

Discovering American Folktales

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Parent Notes

Lesson 2: Johnny Appleseed

Born: September 26, 1774, Leominster, MA

Died: March 18, 1845, Fort Wayne, IN

Each lesson can be taught over a single day or explored over two or three short sessions in a week. You do not have to cover all of the material. Choose things that your child will enjoy. I've tried to include extra material that would appeal to a wide range of children. For instance, if your child does not like to color, but loves mazes, choose a puzzle. If your child loves crafts, choose that. A small child will remember what they are taught with a fun activity much longer than one remembered as work or unpleasant.

I have tried to allow the parents or teachers to teach in a relaxing and fun way that will help the child associate history with a pleasant memory and encourage eager learners in the future. Teach a child to enjoy learning and to enjoy what they are learning, and they will begin to search for new information on their own.

There are pictures in the student pages. They are not included in the parent notes to save ink if you wish to print. However, pictures are noted below.

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children's use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students' exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

(Picture of Johnny Appleseed)

Draw an apple tree beside Johnny Appleseed

This story is about a man who really lived. His parents named him John Chapman. He traveled west planting apple trees for the settlers to find. The settlers liked finding the apple trees on their land, and they built their homes near the apple trees. Johnny encouraged the settlers to pick his apples and use them. He taught them how to plant more orchards.

You can access this through World Book Online, which is included in your membership to SchoolhouseTeachers.com: <http://www.worldbookonline.com/kids/home#article/ar830084>.

Johnny Appleseed was born in Massachusetts, lived in Pennsylvania, and later planted apple trees in Ohio and Indiana and the surrounding areas. Can you find those states on a map?

There is a small USA map provided.

Parents can pull up this map to show their children where Johnny Appleseed lived, and really zoom in, or pull out an atlas or large USA map.

<https://www.google.com/maps/@39.9120011,-84.8461213,1195096m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en&authuser=0>

We can find where Johnny Appleseed lived and where he was buried when he died. That makes part of his story true. But many of the stories about the man, Johnny Appleseed, are exaggerated or made up. Have you ever made up a story? Have you ever “stretched the truth” so your story is more exciting? That is why the story of Johnny Appleseed is part of American folklore.

You can look online for a picture of Johnny Appleseed’s headstone. There are a few pictures of Johnny’s grave. Which one is really the right one?

There are so many stories about Johnny Appleseed that it is hard to know which ones are true. Many of the cities where he planted his trees and visited often have stories that are unique to their city. But all the stories agree about a few things.

(Stamp picture)

Johnny Appleseed loved people and animals and helped everyone, no matter what. He didn’t own much for his daily life; he didn’t even wear shoes, nor did he pursue a comfortable life, even though he was actually a rich man who owned a lot of land. He planted apples everywhere he traveled and taught people the skills he knew. He taught the Bible to everyone; that made him an American missionary! He never allowed an animal to be mistreated. Here was a man who loved his neighbor as himself, and went without many things, often even food, to help others.

(Johnny Appleseed Birthday Commemorative Coin/seal)

CAN YOU READ THIS STORY?

Johnny Plants Apples

There was a man named Johnny Appleseed. He liked to grow apples. He saw that many people wanted to go west. They wanted to live in the west. Johnny packed a bag, picked up his Bible and a bag full of his best apple seeds, and he walked west. He took his apples west.

(Johnny Appleseed with a little tree. Can you help him plant more?)

When Johnny had walked a long way, he looked and thought, "I will plant trees here." And he did. He planted a lot of trees. He walked some more. He planted new trees. He did this over and over.

(Sketch of small orchard for kids to add leaves and apples - drawn by my daughter Vannan Roden)

People came west. They were looking for good land. They wanted to build a house. They saw the apple trees. They thought, "This will be a good place to build a house."

(Wagon going west)

Johnny needed more seeds. He walked back to his farm. He saw the people living near his trees where he had planted them. He would talk to the people. He would read to them from his Bible. He would teach them how to plant more trees.

(Bible - you can write "Jesus loves [name]" or a verse about apples here)

When Johnny got home, he wanted to carry more seeds. He put a pan on his head. He could eat from his pan. He knew how to find food. He took his Bible too. But he did not take anything else! Now he could take even more seeds.

(Orchard that can be colored - original drawing used with permission is by <https://www.facebook.com/CowgirlVKart>)

He walked west again. He planted more trees. He kept walking and planting trees. When he had no more seeds, people gave him seeds. He told them about God from his Bible.

