Sample MonkeyNotes
Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote.
This will give you an idea of the format and content.

The Pilgrim's Progress
by
John Bunyan

MonkeyNotes Edited by Diane Sauder
KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING
The setting of this story is an unusual one, since the premise of the text is that everything takes place in a dream the author has while resting under a tree. The setting inside the dream is a unique world consisting of the City of Destruction and its surrounding landscape, and the Celestial City, where God resides. The entire text of both parts of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* takes place on the road from the City of Destruction to…….

CHARACTER LIST

**Part I Characters**

*Christian* - an ordinary sinner from the City of Destruction who journeys toward the Celestial City in search of salvation.

*Evangelist* - a prophet/preacher who is eager to help those who have decided to seek salvation.

*Obstinate and Pliable* - neighbors of Christian. They try to discourage him from making the journey to the Celestial City.

*Mr. Worldly Wiseman* - a contented gentleman who lives a comfortable life. He tempts Christian by encouraging him to settle in Morality rather than seek the more difficult path to the Celestial City. His argument is practical and compelling, but is not what God wants from Christian.

*Good-will* - he saves Christian from the arrows of Beelzebub and pulls him through the Wicket Gate.

*Interpreter* - a holy man who shows Christian several wonders that await all pilgrims seeking the Celestial City.

*Simple, Sloth and Presumption* - three pilgrims who have failed on their journey.

*Formalist and Hypocrisy* - pilgrims who try a short cut and die for their offense.

*Porter* - a watchman of the house where Christian finds rest.

*Apollyon* - a foul fiend that Christian fights with in the Valley of Humiliation.

*Faithful* - a friend and companion to Christian on the road to the Celestial City.

*Mr. Talkative* - a talkative fool who latches on to Christian and Faithful. When he leaves them,………

**Part II Characters**

*Christiana* - Christian’s wife. Originally, she tried to persuade Christian not to go on the journey. After news of his success reached her, she decided to take her family and seek salvation as well.

*Mercy* - Christiana’s neighbor. She accompanies Christiana to the Celestial City and eventually marries one of Christiana’s sons, Matthew.
Great-heart - a soldier who accompanies the women and children on their journey and saves them from a lot of difficulties.

Gaius - the innkeeper who welcomes the party of pilgrims and who gives his daughter as a bride to……..

CONFLICT

Protagonist - In Part I, the protagonist is Christian. He is an ordinary pilgrim who has decided to seek salvation by making a journey to the Celestial City, where God dwells. Christian is imperfect, as all sinners are. He fails many times by taking wrong paths, forgetting his ways, and following poor advice. But……..

Antagonists - There are several antagonistic characters in both the parts of the book, all of whom have the same goal: to keep the pilgrims from entering the Celestial City and attaining salvation. The antagonists take on many forms: discouraging neighbors, Apollyon, the Enchanted Ground, Flatterer,…………

Climax - Both Parts I and II are based on a series of climactic moments that are quickly followed by moments of peace. Still, Part I has a final climax that occurs in the Dark River, where Christian suffers from a devastating lack of faith. He nearly drowns, but is supported at the last moment by………

Outcome - The outcome for Christian is that he is carried by Hopeful’s faith. The two enter the gates of the Celestial City and are surrounded by the glory they have earned. The outcome for Christiana is……..
They arm him for his journey, allow him to rest, and warn him to be careful on his way.

Back on the road, he faces the Valley of humiliation, where he fights and defeats a beast named Apollyon. Then he reaches the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where he becomes frightened. He meets a friend, Faithful, and the two support each other through the valley. They come to a town called Vanity Fair, where they are tempted with all manner of material things. They abstain, for which the townspeople resent them. They are arrested and put on trial before Judge Hate-good. Faithful is sentenced to death as a martyr for his faith. Christian manages to escape.

Outside Vanity, Christian meets Hopeful, a refugee of the town. The two set out and are quickly kidnapped by the Giant Despair and held captive at the Doubting Castle. They remain imprisoned for some time, until Christian realizes he has the Key of Promise. He frees them both.

