

The Giving Tree Reflection Questions

Philosophical topic: Giving and Altruism

The tree keeps on giving to the boy until it has nothing left to give. The boy on the other hand does not give anything to the tree.

1. Is the boy selfish? Why?
2. What about the tree, is the tree selfish?
3. Is there a word for someone who keeps on giving without thinking about him/herself or expecting something in return?
4. Is the tree selfless? Why?
5. Why do you think the tree is not happy after giving her trunk?
6. Have you ever given something away and later wished that you didn't?
7. Is it easier to give something away if the receiver truly appreciates the gift? Why?
8. When we give something to someone, do we expect something in return? Why?
9. When we are given something, do we feel that we owe something to the giver?
10. Would you give something you really need if someone you love needed it, too?
11. Why do we give?
12. Is it right or wrong to keep on giving without getting anything in return?
13. Are there limits to giving?

Philosophical topic: Love

In the very beginning of the book, the author talks about the things that the tree and the boy did together. The author also says that the tree loved the boy.

1. Why did the tree love the boy in the beginning?
2. Why did the tree keep on loving the boy?
3. Did the boy love the tree? Why?
4. Who do you love? Why do you love them?
5. How do you know that you love someone?
6. Do you treat differently people that you love and the ones that you don't love?
7. When you love someone, how do you show him or her that you love them?
8. What is love?
9. Can you love someone even if they are not with you?
10. How could your love be different towards someone who is with you versus someone who is far away?
11. Have you ever been angry with someone you love because they were away for a while, or because they did something you did not like?
12. Can you be angry with someone and still love them at the same time?

Philosophical topic: Happiness

The tree is not really happy after giving the boy her trunk.

1. Is the boy happy at the end of the story?
2. Is the tree happy?
3. If you were the tree would you be happy? Why?
4. How do you know when you are happy?
5. Does it make you happy when others are happy?
6. Have you ever done something just to make someone happy?
7. Does doing things to make others happy necessarily make you happy?
8. Do you need others in order to be happy?
9. What is happiness? (Is it a feeling? Is it a state of mind? Or something else?)
10. Do you need a reason to be happy (e.g. something good happens), or can you be happy without a reason?
11. Can you be happy and sad at the same time?