

Teacher's Guide for Classroom Use of Jack's Christmas

By J. Paige Straley
(typical for third or fourth grade)

1. **Show the cover.** Introduce the lesson by telling students this is a poem about a rabbit that has a Christmas Adventure.

2. **Vocabulary review.** Most young readers will not have the word monotonous in their collection. Depending on the class, the words entail, clan, swale, warren, kin, and din may also need review. These words are important to the meaning of the poem, and a young reader (or listener) may lose the narrative if they are puzzling over a word.

3. **Perform the poem.** Read with gusto!

4. **Question and answer.** Ask the students what was happening. Use the pictures. This exercise is a quick diagnostic to make sure they understand the story.

5. **The Christmas Adventure.** All the little bunnies thought Jack was a hero for braving many dangers to be at the family Christmas. Emphasize that most of us have had similar experiences. Perhaps we were going somewhere a long way off, through bad weather - but it was worth it.

6. **Sharing Christmas Adventures.** Most students will have an exciting personal Christmas story. Some are hilarious, some are poignant – but they like telling them and their peers like hearing them. Use ten or fifteen minutes and let them share stories.

7. **Take the poem apart.** This is not for every class, and the teacher will judge her students best. To do this, read each stanza then ask what is going on. This gets all the detail and action fixed in their minds.

8. **Final reading.** Again, read with plenty of energy. The children are primed to “get it”, and they will hear and enjoy every word.

9. **Trigger for student writing.** At this point the students have their own experiences in mind, and can easily tap them for a personal narrative, “My Christmas Adventure.” This is a good piece for them to take home and share with their family. A common feedback from “My Christmas Adventure” is that parents are often surprised (and delighted) at how clearly their child remembers a particular trip or incident.

10. Most curriculum guides in grades four through six will have goals such as “introduction to rhymed poetry” and “writing a personal narrative.” Using *Jack's Christmas* as outlined in this guide is fun, it's seasonal, and it works as a good lesson plan!

