

It's a Farmer Jason!

Classroom Resources for Your Farmer Jason Visit

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Designed for use with Pre-K to 4th 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, 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 4th 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

Squirrel

Snake

Farmer Jason

-- 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

Zero

Loud

Craziness

Sad

Compact Car

-- 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 _____.

What do toads eat?

How do toads catch their food?

A baby toad is called a _____.

Where would you go to find a baby toad?

-- 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

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?
Where does a baby opossum live?
What does the kitty in the song like to do?
If you scratch a kitty on the head, he will do what?
What sound does the tractor make?
What is some of the work the tractor in the song could do to help the farmer?
Did the tractor have a name?
What are some of the things the doggie in the song liked to do?
- 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 _____.
How do acorns get into the ground?
How old was the tree in the song?
What does a tree need to grow?
When the old oak tree in the song was young, how did the people travel?
Farmer Jason tells us we can be everything we want to be if we:
 - 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?
- What type of tree is an oak tree?
- How do trees help us breathe?

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

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

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>