

WHO'S THAT STEPPING ON PLYMOUTH ROCK?

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Book by Jean Fritz, illus. by J.B. Handelsman
Themes: Pilgrims/Plymouth Rock/American History
Grade Level: 3 - 6
Running Time: 23 minutes

SUMMARY

Plymouth Rock is the most solid piece of history the United States has. Jean Fritz explores, with wit and wisdom, whether or not the First Comers or Pilgrims stepped on it or not when they landed in Plymouth Harbor.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the significance of Plymouth Rock
- Children will understand something about the beginnings of our country
- Children will appreciate the importance of caring for our country's landmarks

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the Pilgrims' journey on the Mayflower. Provide books and other reference materials children can use to make clear the bravery and courage involved in making such a journey and the delicious sense of freedom the Pilgrims discovered when they arrived here. Encourage children to think about how they might have felt, and the things they might have experienced if they were travelers on these ships.

Encourage children to describe any of our country's landmarks that they may have seen. **Ask:** Where did you see these landmarks? What did you learn about these landmarks? How did it make you feel to look at these important symbols? Give children the opportunity to draw their own symbols that

represent something important about our country. Have children share their symbols, and then describe the significance of the symbols, to others in the group.

Share the book *"Who's That Stepping On Plymouth Rock?"* with children. **Then ask:**

- How do you think you would have felt about Plymouth Rock if you were one of the first settlers in our country?
- What would you have done to protect the rock?
- What do you think life might have been like in Massachusetts when the settlers first came? What things would be similar to the way we live today? What things would have been different?
- How do you think people feel when they visit Plymouth Rock today? How do you think you would feel?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Remind children of the different things that were included in celebrations during the 1600s (eating wholeberry pudding, marching, cannon fire, etc.) Have children describe the different kinds of celebrations we enjoy today and the many and varied elements of those celebrations. Encourage children to consider our Fourth of July celebrations and **ask:** How might they be different from the celebrations of the 1600s? What parts of our celebrations might be similar?

Divide the class into two groups. Have them engage in a mock debate regarding whether or not Plymouth Rock should be valued as a landmark, as the rock the Pilgrims used as a guidepost when steering their ships to American shores, or looked upon as just another rock. Encourage children to be as convincing as they can be in

stating their positions.

Have children recall how the rock appeared not to be movable in the beginning of the story and how the people of Plymouth solved the problem by building the wharf around the rock. Then offer children other problematic situations which they can work together to solve. For example, **say:** "Imagine that a whale has been washed ashore and cannot be moved back to sea. What can be done to preserve the whale?" Encourage children to be as imaginative and thoughtful as possible in working out solutions to this problem.

OTHER VIDEOS AND FILMS ABOUT U.S.HISTORY INCLUDE:

- **AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED, PAUL REVERE?**
by Jean Fritz, illus. by Margot Tomes
- **JEAN FRITZ: SIX REVOLUTIONARY WAR FIGURES**
by Jean Fritz
- **JOHN HENRY**
by Julius Lester, illus. by Jerry Pinkney
- **THE PILGRIMS OF PLYMOUTH**
by Marcia Sewall
- **SHH! WE'RE WRITING THE CONSTITUTION**
by Jean Fritz, illus. by Tomie dePaola
- **THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER**
by Francis Scott Key, illus. by Peter Spier
- **WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, BEN FRANKLIN?**
by Jean Fritz, illus. by Margot Tomes
- **WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS?**
by Jean Fritz, illus. by Margot Tomes