

Name: _____ Class Period: _____

John Donne Study Guide
Pages 496-505



Background

1. Why was John Donne not able to follow the usual paths toward success?
2. For who was he appointed secretary?
3. Why did he lose this position?
4. To what did he convert?
5. What characteristics made him a great preacher?

“Song”

1. List the seven impossible tasks the speaker asks of the reader:
2. Define hyperbole. Write an example from the poem of a hyperbole.
3. Define metaphor. Write an example of a metaphor from the poem.
4. What adjectives best describe the speaker?
5. Explain whether the speaker judges women and love fairly and without bias. How does this compare with the view of women in courtly love?

“Holy Sonnet 10”

1. Define sonnet.
2. Define rhyme scheme. What is this poem’s rhyme scheme?
3. Define paradox. What are two examples of paradox in this poem?
4. Define personification. List 3 examples of the personification of death in this poem.
5. What have some called Death?
6. With what does Death dwell?
7. To what is Death a slave and why might Death be a slave to these things?
8. What do “poppy and charms” do better than Death?
9. What happens after one short sleep?
10. What will happen to Death?
11. What tone does the speaker use in addressing Death? Give an example that supports this tone.

“Meditation 17”

1. How does the speaker personify the church?
2. What does the speaker mean by the church is catholic (lower case)?
3. Why might the person for whom the bell tolls not realize it is for him?
4. When a man dies, what happens to his “chapter”?
5. How does “any man’s death” affect the speaker?
6. What does affliction do for us?
7. What is our only security?
8. What did Donne mean by the metaphor, “all mankind is of one author and is one volume”?
9. What metaphor does Donne use to express human interconnectedness? What is the tenor and what is the vehicle? (see pg 502)
10. What analogies does Donne use? What point is he trying to make with each analogy?
11. What is the theme of this selection?
12. Compare the view of death expressed in “Holy Sonnet 10” and “Meditation 17.”