At the Delectable Mountains, they meet shepherds who warn them they are almost in sight of the Celestial City, but there are still dangerous obstacles. The shepherds tell them to be careful of the………

**THEMES**

**Major Theme**
The major theme in John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is the cost of salvation. As Christian’s journey proves, the road to Heaven is not easy, the cost is great, and the true Christian must be willing to pay the cost no matter what. Man is full of sin, but this does not keep him from attaining………

**Minor Themes**
Along with this main theme, Bunyan toys with a host of minor themes, almost all of them related to religion. The importance of suffering, the debate between Grace and Works, and the perseverance of the………

**MOOD**
The mood of the entire book is highbrow and somber. Since the book is a religious allegory on the journey of man to the gates of heaven, each incident has been described with the gravity and seriousness of a life-or-death matter. The obstacles that the pilgrims face are awesome and traumatic, and they proceed in their journeys with great difficulty and forbearance.

Both parts of *Pilgrim's Progress* are saturated with a puritanical zeal for salvation. There is………

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY**

**JOHN BUNYAN**
John Bunyan was born in Elstow, England, within a mile of Bedford, sometime in the fall of 1628. He had very little formal education and at an early age was set to work at his father’s workshop learning to become a tinker. At the age of sixteen, he became a soldier in the army and served in the forefront during the English Civil War.

As a child, Bunyan was sensitive and suffered from terrifying dreams. He was tormented by devils and spirits in his dreams, and thought constantly about the possibility of going to Hell. These dreams and his vivid imagination have truly been a source of inspiration for him in his writings.

In 1647, at the age of nineteen, Bunyan married Margaret Bentley at Elstow Church. Her influence over him finally convinced him to attend church regularly and he began to read the Bible. Bunyan made a complete
surrender to Christ, and was converted to the Baptist Church of Bedford. Bunyan’s Christian faith and knowledge of the scriptures increased steadily. Though his preaching activities increased, he continued his work as a brazier. He started preaching not only at Bedford, but also in the surrounding villages. Crowds followed him wherever he preached. Ten years later, after the birth of four children, Margaret died. Bunyan remarried Elizabeth, whom he stayed with until his death.

In 1660, Bunyan was imprisoned for conducting a religious meeting without the permission of the State Church, which was the Church of England. He was offered freedom if he would submit to the official religion instead of his nonconformist religion, but he refused. He spent twelve years in prison, despite……..

HISTORICAL INFORMATION
In order to understand the spirit of religion in the time *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was written, one must understand the Church of England and its rise to influence. In the early sixteenth century, Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church and set up his own church, the Church of England, for which he was the commander-in-chief. He supplanted the Pope as the chief religious authority, and mandated that all English citizens belong to his church, pay him tithes, and worship only in that church.

After some time, the English populace grew annoyed with Henry VIII and his successors, seeing the many ways in which religious ideals had become corrupt and distilled. A great deal of these dissenters began to call for a restoration of purity in the church. When they studied the Scriptures, they became confused, seeing the nonconformity of the present church in relation to the Scripture. They felt that the original faith read ……..

SECTION SUMMARIES AND NOTES
Part I
“Christian makes his way toward the Wicket Gate”
Summary
The author, John Bunyan, begins his allegory by relating a dream he has had in which a man stands reading a book. The man is in tattered clothes with a burden on his back, trembling and crying aloud, “What shall I do?” His wife and children, not understanding what is troubling him, ask the reason for his despair and he tells them he is burdened by something that will eventually destroy them all. Soon, the man’s family and friends become annoyed with him, telling him first that he is sick, then that he is crazy. The man, named Christian, is quite alone in his despair.

One day he meets a man named Evangelist, who comforts him somewhat by telling him if he can follow the Light to the Wicket Gate, he will know what to do to ease his despair. Christian sets out for the Wicket Gate, relieved, until his family tries to stop him. He shrugs them off and runs toward the Light crying, “Life! Eternal Life!” Two men, named Pliable and Obstinate, join Christian on his journey with the intention of stopping him. Christian tries to convince them to join him. Obstinate gives up on Christian and returns to the village. Pliable decides to follow Christian in his quest. Together, the two head for the Light and the Wicket Gate, talking excitedly about the great things that await them.

