

# **It's a Farmer Jason!**

## **Classroom Resources for Your Farmer Jason Visit**

**by Peggy Baldwin and Jason Ringenberg**

**Designed for use with Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grades**

**A character created by alternative-country legend Jason Ringenberg, Farmer Jason has been wowing audiences all over the world since 2003. His two CDs, A DAY AT THE FARM WITH FARMER JASON and ROCKIN' IN THE FOREST WITH FARMER JASON, have won numerous awards and been critically acclaimed by publications ranging from PARENTING in the United States to the LONDON TIMES in England. His educational video program airing on PBS stations across the country won an Emmy Award in 2009. He tours North America and Europe constantly, playing schools, libraries, festivals, performing arts venues, and day care centers.**

**The music found on the two Farmer Jason CDs and DVDs is grounded in the natural world, teaching children that nature is something to appreciate and enjoy and that animals are our friends. While listening to these CDs and watching the DVD, children will learn lessons as diverse as how Native Americans made arrowheads, what a tadpole is, or why an old oak tree is good to have around. Coordination and music skills are improved due to the rhythmic nature of the songs. However, make no mistake about it, the Farmer Jason music is FUN and wildly entertaining. The kids will be learning lessons without even realizing it!**

**The Farmer Jason website, [www.farmerjason.com](http://www.farmerjason.com), has an activity pack that includes printable coloring sheets with facts about farm and forest animals. The site also features an interactive computer program where kids can choose to hear instruments from THE TRACTOR GOES CHUG CHUG CHUG song by clicking on different characters from the CDs.**

**This curriculum guide features a variety of activities for students to approach the themes in Farmer Jason's music. Wordplay, thoughts and discussion introduce children to the concepts in the songs. Our hope is that the guide sparks interest and excitement that students can bring to their time with Farmer Jason. Teachers typically find that students enjoy a richer experience at the concert if they have been listening to the CDs in advance of the show.**

## Let's Get Started!

Teachers, these activities are designed for use with the Farmer Jason visit. They can be whole class or small group activities directed by the teacher; some can serve as independent projects for students, depending on their ages. The activities address Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade objectives in language arts, health and environmental science, communications, music and visual arts.

### Playing with Words

- Listen to the song *Forest Rhymes*.

-- How many words can you think of that rhyme with these words from the song?

Deer (**cheer**)

Squirrel (**girl**)

Snake (**bake**)

Farmer Jason (**mason**)

-- Can you think of other rhyming word pairs from the forest, farm or nature?

- Listen to the song *Opposites*.

-- What is the opposite of these words?

Day (**night**)

Zero (**infinity**)

Loud (**quiet**)

Craziness (**serenity**)

Sad (**happy**)

Compact Car (**SUV**)

-- Wow, there are some big words in that song! Can you make up a definition for these words by understanding the opposite word?

Serenity

Infinity

### About Animals (Animal Attributes)

- Listen to the song *Ode To A Toad*.

-- Now that you've heard the song, answer these questions.

Toads live on mounds of \_\_\_\_\_. (Mud)

What do toads eat? (Bugs)

How do toads catch their food? (With their sticky tongue)

A baby toad is called a \_\_\_\_\_. (Tadpole)

Where would you go to find a baby toad? (In a stream, river, or pond)

-- Use your new knowledge about toads and the facts below to write an *ode* (a story) about the life of a toad. Be sure to develop your character with name and details. You might add other characters to your story in addition to the toad. Include the toad's birth and early years as well as his adventures both in and out of the water.

**Toad Facts:**

Toads are amphibians. Amphibians live on land and in the water.

A baby toad is a tadpole.

Tadpoles live only in the water.

Tadpoles have a tail that disappears as they grow and is replaced by legs, allowing the toad to jump from the water to the land.

- Listen to the *Catfish* song.

-- Scientists of all ages learn by gathering information, observing their subject (in this case, the catfish) and making a hypothesis. A hypothesis is an educated guess based on the information gathered and observations of the scientist.

Can you create a hypothesis about why trash thrown into our streams and rivers will harm the catfish?

First, list the facts you learned about catfish from the song. (Teachers, here are some catfish facts:

Catfish live in the water.

Catfish eat from the bottom of rivers and streams.

Plastic bags and soda can rings can harm catfish.

Catfish have whiskers.)

Second, is there a place in your community where you might go to observe catfish to gather information for your hypothesis? You can find more information about catfish and National Catfish Month (August) at:

<http://filebox.vt.edu/users/idavis/catfact.html>

<http://www.uscatfish.com/>

[http://www.tnaqua.org/Newsroom/catfish\\_month\\_presskit.asp](http://www.tnaqua.org/Newsroom/catfish_month_presskit.asp)

## Listen and Learn (for Younger Students)

- From the concert or CDs, can you answer these questions:  
What do you do on the farm in the morning? **(Feed the animals)**  
Where does a baby opossum live? **(In a pouch on its mother's stomach)**  
What does the kitty in the song like to do? **(Jumps so high)**  
If you scratch a kitty on the head, he will do what? **(It will purr.)**  
What sound does the tractor make? **(The tractor goes chug chug chug.)**  
What is some of the work the tractor in the song could do to help the farmer? **(It plows the fields and can work all day without resting.)**  
Did the tractor have a name? **(John Deere)**  
What are some of the things the doggie in the song liked to do? **(It likes to dig up flowerbeds and play with its friends.)**
- Every song, story or sentence has a topic. These are some of the topics of Farmer Jason songs. Draw a picture of one of the topics of Farmer Jason's songs.

## Question, Wonder, Observe and Research (for Older Students)

- Listen to *The Old Oak Tree*. Then answer these questions.  
Oak trees grow from an \_\_\_\_\_. **(acorn)**  
How do acorns get into the ground? **(Acorns, which are the seeds of an Oak Tree, fall to the ground when they are ripe. Squirrels like to eat these acorns, so they pick them up and bury them in the ground, to store for the winter when food is hard to find. Sometimes they forget where they buried them, and those acorns can grow into oak trees.)**  
How old was the tree in the song? **(200 years)**  
What does a tree need to grow? **(Water and space)**  
When the old oak tree in the song was young, how did the people travel? **(They rode horses and uses stars to help find their direction.)**  
Farmer Jason tells us we can be everything we want to be if we: **(Try and work very hard)**
  - Learn more about trees. You can take rubbings of a tree's bark by putting a white piece of paper against the bark and gently rubbing the area with a crayon. Leaf rubbings can be gathered the same way, by putting the leaf under the piece of paper and rubbing with a crayon. Bark and leaves are two *identifying factors, or attributes*, unique to each species of trees.
- Find an oak tree and take rubbings from the bark and leaves.
- Identify three other tree species in your schoolyard or your home yard or neighborhood park.

-- There are many good books about trees in your school and neighborhood library. These questions may help you in your reading and research.

What do trees and books have in common?

**(The pages in a book are made of paper, which in turn is made from trees.)**

What type of tree is an oak tree? **(Deciduous)**

How do trees help us breathe?

**(They make oxygen from the carbon dioxide that we exhale when we breathe.)**

What are some of the products you use each day that are made from trees?

What are three things you can do to help conserve our forests?

## **Bibliography**

**Here are a few online and print resources for your classroom.**

**To learn more about sustainable agriculture:**

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/agnic/susag.shtml>

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC\\_pubs/k-12.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pubs/k-12.htm)

**There are many free resources for using gardening as a study in the elementary school. This link from the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project is one source.**

<http://www.growing-minds.org/lessons.php>