

“The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Literary Analysis: Parable

A **parable** teaches a moral lesson through a simple story about humans. Often a parable leaves out specific details about characters or about the location of the story. This technique makes the story more applicable to all readers. For example, in “The Minister’s Black Veil,” Hawthorne does not reveal the reason Parson Hooper is wearing the veil because the people’s reaction to the veil is the critical part of the parable.

Hawthorne calls “The Minister’s Black Veil” a parable because he feels strongly about the moral lesson of the story.

DIRECTIONS: *Look at each of the following excerpts. Then, in the space provided, write how you think the language reinforces the message of the parable for all readers.*

Excerpt	How the Language Conveys the Parable
1. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on weekdays.	
2. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased . . .	

<p>3. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding.</p>	
<p>4. The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows.</p>	