On the way, Pliable and Christian fall into a pit called the Slough of Despond. It is a swamp full of slime and mud, and the two struggle to get free of it. Pliable is totally discouraged by this event, deciding that Christian’s expectations are not worth the troubles they have encountered. He gives up and leaves Christian alone to head to the Wicket Gate. Back in the village, Pliable is the butt of many jokes for falling prey to Christian’s “foolish” ideas. Christian, meanwhile, struggles to get across the Slough alone when a man named Help comes and assists.
Christian soon meets a gentleman named Mr. Worldly Wiseman. Mr. Wiseman persuades Christian to lighten his burden by going to live in a village called Morality. Morality is a good place, safe and honest, and there Christian can live a good life. A man named Legality lives in Morality, and Mr. Worldly Wiseman promises that Legality can help Christian forget his burdens. Christian is about to give in when he sees Evangelist in the distance. Evangelist chastises Christian for being so easily deterred from his goals. He tells Christian that Morality is not bad, necessarily; but it is not the Celestial City. He tells Christian that unless he gets to the Wicket Gate and goes inside the Celestial City, he will never get rid of his burdens. Christian begs for forgiveness and sets off anew for the Wicket Gate and the Light.

Notes
In this first section of the work, the author John Bunyan speaks directly to his readership and informs them that the story to be told is from a dream. In this very brief introduction, he at once commands attention from his readers and credibility for his story. He does this by revealing two things: the story is his dream, and he wants to share his dream with others. It is not a story he once heard, or a legend he wants to repeat. In such a way, he offers the reader incentive for listening and reveals his own interest in narrating this dream. Having quickly established himself as the author and as the dreamer, Bunyan then plunges into the dream and focuses his attention on its main character, a poor man seeking knowledge and salvation in the form of relief from his burdens. The man reads a book, which is the Bible. His burden, a visible load on his back, represents his sins and misdeeds. From the beginning, the symbolism that will characterize The Pilgrim’s Progress as a great allegory is apparent.

Some common themes of the Christian religion are taken up in this first section, not the least of which is the name of the Pilgrim: Christian. In keeping with Christian themes, Christian, the Pilgrim, makes his decision to seek salvation at any cost. In light of the objections of his wife and children to his quest, Christian abandons them and leaves on his own. Followers of Christ are urged to give up everything and follow him. Everything includes wealth, position, even family. Salvation must be the primary goal of the sinner; nothing should come between a man and God—even family. Historians are able to pinpoint similar moments in the author’s life that probably influenced his “dream.” Once, before he was first jailed, John Bunyan was told he would not be imprisoned if he would give up his preaching. Despite the fact that he had a wife and children who needed him desperately, Bunyan refused to quit preaching and consequently spent twelve years in prison, leaving his family destitute. The author made the choice to forsake family for his own salvation, and the Pilgrim in his dream does the same. This is a repeated theme in the work.

Sacrificing his family is only the first of many obstacles Christian encounters. A second is the loss of other companionship. Pliable and Obstinate are themselves types of sinners who try to dissuade Christian from his quest. Christian tries to persuade them of the need for salvation, hoping they will accompany him on his journey so he will not be alone. But Obstinate refuses to recognize the need for salvation; he leaves immediately after recognizing that Christian is resolute. Pliable, on the other hand, is fickle and easily influenced. He is won over to the cause of salvation, but is just as easily won over to some other cause at a moment’s notice. His desertion of the Pilgrim in the Slough of Despond is evidence of this. Pliable, unable to sustain his interest in salvation because the cost is too high, leaves. The encounters with these two men represent both internal and external forces of resistance and doubt, and leave Christian somewhat confused and alone.

The Slough of Despond is a self-titled pitfall in the quest for salvation. It represents those situations that cause any seeker to despair of ever reaching his goal. Pliable capitulates to despair. Christian, at his lowest moment in the Slough of Despond, receives unexpected aid from Help.
Christian’s meeting with Mr. Worldly Wise is interesting because of its ambiguity. Mr. Worldly Wise is not a villain or even a bad character. In fact, he is a good solid man with advice and friendliness. He thinks the village of Morality will be a good place for Christian, since he can bring his family and live in relative comfort. But Christian is not supposed to settle for good; he is to aim for the best. His moment of weakness is a sin because he nearly gives up the goal the Evangelist has given him. Morality, while comfortable, will never completely ease him of his burdens in the way that the Celestial City will.

