

Johnny Appleseed by Pleasant DeSpain

Evelyn: this is the story of John Chapman, a true American hero. You might know him as Johnny Appleseed. Johnny was born in Massachusetts a long time ago. He had ten half-brothers and half-sisters.

Chorus: (waves) that's Us!

Claudia: When Johnny was a boy, many of his neighbors were moving out west. They were pioneers on the wild frontier. Johnny decided that when he became a man, he would also go out west. He wanted to plant apple seeds everywhere he went. That way, the pioneers would have apples to eat at their new homes.

Evelyn: Johnny left home at age 23.

Chorus: what did he take with him?

Claudia: He took a pot for cooking and a sack of apple seeds. He walked and walked and he planted and planted.

Chorus: He walked and walked and he planted and planted.

Evelyn: 'Cause he had itchy feet!

Chorus: "Cause he had itchy feet!

Claudia: now Johnny is 30 years old. He hates to wear shoes, and he likes to sleep outdoors. He likes animals as much as he does people. He has been walking west planting apple orchards. For seven years now.

Chorus: apple juice and apple butter. Applesauce and apple cobbler. My, oh my, apple pie! Yummmmmmmmmmmmm!

(Frontier Family walks into the clearing.)

Mason W.: Howdy, folks! Come on over and rest a spell.

Pary: Pa, that man is wearing a pot on his head.

Anderson: he looks strange, Ma!

Mason W.: Don't be scared. People call me Johnny Appleseed.

Travis: (surprised) we heard about you in Pennsylvania, and now here you are in Ohio.

Mason W. : It's these itchy feet of mine. I have to keep moving west.

Maddie: You planted all the apple trees we have seen along the way.

Travis: That's hard work. Who pays you?

Mason W.: (laughs) Nature does. I plant the orchards before folks move west so the apples are already growing when they arrive. The apples are nature's gift, and I just pass it along.

Pary: Pa says we are going to build a cabin and live here.

Anderson: Where is your cabin, Johnny?

Mason W.: (laughs) All around you. The earth is my floor, and the sky is my roof. The sun and wind and rain are my friends. This stew pot keeps my head dry, and wherever I go, I have all I need.

Maddie: Don't you get cold?

Pary : Don't you get scared?

Anderson: Don't you get lonely?

Mason W.: Yes, yes, and yes. That's part of living outdoors, but I make friends wherever I go. My Indian friends have taught me how to survive in the great outdoors.

(Young Wolf and the Ten Horses walk into the clearing.)

Mason Weight: Hello, Young Wolf and Ten Horses.

London: Hello, Tree Planter. Who are these strangers?

Mason W.: Meet my new friends. They come by wagon all the way from New England. They want to build a cabin here. They are good folks and good neighbors.

Travis: Johnny's right. We promise to be good neighbors.

Savannah: Tree Planter always speaks the truth. Welcome, friends!

London: Be careful of the she-bear, Tree Planter.

Anderson and Pary together sounding frightened: The she-bear?

Mason W.: Yes I've heard her growl a time or two, but I get along with bears just fine.

Travis: We must get back to the wagon. Thanks for everything, Johnny Appleseed.

Mason W.: (yawns and stretches) I'm so tired. I'll sleep in this hollow log tonight and finish planting the apple orchard tomorrow.

(Johnny starts to crawl into the log.)

Evelyn:(roars like a bear) Grrrrrrrrrr!

Mason W.: (startled) I'm sorry Mrs. Bear! I didn't know that this was your bed, too. I'll sleep under the tree over there. You have sweet dreams, you hear?

Evelyn: *(grows warmly)* Mmmmm!

Mason walks to the back of the room and sits down. Gavin walks to the front and takes Mason's spot.

Scene Two

Claudia: Johnny Appleseed is now 70 years old. He's walked a long way, and he's still going.

Chorus: Apple juice and apple butter. Applesauce and apple cobbler. My, oh my, sweet apple pie! Yummmmmmmmmmmmm!

Chorus Girls: How far did you walk, Johnny?

Gavin: Must be thousands of miles.

Chorus Boys: How long did it take?

Gavin: It took almost fifty years.

Chorus Boys: How many trees did you plant?

Gavin: Too many to count.

Chorus Girls: Who eats all the apples?

Gavin: The good folks who move out west looking for a better life.

Chorus: Do you still have itchy feet?

Gavin: *(laughs)* I was born with itchy feet. Got to keep on going, that's what I always say. This great new country needs lots of apples. They help us grow strong and healthy.

(Johnny bites into apple and slowly begins to walk away.)

Chorus: Good-bye, Johnny Appleseed.

Gavin: May you always be blessed with apples.

Chorus Girls: Thank you, Johnny Appleseed.

Chorus Boys: Be careful of the bears.

(Johnny waves good-bye and walks out of sight.)

Evelyn: John Chapman died when he was 71 years old. We will never forget this pioneer and American hero.

Chorus Girls: Appleseed Johnny, Johnny Appleseed. John Chapman was his real name. The wild frontier he helped to tame.

Chorus Boys: He planted apple seeds, which grew into trees. This was his story. Everyone clap now, please.

The End