



2003

Johnny Appleseed

Morgan Hagey

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McCaslin, Nellie. *Johnny Appleseed*. Players Press, Inc., 1996. ISBN 088734447X. \$ Royalty quoted upon application to Players Press, Inc.. 15 pp.

Reviewer: Hagey, Morgan

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Legends; Plays; Historical Fiction;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Legends; Euthenics;

Theme: Giving to the earth is better than taking

Production Requirements: This play requires some amount of historical props

Acts: 1

Run Time: 15 minutes

Characters: 9

Cast: You need a someone to be or look 50 to be Johnny Appleseed, a

Time Period: 1840

Cy James is a new neighbor of the O'Brien family. He comes by for a visit with them and hears of Johnny Appleseed, a friend of the O'Brien family. He is famed with having planted practically every tree in the state. Then, right in the middle of their conversation, Johnny himself stops by for a visit. Everyone is glad to see their old friend, and introduces him to Cy James who is very glad to meet him.

The next scene opens, and it is the next day, Mrs. O'Brien has made Johnny some new clothes so he doesn't look so ragged. Everyone is trying to encourage Johnny to stay around for awhile. He considers it, but in the end, he continues on his way, planting seeds and doing good deeds.

This play is good for young elementary aged students. It is very short, which means it would be good to perform it in conjunction with something else, whether that be a lesson on American legends, or perhaps a performance of another famous legend. By itself, it would seem rushed and random.

The writing is clear, which is ideal for young audiences and readers. However, the sudden appearance of Johnny Appleseed seems contrived. Perhaps to a younger reader, this would not be the case. However, there is no time between the exposition and the climax. It all happens at once.

In general, I can see young children thoroughly enjoying a performance of this. Children would even be great performers in a school setting. The production requirements could easily be simplified to allow for a classroom performance.