The mentioned character Legality represents people who obscure the truth of Christianity in mere obedience to laws. The Evangelist encourages Christian to see comfort in heartfelt ideas, not blind obedience to arbitrary laws.

“Christian meets the Interpreter”

Summary
Good-will opens the gate for Christian and ushers him in quickly, warning him that a man named Beezlebub lives across the way and tries to kill anyone who knocks at the door. Inside, Good-will asks Christian about his journey and shows him a long narrow road. He tells Christian all he needs to do is stay on this very straight, very narrow path and he will find relief from his burdens. He then tells Christian about a man named Interpreter whom he will meet. Interpreter will tell him many great things.

In the Interpreter’s home, Christian is led into a room and shown a picture of a man. The man looks very somber, very pious, and very dedicated. The Interpreter tells Christian to study this face; it is the face of a true preacher, and Christian will need to know it well to distinguish between genuine piety and self-righteous imposters. The Interpreter takes Christian into a room filled with dust and orders a man to sweep the room. The clouds of dust cause Christian to choke and cough. Then a young woman comes in and sprinkles water in the dusty room, cleaning it completely of its filth. The Interpreter tells Christian that this room represents the human heart full of sin. The sweeper removes the corruption and the lady with the water acts as the Gospel, cleaning the heart and making it livable.

The Interpreter also takes him to two children named Passion and Patience. The Interpreter explains that Passion signifies the men of this world, who live for the instant gratification of their hearts and are able to keep nothing lasting because of their fiery impetuousness. Patience, however, has more wisdom. He retains what he has and lives for a future reward, in heaven. Christian is next led to a place where a fire burns against a wall and a man tries in vain to put the fire out. On the other side of the wall, another man adds oil to the flames, keeping the fire burning. He is Christ, saving the souls of the people. The Devil, with his bucket of water, can never extinguish the flames of Christ’s passion.

Christian is led to the gates of a beautiful palace, where crowds of people clamor to enter. Armed guards keep them out. The Interpreter tells Christian that the gates lead to eternal glory, but that Satan has posted guards to scare people away.

Christian thinks he should be on his way, but the Interpreter has two more things to show him. The first is a man in the iron cage of Despair. The prisoner tells Christian that he was once a Christian as well, heading for the Celestial City. But he slid backward into sin and renounced his Christianity. He can never again be saved, and must always suffer in his chains. The second thing the Interpreter shows Christian is a man terrified that Judgement Day has come. The man has an unclear conscience.

Having shown Christian these visions and explained them, the Interpreter asks if Christian understands. He
tells Christian he must always remember that which he has seen. The Interpreter then advises Christian to continue his journey toward the Celestial City.

Notes
Once Christian makes his way to the gates, he concentrates on listening to the stories of the Interpreter. He learns a great deal, especially when the Interpreter begins to use visions and characters to teach Christian lessons. Passion and Patience are allegorical examples of the two kinds of men there are: those who live for the present and those who live for eternity. The Interpreter advises Christian to be a man of Patience.

Later, the Interpreter shows Christian the gates of heaven, through which many long to pass. The armed guards are there to make entry difficult, if not impossible. A man in the crowd forces his way in, ignoring all obstacles. The Interpreter does not need to explain; Christian understands that he must choose his fate and defend himself well so that he can pass through the armed guards and find relief. It will not be easy, so he must be strong.

The visions that follow this scene are examples of the things Christian wants to avoid. One if the unforgivable offence of denouncing God. The other is the painfully uncomfortable situation of having an unclear conscience. In short, the lessons are to be faithful and to be free from guilt. The two men Christian observes and speaks with are examples of the kind of man he does not want to become. In short, this entire section is a lesson in observation and interpretation. Christian must watch, learn, and remember.

