The Shoemaker and the Elves

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: A **fable** is a short story, often with animals that talk and act like people. It ends with a **moral**, a lesson about how to live.

Find the moral: What mistake did a character make, or what wise thing did they do? What should we learn from it?

The Shoemaker and the Elves



Once there was a hard-working shoemaker who had grown very poor. One evening, he had only enough leather left for one last pair of shoes. He cut out the pieces, laid them on his workbench and went sadly to bed.

The next morning, he could hardly believe his eyes. On the bench sat a finished pair of shoes, stitched so neatly that not one thread was out of place. A customer saw them, loved them and paid enough for the shoemaker to buy leather for two more pairs.

That night, he cut out the leather for two pairs. In the morning, both pairs were finished. This went on night after night, and soon the shoemaker and his wife were no longer poor.

"Who could be helping us?" his wife wondered. So one night they hid behind a curtain. At midnight, two tiny elves in ragged clothes climbed onto the bench. They sewed and hammered so quickly that their little hands were a blur. Then they slipped away before dawn.

"They have done so much for us," said the wife, "and they have nothing warm to wear. Let's make them some clothes." She sewed two tiny shirts, coats and trousers, and the shoemaker made two pairs of tiny boots.

That night, they left the gifts on the bench. When the elves saw them, they laughed, dressed in their new clothes and danced around the workshop. Then they skipped out the door and never came back, but the shoemaker's good luck stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Moral: *When someone helps you, show your thanks by helping them in return.*

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1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. Why was the shoemaker sad at the start?

(a) He had only enough leather for one pair of shoes.
(b) His shop burned down.
(c) He lost his tools.

2. What did the shoemaker find in the morning?

(a) A finished pair of shoes
(b) A bag of gold
(c) New leather

3. How did the couple find out who was helping?

(a) They asked a neighbour.
(b) They hid behind a curtain at night.
(c) The elves left a note.

4. How did the couple thank the elves?

(a) They gave them money.
(b) They made them clothes and boots.
(c) They threw a party.

2. Write your answer

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the text.

1. **Why did the wife want to make clothes for the elves?**

2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**

Answer Key

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2. Write your answer

Sample answers. Students' wording will vary.

1. **Why did the wife want to make clothes for the elves?**
   The elves had helped them so much, and she saw that they only had ragged clothes and nothing warm to wear.
2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**
   When someone helps you, show your thanks by helping them in return.