Name _____ Date _____

The Elves and the Shoemaker

Fairy tale · 1st–3rd grade

A shoemaker and his wife worked hard, but they were very poor. One night, the shoemaker had only enough leather left for one pair of shoes. He cut out the pieces, laid them on his workbench and went to bed.

In the morning, he found a pair of finished shoes on the bench. The stitches were tiny and perfect. A customer came in, loved the shoes and paid a high price for them.

With the money, the shoemaker bought leather for two pairs. He cut them out and went to bed. In the morning, two beautiful pairs were waiting. The next night, four pairs. Soon the shoemaker was busy and no longer poor.

"Who is helping us?" wondered his wife. So one night, they hid behind a curtain and watched. At midnight, two tiny elves climbed through the window. They were dressed in rags, but they sewed and hammered so fast their hands were a blur. Before dawn, they slipped away.

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

That night, they laid the gifts on the bench and hid again. When the elves found the clothes, they laughed and danced with joy. They dressed in their new things and skipped out the window, singing.

The elves never came back, but the shoemaker and his wife did well for the rest of their lives, and they always remembered their tiny friends.

Questions

1. What was the shoemaker's problem?

2. What did the shoemaker find each morning?

3. How did they find out who was helping?

4. What did the wife notice about the elves?

5. How did they thank the elves?

6. What is the lesson?

7. Why do you think the elves helped the shoemaker?

8. How could you thank someone who helped you?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. He was very poor.
2. Finished shoes.
3. They hid and watched.
4. They had nothing warm to wear.
5. They made them clothes and boots.
6. Kindness should be returned with kindness.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Kindness should be returned with kindness.