John Bunyan keeps referring back to himself and the fact that this narrative is a dream. In this way, the reader is continuously made aware of the author’s presence………….

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Christian - Christian, the protagonist of The Pilgrim’s Progress, is described in the beginning as a man “clothed with rags, standing in a certain place…a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back.” He is an ordinary man who has become repentant for his sins. He sets out for the Celestial City against the advice of all his friends and even his wife and children. Salvation becomes the most important goal of his life, one for which he abandons his family. This show of strength reveals him to be dedicated to his goal.

On his journey, Christian reveals his humanity. He listens with care to the advice of Evangelist and the Interpreter. Still, he is nearly waylaid by Mr. Worldly Wiseman by the allure of Morality, where he…….

Faithful - Faithful is a Christian martyr. He is executed for his beliefs, and is carried to heaven in much pomp and glory. Before his death, Faithful and Christian each long to be the one chosen as a martyr—so much is the glory for such a fate. Faithful’s death is a portrait in sacrifice. Just as Christian is………

Hopeful - Hopeful is the other friend which Christian makes in his long journey to the Celestial City. Hopeful meets Christian after the death of Faithful. He is introduced with the phrase “one died……

Giant Despair - Giant Despair is the owner of Doubting Castle. Christian and Hopeful come across him when they cross his grounds on their journey. Giant Despair takes them with him into his castle and locks them in a dark dungeon as a punishment for trespassing. With his wife, Diffidence, he beats them mercilessly and starves them for days.
Through Giant Despair, Bunyan wishes to explain how huge obstacles can deviate a man from the right path. The name itself signifies the extent of desperation a man would have to undergo if he comes ........

**Ignorance** - Ignorance is an interesting character who presents the reader with a dilemma. He is a good-hearted boy with the best of intentions. He sees himself as obedient and interested in salvation. He even makes it past all the obstacles to the gates of Heaven. But his one failing is that he has not........

**Christiana** - Just as the second work pales in comparison to the first, so, too, does the pilgrim Christiana pale in comparison to Christian. She faces most of the difficulties and hazards that Christian faced in his journey. However, it is clear from the onset that her journey is not as hazardous or dangerous as........

**PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS**
Structurally, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is a set of two long narratives, written separately but titled the same. For the purposes of this guide, the two works have been denoted Part I and Part II; it is possible to discuss them individually as well. The first book is a narration by the author of a dream he has supposedly had. The author intrudes occasionally to remind the reader of the supposed truth of this dream. It has no imposed parts or chapters, but for the purposes of discussion is broken down into natural segments of action. It chronicles Christian’s flight from the City of Destruction and his subsequent journey toward the Celestial City. It is a traditional chronicle, told in straightforward time.

The second book is also a narration, also a dream. This time, the author stretches credibility by........

**THEMES ANALYSIS**
As a religious allegory, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* expresses a major theme relating to spiritual salvation for mankind. After all, it is born out of John Bunyan’s puritanical zeal to reform the souls of so-called Christians and to teach, as simply as possible, the true tenets of the Christian faith. As such, it is structured around a man’s journey from earth (the City of Destruction) to heaven (the Celestial City). The man, Christian, is an ordinary everyman; he has a home, a wife, children, even friends. But he also has a burden, which is........

**THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS AS RELIGIOUS ALLEGORY:**
*The Pilgrim’s Progress* is a specific type of literature known as religious allegory. Allegory is a form of writing that presents images and ideas through symbolism. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, theology is presented in simple terms as a man travels toward heaven. In the process of making Christian and others......

**QUESTIONS**
1. Explain the various elements of allegory in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.
2. Discuss at least three characters other than the pilgrims themselves in terms of their names and personalities (example: Mr. Worldly Wiseman is a practical humanist who settles for easy morality rather than hard won spirituality.)
3. Describe the duel between Christian and Apollyon. Why doesn’t Christiana face Apollyon?........

Copyright © 1997-1999, PinkMonkey.com, Inc.
www.pinkmonkey.com All Rights Reserved.
Distribution without the written consent of PinkMonkey.com, Inc. is prohibited.
END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES FOR "THE PILGRIMS PROGRESS" BY JOHN BUNYAN