



Cross-curricular
Age 8-11

Apple wassailing

- Musical composition
- Performance

Overview

- At an orchard wassail, musicians 'bless' apple trees with songs and music to awaken the trees and ensure a good harvest in the autumn. Holding a wassail celebration with your pupils can bring wellbeing through learning, connection to nature, and celebration of the seasons.

Learning outcomes

- To compose a group piece of music.
- To plan a wassail celebration.

Equipment

- Percussion instruments or loose parts (e.g. pots and pans with sticks)

Activity

1. Introduce pupils to orchard wassail traditions by learning some traditional orchard wassail songs to practise around the trees outdoors.
2. Working in groups, ask pupils to compose their own wassail songs to 'awaken' the trees. Encourage them to add rhythms using instruments or body percussion, and choreograph dances to accompany their songs.
3. Bring the groups together to perform their wassail songs and teach them to the rest of the class.
4. If you'd like to expand on this lesson further, why not plan a wassail celebration with your class? Activities might include mapping a route for the procession, creating a running order or planning a recording of the event. Use the ideas in the table for more inspiration!

Further activities

Literacy and language	Poetry	Write wassail poems using rhyme schemes
Design and technology	Food and cooking	Create a spiced apple drink using simple ingredients
	Design	Make clay wassail bowls or decorate paper cups with wassail motifs
Science	Living things and their habitats	Learn about the life cycle of an apple tree and the role of pollinators Grow an apple tree from seed
	Gravity	Discuss Newton's apple and conduct experiments
Drama	Role play	Act out the life cycle of an apple tree from seed to harvest
Religious education	World religions and cultures	Compare apple tree stories from different religions and cultures
History	Local seasonal traditions	Explore other folk customs, e.g. Pace Egging, Whuppity Scoorie, Calennig, cheese rolling, haggis hurling, straw bears



Learning
through
Landscapes

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