

Glenview New Church Sunday Morning Program
Preschool Lessons, Phase 1 - Lesson 11
Thanking the Lord (Psalm 1)

Theme: Thanksgiving

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. Everything the Lord created is for the sake of people (*TCR 67*).
- B. The Lord requires that we give thanks for our own sake so that we might come into a state receptive of His love (*AC 5957*).
- C. It is good to give thanks to the Lord for all the blessings He has given us.
- D. One way to thank the Lord is by helping other people.
- E. A good person can be compared to a tree which brings forth fruit.

NOTE: For background information on Johnny Appleseed, please see attached biography.

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduce the story
 - 1. Show the children several fruits which grow on a tree.
 - 2. Who made the fruit? The Lord made the fruit trees. And He makes the sunshine and the rain that help the fruit trees grow.
 - 3. Fruit is a gift from the Lord, and it is good food for our bodies.

B. Tell/read the story

- 1. Read Psalm 1:3:

A good person "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

- 2. If you want to grow an apple tree, what do you do? You plant an apple seed.
- 3. Let's read a story about Johnny Appleseed and how he helped people grow apple trees. (We recommend Reeve Lindbergh's *Johnny Appleseed* or the version by Steven Kellogg.)
- 4. Johnny Appleseed was a man who was very thankful to the Lord for all He gave to him, so we're learning about him at Thanksgiving time.
- 5. If time permits, sing the Johnny Appleseed song, "The Lord is good to me and so I thank the Lord..."
- 6. What are some things that you are thankful for?

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C. Ideas to discuss

1. What is the name of the man we read about today? (John Chapman)
2. Why did people call him Johnny Appleseed? (Because he planted apple seeds and helped them grow into apple trees)
3. Johnny Appleseed knew who really makes trees grow. Who is that? (the Lord)
4. Johnny Appleseed loved to share apple seeds and trees with people. What else did he like to share with them? (the Lord's Word)

D. Further Ideas

1. When Johnny Appleseed shared the Lord's Word with people, he also shared ideas and pages from the Heavenly Doctrine with people. He would tear out a page and let people read it. Then he would come back and get it back and give a new page for them to read. He called it "news fresh from heaven."

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. Johnny Appleseed song "The Lord is good to me"
2. "Thank you, Lord" by Lori Odhner
3. Other songs of thanksgiving

B. Activities

1. Have an apple feast (sliced apples, apple pies, applesauce, dried apples, apple juice, apple cake).
2. Play "hot potato", but instead call it "hot apple".
3. If you have a "Johnny Appleseed Tree" nearby, take a field trip and look at it.

C. Project

1. Draw an apple tree
 - a. Buy apple stickers to put all over the tree.
 - b. Text slip: "The Lord is good to me and so I thank the Lord for giving me the things I need—the sun and the rain and the apple seed."

IV. Teaching Aids

A. Apples and apple seeds

B. Books about Johnny Appleseed:

1. *John Chapman: the Man Who Was Johnny Appleseed* by Carol Greene
2. *Johnny Appleseed*, by Steven Kellog
3. *Johnny Appleseed*, by Reeve Lindbergh
4. *The Story of Johnny Appleseed*, by Alike
5. *A Visit From Johnny Appleseed and Other Stories*, by Kurt Asplundh
6. *Johnny's Trail*, by A.E. Crompton
7. *Johnny Appleseed, Man and Myth*, by R. Price

JOHNNY APPLESEED

Johnny Appleseed was a real person, who was born in 1774 in Massachusetts. His name was John Chapmen, and he was the son of Elizabeth and Nathaniel Chapman. His father was a farmer and carpenter who fought in the American Revolutionary War. We don't know much about John Chapman's childhood, but in 1797, when he was twenty-three years old, he was seen traveling west to plant his famous apple seeds in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and northern Indiana. Many people don't know this, but he even owned land in those states, and established nurseries there to raise and care for the apple trees he distributed to the settlers of the American frontier.

Apples were very important to the wilderness settlements of early America, as they were one of the few crops that could be grown and harvested easily and eaten in one form or another all year round. On the other hand, few pioneering families had room to take seedling apple trees along with all their household goods when they traveled west. John Chapman provided the answer for many people with his seeds and his nurseries. He became known by the name "Johnny Appleseed" by grateful American settlers of the early 1800s. While he did not establish all of the original apple orchards in America, as people sometimes claim, he did play an important part in bringing apples to the frontier.

John Chapman was also a devout Christian missionary who tried to explain and share his beliefs wherever he traveled. He was a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish philosopher who believed that we must live simply and in harmony with the natural world. John Chapman was said to have shown little interest in his personal appearance or in his possessions, but he had great love for all humanity and all living things. He gave away his trees to any families who could not afford them, and his kindness toward wild creatures, from bears to wolves to rattlesnakes to wasps, is well recorded. He was respected by the Indians and moved freely among them.

John Chapman was known to be especially fond of children. He spent much time during his travels telling his adventures to the younger members of the households he visited. He died in Port Wayne, Indiana, in March 1845, but his story, like the apple seeds he planted, will be part of our country forever.