



Book Study: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* **Syllabus**

Course Description: While reading C.S Lewis' classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, students will gain an appreciation for the author's history and experience leading up to Narnia and be encouraged to use their own ideas to foster creative worlds and characters of their own. In addition, students will engage directly with the text to study character development and the use of several literary devices, including allegory, description, dialogue, foreshadowing, humor, idioms and expression, personification, and repetition. Weekly vocabulary lists will be included with each lesson for study or spelling practice.

Students must have their own copy of the text for this class.

Prerequisite: *The Composition* or equivalent experience.

Course Outline:

Week One: *The Way to the Wardrobe*

- Biography of C.S. Lewis – *Finding Narnia*
- A Brief Visit to Boxen
- Read Chapter 1

Week Two: *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve*

- Read Chapters 2-4
- Begin Character Charting
- Dialogue & Description

Week Three: *Don't Shut Yourself into a Wardrobe*

- Read Chapters 5-6
- Repetition

Week Four: *Aslan Is on the Move*

- Read Chapters 7-9
- Foreshadowing

Week Five: *Winter Has Been Destroyed*

- Read Chapters 10-11
- Humor
- Description & Compare/Contrast

Week Six: *Meeting Aslan*

- Read Chapters 12-14
- A Study of Aslan
- Personification

Week Seven: *A Magic Deeper Still*

- Read Chapters 15-16
- Allegory

Week Eight: *Only the Beginning of the Adventures*

- Read Chapter 17
- Chart Character Change
- Final Responses

Grading Information: All assignments will be graded using *The Beginning Writer* grading rubric and will be averaged to receive a final course grade.



Book Study: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Lesson One: The Way to the Wardrobe

SAMPLE LESSON

The reading and enjoyment of a book are incomplete without understanding the journey of the author. We can certainly read a book and enjoy it, but without knowing the author's background, we cannot fully appreciate the story.

Whether you have read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* before (or perhaps seen a movie rendition) or have never been exposed to this wonderful story, the place we want to begin is in the meeting of C.S. Lewis himself. The life experience that went into the creation of this timeless story is worthy of attention, for many reasons. However, for the purpose of this class, we want you to pay attention to C.S. Lewis' history as a way to be encouraged that **inspiration is everywhere**—not just for adults, not just for teachers, not just for authors.

Creativity and imagination are healthy ways of interacting with the world around us and understanding our place in the world. In addition, they are wonderful outlets in the face of a world that is often overwhelming, evil, and unfair.

FINDING NARNIA –

Clive Staples Lewis (known as Jack to family and friends) was born on November 29, 1898. He and his older brother of three years, Warren Hamilton Lewis (known as Warnie to family and friends), spent their childhood days in Belfast, Ireland.

In his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis shares details of his childhood, which help us to understand some of the things that shaped his life and his future stories. For example, he tells of “bookish” parents and of a home filled with books. Lewis writes –

There were books in the study, books in the drawing-room, books in the cloakroom, books (two deep) in the great bookcase on the landing, books in a bedroom, books piled as high as

my shoulder in the cistern attic, books of all kinds . . . In the seemingly endless rainy afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves. I had always the same certainty of finding a book that was new to me as a man who walks into a field has of finding a new blade of grass.

Lewis also writes about one of his life's greatest blessings: his brother, Warnie. "Though three years my senior, he [Warnie] never seemed to be an elder brother; we were allies . . . from the first."

The boys spent many days drawing. Warnie drew pictures of ships and trains, while Jack drew pictures of "dressed animals" - animals with human characteristics or behaviors. While Jack read and was inspired by many books, he remembers particularly that he drew inspiration from the works of Beatrix Potter, most notably *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*.

Over time, Jack and Warnie began to create lands and stories within those lands. Warnie claimed India as his land, even going so far as to draw railway maps and create timetables for the trains. Jack's land was known as Animal-Land, a place where he imagined stories for his two greatest interests: "dressed-animals" and "knights-in-armour."

When Warnie was on holiday from boarding school, the boys collaborated in their stories and play. Lewis writes –

The Animal-Land which came into action in the holidays when my brother was at home was a modern Animal-Land; it had to have trains and steamships if it was to be a country shared with him . . . There was soon a map of Animal-Land--several maps . . . Then Animal-Land had to be geographically related to my brother's India, and India consequently lifted out of its place in the real world. We made it an island, with its north coast running along the back of the Himalayas; between it and Animal-Land my brother rapidly invented the principal steamship routes. Soon there was a whole world and a map of that world which used every colour in my paint box.

The collaboration of India and Animal-Land led to a new land, known as Boxen. As Caroline McAlister writes in her lovely picture book about Jack and Warnie, "Jack drew a map of Boxen's teeming capital city. He sketched the parliament house, the stock exchange, shipyards, a train station, and a music hall. Warnie designed a steamship to travel from Boxen to India and back. He included an engine room, a telegraph, and an anchor winch. Jack wrote Boxen's newspaper, Warnie made Boxen's railroad schedule, and together,

they held a double coronation where Jack and Warnie wore their crowns and smiled and waved” (*Finding Narnia*, pg 12-13).

