Lesson focus: To examine Shakespeare’s portrayal of Hermione, Paulina and Perdita.

Opening exercise: Students should walk around the room, and, when told, should freeze as a statue/waxwork of:
- Hermione
- Paulina
- Perdita
  - Work quickly, without too much thinking time.
- As a lead-up to this, you could try a few well-known characters from TV, film, sport, etc first
  - The idea is to represent something of the character, rather than to impersonate them

Discussion ideas: Discuss the versions produced by the above exercise
- For a non-dramatic group, this could be done by drawing quick sketches, or just by those willing to participate with others watching (and commenting).

Textual examination: Allocate the three female characters around the group
- Make notes under the following headings:
  - First impressions
  - Changes and final impressions
  - Key lines spoken
  - Images and themes linked with the character.
- Resultant notes can be photocopied and distributed and/or ‘expert groups’ can report back to the whole group. (See Characterisation > Hermione; Paulina; Perdita)

Examine the quotations on the accompanying Worksheet (d)i.
- Check the context of each
- Discuss the picture of women and marriage which seems to be given in this play
  - Students could be challenged to find further relevant quotations.
    (See Characterisation > The importance of women)
    (See The context of The Winter’s Tale > The theatre > The role of women)

Recreative task: Improvise, or write and perform, the conversation that might take place between Hermione and Leontes after the end of the play. (See Themes and significant ideas in The Winter’s Tale > Spiritual re-creation)

Critical task: Irene G. Dash (in The Woman’s Part; University of Illinois Press, 1983) writes about Hermione that:
‘she sees her primary role as wife to her husband, and hostess for his home and kingdom.’
- How far do you agree with this statement?
- Is this the view of women that is generally approved in The Winter’s Tale, do you think?
  (See Characterisation > The importance of women)
  (See The context of The Winter’s Tale > The theatre > The role of women)

Extension task: Compare Hermione with any other female character that you know from another Shakespeare play.