

Discussion & Activity Guide

The Star Jumped Over the Moon

By
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The Star Jumped Over the Moon is a story about discovering and embracing what makes each of us unique individuals. It's the story of friendship, self-exploration, living and letting go, transformation, and ultimately using our talents and everything else that make us different to navigate the joys and challenges of life, while propelling ourselves toward our dreams and best days ahead. Readers of all ages will discover that, indeed, *YOU* are the star that jumped over the moon!

The following discussion questions and activities can be used, and easily adapted as needed, by parents, teachers, librarians, and others who work with children. And, BTW, adult readers and book clubs will also enjoy and be inspired by the timeless messages of love, friendship, curiosity, resilience, letting go, and hope in *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, and the questions and activities that follow—because, ultimately, this is a story about the transformative power and potential of being young at heart forever.

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Discussion Questions

1. The star quickly discovers that he is unique and different from everyone and everything around him. What does it mean to be unique and different? In what ways is the star unique and different? In what ways are you unique and different? Why is it okay to be unique and different? What are the benefits of being unique and different?
2. At the beginning, the apple tree is a completely new place that is unfamiliar to the star. When have you been in an unfamiliar place? What was the place? Did you like the place? Why or why not? If not, did you grow to like the place eventually?
3. Before waking up in the apple tree, where do you think the star was? And, what do you think the star does after he jumps over the moon at the end of the book? Have fun using your imagination to answer these questions!
4. The star spends a year—four seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter—exploring and discovering his new surroundings. What does it mean to explore and discover? What are some of the ways the star explores and discovers his new surroundings throughout the year? How do you, or how could you, explore your own surroundings and discover exciting new things?
5. Throughout his yearlong adventure in the apple tree, the star experiences many feelings, moods, and emotions, such as happiness, sadness, curiosity, fear, uncertainty, self-confidence, anxiety, courage, loss and letting go, and joy. Where in the story does the star experience these and other feelings? When have you experienced these and other feelings in your life?

6. The star learns many life lessons during his year living in the apple tree. What are some of the life lessons the star learned? What lessons did you learn from the star? How can you use those lessons in your everyday life?
7. Would you like to live in a tree or in outer space like the star does? What do you think your home and everyday life would be like in those places?
8. The apple tree becomes a wise friend to the star. What does it mean to be wise? Who is someone you know that is wise? Why are they wise? What have you learned from them? How do they remind you of the apple tree?
9. The star learns to jump higher and higher by practicing—hopping and dancing throughout the story. What does it mean to practice something? What is something you have learned through practice? What is something new you would like to learn that will take practice?
10. The entire story takes place in nature. Do you like nature? Why or why not? What is your favorite part, and least favorite part, about nature? What is your favorite, and least favorite, season of the year?
11. At the end of the book, the star learns that unexpected and bad things can happen in life when the apple tree he loves is cut down. This experience teaches the star that sometimes you have to let go of the things you love and move on with your life. When have you had to let go of something, or someone, you loved? How did that make you feel? What did you do, or what can you do, to feel better?

12. Toward the end of the book, the star realizes it is time for a change and that he needs to let go of his apple tree. How is this depicted in the story? What does change mean? What does letting go mean? How do the seasons—moving from spring to summer to fall to winter, and back to spring again—represent change and letting go?

How can change be a good thing? How can letting go of something help us to move forward in our lives?

What is an example of something that changed in your life, and how did that make you feel? What is an example of something you have let go of in your life, and how did that make you feel?

13. TRANSFORMATION is a really big word! And it's a really cool word! What do you think transformation means? What are some examples of transformation? How is transformation depicted in the book by the star, apple tree, and nature? What are some examples of transformation in your life? In what ways was the transformation in your life a good thing?

14. Throughout the book, the star often dreams of jumping over the moon and shining brightly in the sky. What dreams do you have? How can you make your dreams come true?

15. In what ways are YOU the star that jumped over the moon? Or, in what ways can YOU be the star that jumped over the moon?

Activities

Activity 1:

YOU are the star that jumped over the moon!

After reading *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, have each member of your class or group, including yourself, explain how and why they each see themselves reflected in the star. In what ways are they similar to the star in the book?

Explain to your class or group that a self-portrait is when you creatively draw, sculpt, or in some other way artistically portray yourself.

On blank sheets of paper, using pencils, crayons, markers, paint, or any other materials, have everyone draw their self-portrait as a star. If they were a star, what would they look like?

Once finished, have everyone show their star and explain how and why it is a self-portrait of them.

Activity 2:

Dance Like a Star

Throughout *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, the star is often dancing from branch to branch inside the apple tree.

Have each member of your class or group, including yourself, create an original star dance. Then, have them show everyone their unique star dance. This can also be done as a fun group dance party set to music where everyone is doing their unique star dances at once.

Activity 3:

The Moody Star

Throughout *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, the star experiences many different feelings, moods, and emotions. These include happiness, sadness, curiosity, fear, uncertainty, self-confidence, anxiety, courage, loss and letting go, joy, and more.

On blank sheets of paper, using pencils, crayons, markers, paint, or any other materials, have everyone, including yourself, draw individual stars depicting each feeling, mood, and emotion they can think of that they have experienced.

Once finished, have everyone share and talk about the feelings, moods, and emotions that they depicted in their star drawings. Then, hang these papers where your students or group members can continue to add to them, or use them to express how they are feeling in the future. As an alternative, create individual, cutout stars that students can display on their desks to further express their feelings, moods, and emotions each day.

