

Read Aloud and Response Activity

Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*. New York: Scholastic, 1997. Print.

Recommended Level: Upper Middle

Author's craft: Silverstein uses personification to create a sympathetic character in the story, that of the actual Giving Tree. The character becomes sympathetic as it loses the relationship it had with the boy as the novel progresses. Eventually the Tree's giving personality creates the theme of the book – selfishness vs. giving. Silverstein also uses simple, meaningful pictures show his meaning (example: the initials on the tree).

Examples:

- "I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy." And the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house. And the tree was happy. (2)
- "Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "Well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest." And the boy did. And the tree was happy. (3)
- Once there was a tree..... and she loved a little boy. (2)

Awards:

- NEA "Top 100 Books for Children"

Response Activity:

- After a discussion about the personification and the theme of selfishness vs. giving, students will identify something/someone in their lives that gave to them as the Giving Tree gave to the boy. Students will then divide into groups to write a story in the style of Shel Silverstein.
- Each group will receive an item (a baby doll, a blanket, an Ipod, a necklace, etc) about which they are to write.
- Students will create a picture book with a unique plot where the item is given human qualities complete with drawings in the style of Shel Silverstein.
- Students will share these books with the class.

Other books by Shel Silverstein:

- *Where the Sidewalk Ends*
- *Falling Up*
- *A Light in the Attic*