The people liked to see Johnny Appleseed. They did not mind that he had bare feet. They did not care that he had a pot on his head. They liked to listen to him read the Bible. They liked the apples. Johnny was a big help to the families who went west.

The End

Parents: If you wish to further study Johnny Appleseed and the life of people during this time, below are many pages of ideas and links. Don't feel like you have to do everything, or even ANY of it. If it sounds fun, try it. If it does not sound fun, skip it! I hope there is something here for every parent and every child to enjoy learning or doing. Try to choose between one and three things to do so the material is both fun and "sticks" with them. Older children may want to dig deeper or do more complicated things; younger ones may not be ready for some of this material, but the thing I have learned of very young children: if they are interested in a subject, they are able to absorb far more difficult concepts than we adults give them credit for! So, I gave a few deeper places that may be of interest to a few kids.

(My oldest was approaching 7 starting first grade, while my youngest was almost 5. The middle two were both 6. I understand that a first-grade child can be anywhere from 4–8, and skill levels may range from genius to special needs. I've taught both and have attempted to accommodate all levels in the extra support materials. Also, I am teaching my children in groups, so this will make it easier for a parent to include other children if needed.)

Some of the options you will have in the following pages:

Find and Print a Coloring Page

Find and Print an Activity Page

Learn about the US while Johnny Appleseed was alive

Learn about why the story of Johnny Appleseed became popular

Who lived at the same time as Johnny Appleseed?

Learn about Growing and Harvesting Apples

Read more Johnny Appleseed stories (or listen to stories or watch videos)

Find Festivals and Celebrations of Johnny Appleseed

Find Museums and Orchards

Learn to cook apple foods

Make a Craft

Memorize a Verse or Poem - Write it out for Penmanship

Learn Johnny Appleseed's Song - or other songs about apples

Discussion Questions

Some websites to visit to learn even more about the real Johnny Appleseed

❖ Find a picture to color from the story or draw one

- https://wpclipart.com/American_History/Historic_figures/Johnny_Appleseed/John_Appleseed_Chapman_small.png.html
- https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&biw=1388&bih=698&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=%22Johnny+appleseed%22+coloring+page&oq=%22Johnny+appleseed%22+coloring+page&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0j0i30k1j0i5i30k1.222187.227193.0.229059.2.2.0.0.0.107.211.0j2.2.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab
- <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/johnny-appleseed>
- <http://www.survivingateacherssalary.com/johnny-appleseed-apple-themed-coloring-pages/>

Why was this story written?

This story was a celebration of triumph as people moved west after Thomas Jefferson acquired the Louisiana Purchase. This was between the time of the American Revolution and extended past the War of 1812, very early in American history.

Johnny Appleseed did so much to help families succeed in settling the areas of Ohio and Indiana. Today, everyone wants to be able to tell about meeting someone famous. People did back then, too, and Johnny Appleseed was one of their heroes.

There were few roads. There were no stores to buy something if you needed it. There was danger from wild animals, angry Indians, the weather, and sickness. It was not easy to move west.

Johnny Appleseed planted apple trees on land he claimed. Some people bought that land from him; others bought land next to his and picked the apples on his land. People could make apple cider from the apples and sell it to their neighbors. It was also a good drink to have in the long winters and when the water was not good to drink.

Johnny Appleseed traveled a lot. He brought news from one town to another as well as to people who did not have close neighbors. This was important at a time when there was no TV or radio or newspapers. Even the mail was very slow. It might take months to get a letter from your mother back in the East.

Johnny Appleseed was a friend to the Indians. He was also a friend to the settlers. Sometimes he was able to help them agree to be friends when they had problems. He was a peacemaker. The pot on the head probably came about when Disney produced their short video, as none of the older stories or pictures have a pot on his head. He probably did not have a pet wolf, although he was kind to all animals, and there are many stories of him rescuing animals from traps. He also purchased farm animals from cruel owners and then sold them later to poor settlers who needed them.

It is important to note that Johnny Appleseed went west as a businessman and died a very rich man owning over 1000 acres of farmland, primarily apple orchards. He left no heirs, but he did have a large family of brothers and sisters with children.

As Johnny went west, roads, toll roads, canals, and better methods of travel were being developed and stretched west as more and more people wanted to move out to the rich farmlands of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. By the time Johnny died, trains were already making tracks into the West. The world was changing very fast.

❖ Learn more about the way of life behind the story

- <http://mentalfloss.com/article/62113/9-facts-tell-true-story-johnny-appleseed>