Activity 4: **Who is Your Wise Apple Tree?**

During their year together in *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, the star and apple tree become friends. The star learns many lessons by living in the tree. What does it mean to be wise? What does it mean to learn? What are some of the lessons that the star learned from the wise apple tree?

Have each member of your class or group, including yourself, choose someone in their life who reminds them of the wise apple tree. Have them write a brief sentence, paragraph, song, or poem, or create a drawing, expressing why that person is wise and has taught them valuable life lessons.

Then, have your students or group members share what they wrote or drew.

Activity 5: **The Talking Star**

The star in *The Star Jumped Over the Moon* is a fun and curious little character who is on an adventure exploring the apple tree and his surroundings. But what would the star's voice sound like? What would the star's laugh sound like?

Have each member of your class or group, including yourself, create an original voice and laugh for the star. Then, have them share what that voice and laugh would sound like. This can be done by having them read a page from the book, recite ABC's, count numbers, or in any other way you'd like.

As an alternative or addition to this activity, your students and group members can also create voices and laughs for the apple tree and the moon.

Activity 6: **Write Your Own Star Poem**

The Star Jumped Over the Moon is a poem.

On blank sheets of paper, have each member of your class or group, including yourself, write their own poem about a star. This can be as simple as listing, and/or creatively arranging, all the words that rhyme with star or writing actual lines of poetry (that can rhyme or not).

Have everyone share their star poem with the class or group. You can even combine everyone's star poems into a photocopied and stapled, collected volume that they can each take home.

Activity 7: **Counting Stars**

Just like there are more people on earth than we can count, there are also more stars in the sky than anyone could ever count, but we can still have fun trying! And just like the star in *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*, there is only one YOU in this infinite galaxy.

On blank sheets of paper, have your students or group members, including yourself, draw as many stars as they can. One alternative is to have them draw as many stars as the highest number to which they can count. Or, they can simply fill the paper with as many stars as time allows.

Then, collect the paper galaxies, mix them up, and hand them out to the class or group, making sure that no one gets their own paper. Have each person count the stars on the paper and write down the number they reach. Then, collect, mix-up, and hand the papers out again, making sure no one gets the same paper. Again, have them each count and record the number of stars.

Do this as many times as you'd like, and have fun seeing how many of your students or group members count the same number of stars on the pages.

Activity 8: **Adopt a Tree/Do You Have a Favorite Tree?**

The Star Jumped Over the Moon was inspired by the author's favorite apple tree.

This activity can go in many different directions, including:

1. Ask the members of your class or group if they have a favorite tree. Have them either describe or draw a picture of their favorite tree, and share it with the class or group. If someone doesn't have a favorite tree, ask them to describe or draw what their favorite tree would look like if they had one.
2. Choose a tree on your school or library grounds, at home, or wherever your group meets, and adopt that tree for the school year, or some other span of time. Schedule time for your class or group to visit the tree, especially during the changing seasons of the year. Study what kind of tree it is, and the changes it undergoes throughout the time your class or group is visiting it. Together, you can even read *The Star Jumped Over the Moon* while sitting under or nearby the tree.
3. Once you adopt a tree, even if it's not nearby and you simply hang a photo of the tree in your classroom or meeting space, have each person (or collectively on one sheet of paper) write a letter to the tree. Or, for younger children, have them tell you what they'd like included in the letter as you write it for them. If the tree is close by, as a group, deliver your letter(s) to the tree by burying it near the tree's roots.

BTW, hugging your adopted or favorite tree is highly encouraged!

Activity 9:**Where in the Galaxy Do You Want To Go?**

As *The Star Jumps Over the Moon* reminds each reader, YOU are the star that jumped over the moon. With your talents and hard work, you can go anywhere in the world, and, indeed, the galaxy!

Hang giant maps of the world and outer space in your classroom, library, at home, or other meeting space. Using either stars created by your students or group members, or star stickers, have each person place their stars on all the places they'd like to go.

Have everyone explain why they chose the locations they did. This activity can include having them do research and presentations on those places to learn more about them.

Activity 10:**Create a Galaxy of Kindness Stars:****The Kindness Rocks Project + *The Star Jumped Over the Moon***

The Star Jumped Over the Moon's author John Schlimm collaborated with Megan Murphy, Founder of The Kindness Rocks Project, to create The Kindness Rocks & Smiles Community Project™ (KRScommunityproject.com).

For this new activity created just for you below, John and Megan invite you and your class or other group to create a Galaxy of Kindness Stars for your community.

Give each student or group member a smooth rock, which ideally has already been completely primed with black paint. Then, using yellow paint, and/or whatever other paint colors everyone would like, have each person paint a Kindness Star on their galaxy rock. Allow the rocks to dry. (If it's not possible to use rocks, this activity can be done using sturdy paper stars, which can be decorated with kindness messages and designs.)

Then, to share the Galaxy of Kindness Stars with your community—school, library, family, friends, neighborhood, town/city, etc.—you can do so in a few different ways:

1. Have each student or group member place their Kindness Star wherever they'd like in the community for someone else to find.
2. Somewhere in your community, create a Galaxy of Kindness Stars garden by grouping all of the rocks together in one location for passersby to then each choose a Kindness Star to take. Arranging the Galaxy of Kindness Stars around a tree would especially tie-in nicely to *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*.
3. If using paper stars, display them where passersby are invited to take one, or give them to businesses and other community members to display.

If sharing this project on social media, please tag @thekindnessrocksproject and @JohnSchlimm, and use the hashtag: #TheKindnessRocksProject.