavenly wine, And teach them, in the tasting, To know the gift is Thine.”

Verse 3: Who should “breathe” on this couple? Why? Who is mighty? Mighty in what? Who is tender? Tender in what? Who guards? Guards from what (line 6)? Explain and discuss: “Their lives may own Thy guidance, Their hearts be ruled by Thee.”

Verse 4: Who should build the house (line 1)? What happens if this Person does not build the house (line 2)? Who should bless the house? Why (line 4)? Explain and discuss: “But naught can break the union, Of hearts in Thee made one; And love Thy Spirit hallows, Is endless love begun.”

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 four verses.

What does the Bible say about love? Identify Biblical characters that were demonstrated love. Can you think of anyone else in history that demonstrated this character trait in the Biblical sense? What will you tell your grandchildren about love? How will you encourage your grandchildren in this character trait?

Identify famous love stories in the Bible. What makes these stories so compelling?

For more scriptural helps in learning what the Bible says about love, go to the internet page <http://www.lovetolearnplace.com/SpecialDays/Valentines/Bible.html>

Discuss this poem in light of ...

Matthew 22:37 " ... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Luke 10:27 "... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

Deuteronomy 6:5 "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ..."

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 name of the author for this poem or lyric is John Ellerton (1826-1893). He was born 16 December 1826 in Clerkenwell, Middlesex, England, and died 15 June 1893, Torquay, Devon, England. He became a minister in 1850 and wrote/translated over 80 hymns.

Geography

Locate England on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Galilee, Middlesex (England), and Devon (England) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast the weather of England and/or the Middle East with your own for one week.

Make an English or Middle Eastern meal for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be four different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song 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 this poem could illustrate (e.g., family members, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Adam and Eve, Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, 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 *O Father, All Creating*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about John Ellerton (1826-1893) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.