

Intertextuality and the context of reception: Jane Eyre - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

Intertextuality and the context of reception: Jane Eyre - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

Lesson plan

Resources

- ❖ **Resource A** – punishment and reward table
- ❖ **Resource B** – film Clip of *Jane Eyre* chapter 38
- ❖ **Resource C** – extract from *Jane Eyre* chapter 38 with corresponding Bible passages
- ❖ Highlighter pens (optional)
- ❖ Sugar paper (option).

Learning objectives

- ❖ To consider the character of St John
- ❖ To consider the conclusion and message of the novel.

Starter activity – writing character obituaries

- ❖ As the novel ends, consider the reader's impression of each of the characters
 - Allocate the following characters to students/pairs:
 - Bertha
 - Jane
 - Helen
 - Edward Rochester
 - Aunt Reed
 - Cousin John
 - Mrs Fairfax
 - Brocklehurst
 - Students write an obituary for the character, summing up his / her achievements and qualities
 - Hear them.

Introduction – recapping knowledge on St John

- ❖ Given that Jane is the central protagonist, and the relationship between Jane and Edward Rochester the prime focus of the novel, it is perhaps surprising that the novel ends with a focus on St John and his approaching death
 - Why does he merit this focus?
- ❖ Working in small groups, students make notes under these table headings to recap knowledge of St

John (students may need to skim read back through chapters 28 to 36):

Word to describe St John	St John's words and actions	Reader's impressions of St John

- ❖ Despite St John's various faults and Jane's (and consequently the reader's) inability to like him, he is shown to be a charitable and Christian character.
 - What sort of obituary does he deserve?

Main activity 1 – considering the book's moral values

- ❖ Considering our knowledge of each character's behaviour and qualities, how does Brontë reward or punish each character through the events of the story?
 - Complete the reward and punishment table [**Resource A**].
 - Consider what values Brontë is promoting. In the world of the novel, what qualities / actions are seen as:
 - Desirable?
 - Dangerous and reprehensible?
 - Why does St John in particular get such a glorified ending?
 - Is he the most deserving character?

Main activity 2 – close analysis

- ❖ Watch the film clip of *Jane Eyre* chapter 38 [**Resource B**] and follow along using the extracts from *Jane Eyre* chapter 38 with corresponding Bible passages [**Resource C**]:
 - Consider the impact of all the biblical allusions
 - Why is it a fitting tribute to St John?
 - What is Brontë suggesting about the character?

Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Jane Eyre* - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Jane Eyre* - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

- ❖ Complete the following tasks in pairs. Highlight and annotate the following:
 1. Words which suggest being close to God
 2. Words which suggest being in heaven
 3. Words which suggest being rewarded
 4. Words which suggest being forgiven / redeemed
 5. Words which suggest God's pleasure or approval
 6. A quotation which you think best sums up Brontë's tribute to St John.

Plenary – summing up the novel's messages

- ❖ Working in groups, students create spider diagrams on sugar paper of Brontë's messages at the end of the novel
 - Feed back ideas
- ❖ Read the final lines of the novel again
 - Why is this an appropriate ending?

Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Jane Eyre* - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

Resource B – <http://www.crossref-it.info/articles/486/Jane-Eyre-~-ch-38>

Resource C

***Jane Eyre Chapter 38* by Charlotte Bronte**

As to St. John Rivers, he left England: he went to India. He entered on the path he had marked for himself; he pursues it still. A more resolute, indefatigable pioneer never wrought amidst rocks and dangers. Firm, faithful, and devoted, full of energy, and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race; he clears their painful way to improvement;

1 Corinthians 9:24 ²⁴**Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.**

He hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it. His is the exaction of the apostle, who speaks but for Christ, when he says--'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

Mark 8:34-5 ³⁴**[Jesus] ... said unto them, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.'**

His is the ambition of the high master-spirit, which aims to fill a place in the first rank of those who are redeemed from the earth--who stand without fault before the throne of God, who share the last mighty victories of the Lamb, who are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 14:1, 4-5 ¹**And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. ... These are ... redeemed from among men ... for they are without fault before the throne of God.**

St. John is unmarried: he never will marry now. Himself has hitherto sufficed to the toil, and the toil draws near its close: his glorious sun hastens to its setting. The last letter I received from him drew from my eyes human tears, and yet filled my heart with divine joy: he anticipated his sure reward, his incorruptible crown.

Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Jane Eyre* - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Jane Eyre* - chapter 38 by Charlotte Brontë

1 Corinthians 9:25 ²⁵And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.'

I know that a stranger's hand will write to me next, to say that the good and faithful servant has been called at length into the joy of his Lord. And why weep for this?

Matthew 25: 21 ²¹His lord said unto him, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.'

No fear of death will darken St. John's last hour: his mind will be unclouded, his heart will be undaunted, his hope will be sure, his faith steadfast. His own words are a pledge of this--

'My Master,' he says, 'has forewarned me. Daily He announces more distinctly,-- 'Surely I come quickly!' and hourly I more eagerly respond,--'Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!''

Revelation 22:12, 20 ¹²And, behold, I [Jesus] come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ... ²⁰He which testifieth these things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.