

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text: **Counterfeit Coin (The)** by Oscar Wilde

Ideas, Values: **Cause, Desire, Life & Death, Honor, and Currency**

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

Who defines the worth of something? Have a brief chat with the family about what is considered valuable to the household that might not be seen as valuable to another family.

Bonus\* If you found out that something passed down for generations was counterfeit would it change the value of it to you?

1st Read:

Read aloud the text while family and/or friends listen.

Vocabulary:

Discuss the unfamiliar words in the story. Explain what they mean, figure them out from the sentence, or look them up in a dictionary.

2nd Read:

Allow another participant in the discussion to read the text aloud. Make note to focus on the “Ideas and Values” listed above as you listen or read.

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Share why you are having the discussion.

(Sample script from our classroom Paideia Seminars: Modify to fit your household.)

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.”*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”*

* Describe what you want to accomplish.
* Set a Family Goal.
* To balance the talk time
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
  + What were you surprised by in this story? (Have younger kids share first if they feel comfortable and advance by age. Don’t share your why until after everyone has had a chance to answer.)
  + Did anyone share a thought about being surprised that links to or deepens what you were surprised by? (Anyone can share)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
  + Was the poor man’s fate sealed when he found the gold coin? How do you know this? (Anyone can share)
  + In paragraph three the innkeeper states “This golden coin is a counterfeit coin and the king whose face it bears is a counterfeit king.**”** Why would the king also be considered counterfeit?
  + The poor man works “twice as hard” to pay his debt; what word comes to mind to describe his actions? Why?
  + What is the connection between the poor man and the boatman?
  + Why do you think the poor man continued his search to find the place where his coin is properly valued?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):

* + Is any inanimate (lifeless) object worth a life’s pursuit? Is it worth dying for?

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Ask each person what they liked most about the discussion.”*

* Have the family do a quick check of the discussion goal.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing/Family Activity:

Review and discuss key ideas that you heard, said and thought during the family seminar. Think about the following quote: “You are no richer than what you carry in your mind, no stronger than what you hold in your heart, and no purer that what you harbor in your soul.” -Matshona Dhliwayo as it relates to the discussion that you had and draw a venn-diagram to see similarities and differences.

Do you agree or disagree with the Matshona Dhliwayo quote?

Think back to the Big Ideas Chat about a who defines the value or worth of something. How would something you carry in your mind make you rich?

* Writing:

Write a journal entry about how mindset can impact our own personal worth. Reference the discussion and the text in your writing.

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\*Text is attached if open sourced.

\*Text is cited if it needs to be procured.

The Counterfeit Coin

by

Oscar Wilde

Once there was a very poor man who wandered the highways of his country in search of whatever employment he could find along the way. One day on his journey he discovered by the roadside a golden coin on which there was the face of an unknown king.

‘What luck!’ cried the man, when he saw the golden coin glimmering in the sunlight. ‘It is so long since I last ate a meal.’ And so, proudly caressing the golden coin in his pocket, the poor man entered the nearest inn. Sitting down at the wooden table, he ordered as much as he could eat.

When the dishes and the glasses had been cleared away, the man brought out the golden coin with a flourish and threw it down on the table in order to settle his bill. But, on looking at the golden coin, the innkeeper frowned at the poor man and said, ‘This golden coin is a counterfeit coin and the king whose face it bears is a counterfeit king.’

On hearing these words, the poor man replied, ‘Alas: I have no other golden coin in all the world, but I will find employment hard by here and, after a time, I will surely earn that which I owe.’

After laboring twice as hard as usual for many days, the poor man was true to his word and paid the innkeeper’s bill. Having paid the bill, the poor man gathered all of his clothes together in a bundle and took in his hand a long, wooden staff. Then, going forth from that place, he set out to discover the land in which he would be able to use his golden coin.

Working whenever he could along the way, the poor man wandered throughout the world. Through lands that were parched with heat he traveled, and through lands where the mountains were covered with snow. But never did he find the land for which he sought, and never did he see the face of the king. For although on his journey he passed through many kingdoms, he could not find the kingdom in which the king on the golden coin reigned.

And, whenever he came to a new city, the poor man would show his golden coin to the crowds of people who gathered around him and the people would look at it and say, ‘Your golden coin is a counterfeit coin and the king whose face it bears is a counterfeit king.’ But the poor man said to them, ‘As the face of the king is a golden face, I am sure that he is reigning somewhere.’

And whenever the man went forth from each new city, the laughter of the people would follow him. But as he set his face to the sun and journeyed, the man was full of joy and, wherever he wandered, he would sing. For in his pocket he could feel the golden coin, and in his heart he felt hope.

On and on the poor man travelled, until at length he came to a great river and sat down wearily on its bank. It was evening, and in the dusky twilight he could see a boatman sitting close by him whose face was wizened and whose body was black. After hailing the boatman, the poor man asked him for a passage across the river. In return, he offered the boatman his golden coin. To the poor man’s amazement, the boatman accepted it and led him down to the boat.

But as soon as the poor man and the boatman sat down in the boat, it began to sink under their weight. Into the darkening waters it sank, and the poor man’s heart trembled with fear; into the swirling waters it sank and the poor man looked across at the boatman. And there, silhouetted in the gold of the dying sun, he beheld the face of the king on the golden coin, the king for whom he had searched throughout the world.

And with a smile of supreme contentment, knowing that he was leaving for a land from which there would be no return, the poor man, having finally parted with the golden coin, let the darkening waters flood over him.