Lewis explained in his autobiography that he began to write as a young boy (even at the ages six, seven, and eight) because of having only one joint in his thumb. He said –

With pencil and pen I was handy enough . . . but with a tool or a bat or a gun, a sleeve-link or a corkscrew, I have always been unteachable. It was this that forced me to write. I longed to make things, ships, houses, engines. Many sheets of cardboard and pairs of scissors I spoiled, only to turn from my hopeless failures in tears. As a last resource, I was driven to write stories instead . . .

Sadly, when Jack was just nine years old, his mother passed away from cancer. Jack and Warnie were soon sent off together to England to the boarding school which Warnie had already been attending. This led to the seeming end of Boxen and of Jack's imagination and story writing. After the closure of Wynyard School, Jack studied at several locations, then with a private tutor, and finally at Oxford University in England. As the years continued, Jack and Warnie were further separated by World War I, when the brothers fought in different regiments. Then later, during World War II, Jack took in refugee children who had been sent away from their homes to the countryside to be safe from the bombs. Here, we begin to see the introduction of Narnia, for C.S. Lewis began to create stories to entertain his young house guests. Eventually, Jack and Warnie shared the same house again. Jack wrote all of his stories by hand with a fountain pen, and Warnie typed those hard copies on his typewriter for publication.

C.S. Lewis drew inspiration from his childhood Animal-Land, creating a world – known as Narnia – full of magic and adventure. Mark Bane, in an article about C.S. Lewis writes, “Though no steamships or railways exist in Narnia, that country beyond the wardrobe reflects the same great imaginative detail present in the author's earlier creations. Soon Lewis's fairyland developed its own history, geography, myths, legends, and prophecies.” And indeed, Lewis created Narnia to be a land full of dressed animals – many of whom you will have the privilege of meeting as you read through this book.

But what of the wardrobe? Was this just another element from Lewis' imagination? No. In fact, Jack's grandfather had built and carved a beautiful wardrobe which was located in Jack and Warnie's first childhood home (known as Little Lea – see attached photo). The boys and their cousins were known to play in the wardrobe as children. Perhaps they wondered what would happen if the wardrobe had no back . . . Later, that wardrobe found its way to Jack's adult home (known as The Kilns – see attached photo), where

he took in the refugee children. And perhaps these children also wondered what could be on the other side of such a wardrobe.

As you read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, you will soon discover for yourself what lies beyond the wardrobe. And you will see how Lewis' childhood fantasies lead him to write one of the most classic children's books of all time.

Welcome to Narnia . . .

Assignment 1A: Read Chapter 1 of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Assignment 1B: Read Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, noting how C.S. Lewis drew inspiration for his dressed-animals from this childhood story. You may also enjoy reading the more commonly known *Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Both tales are attached with this week's lesson. (You do not need to submit anything for this assignment.)

Assignment 1C: Create Your Own Land.

- What is the name of your land?
- Did you draw inspiration for this land from anything in particular?
- Write a brief history of your land (100-200 words; more only if desired).
- If you wish, draw or paint a map of land and share it via image with your homework.

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Week One – Further Resources

Books & Websites –

Bane, Mark. “Myth Made Truth: The Origins of the Chronicles of Narnia.” *Into the Wardrobe – a C.S. Lewis website*, <https://cslewis.drzeus.net/papers/origins-of-chronicles-of-narnia/>. Accessed 30 May 2020.

Lewis, C.S. *Surprised By Joy*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955.

McAlister, Caroline. *Finding Narnia*. Roaring Brook Press, 2019.

Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. The Saalfield Pub. Co., 1916.

Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*. Frederick Warne and Co., 1903.

Attached Photos –

“C.S. Lewis family Wardrobe (Owned by Wheaton College).” *Photo Courtesy Marjorie's Gallery at Picasa*.

“Little Lea.” Photo Courtesy Joel D. Heck, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Little_Lea.JPG.

“The Kilns.” Photo Courtesy jschroe from Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, USA, CC by 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7304420>.

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Week One – Vocabulary List

SAMPLE

(Note: weekly vocabulary lists are optional and do not need to be submitted with the homework.)

Definitions – Using a dictionary, look up each of the following words from Chapter 1. After reading the definition, write it down *in your own words*.

Spelling – You may also use this list for spelling practice. Copy each word on the list for three or four days. On the final day of your school week, write each word without looking at the list or have a parent quiz you in oral spelling. Can you spell each word correctly?

Vocabulary Words –

1. enormous
2. extremely
3. glimpse
4. inquisitive
5. parcel
6. passage
7. queer
8. splendid
9. troop (verb)
10. wardrobe