

JOHNNY APPLESEED

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by Reeve Lindbergh, ill. by Kathy Jakobsen
(Little, Brown)

Themes: Apples, Biography, Poetry, Nature

Grade Level: K – 5

Running Time: 15 minutes

SUMMARY

This is the story of Johnny Appleseed, a famous American born in Massachusetts in 1774, who grew up to help settle the west. As a young man, Johnny began traveling west, planting apple seeds in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and northern Indiana. He continued planting his apple seeds, helping early pioneers who had no room to take seedling apple trees with them on their journey to settle the western part of our country.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the contributions of Johnny Appleseed.
- Children will explore the settling of the west.
- Children will learn about life in the late 1700's and early 1800's.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask children to share what they know or may have heard about Johnny Appleseed. If children are unfamiliar with him, ask what they can tell about him from his name. Explain that Johnny Appleseed was a man born more than two hundred years ago—a man who contributed to our country by planting apple trees for new settlers across the western part of America.

Have children imagine what it might be like to settle in a new land. Have them think about seeing nothing but wide open space before them, no home, no garden, no stores. Ask:

- What might be the first thing you would do?
- Why would you do that first?
- How would you go about finding food?
- What would you do for shelter?
- What would you enjoy about this life? What would be difficult?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share pictures of the early pioneers with children. Point out the kinds of home made tools and equipment people worked with to make a life for themselves in a new place. Encourage children to consider the games they might have made up and played if they lived during the time the west was being settled.

Talk about Johnny Appleseed's trek across the country. Discuss the different kinds of wildlife and people he may have encountered. Encourage children to identify the dangers Johnny might have been faced with and the beauty he may have witnessed.

Emphasize the beauty of the environment as it must have existed 200 years ago, including the condition of the air, water, and the types of wildlife that could be seen. As you talk, stress the importance of preserving wildlife and caring for our environment.

Talk about how apples grow with children. What other kinds of fruits grow on trees? Which fruits are your favorites? Why? What are your favorite fruit recipes? Invite children and their family members to prepare and share some favorite fruit recipes with the class.

Visit an apple orchard with children. Encourage them to notice the different varieties, tastes, and look of the various kinds of apples. Talk with children about the many different ways we can enjoy apples (apple butter, apple pie, apple cake, etc.) Bring back enough apples to the classroom to make applesauce.

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