



Lesson Extensions and Activities for

Joha Makes a Wish

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Reading Is Fundamental

Google Voyager Folktales Unit

Book Description

Joha discovers a wishing stick, but its usage isn't as straightforward as one would think! When he wishes for new sandals, his old ones disappear, leaving him barefoot on his way to Baghdad. When he wishes for a donkey to carry him, he ends up having a heavy load to carry himself. Can Joha figure out how the wishing stick works before it gets him into trouble with the sultan?

A popular character in the Arabic-speaking world, Joha has a lot to teach about the very thin line between wisdom and foolishness. *Joha and the Wishing Stick* was inspired by 'The Answered Prayer,' a story found in Sharly Gold and Mishael Maswari Caspi's *The Answered Prayer and Other Yemenite Folktales* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

Vocabulary

Baghdad – the capital of Iraq.

Seal – something used to join two things together.

Parchment – stiff, translucent paper.

Reined – kept under control or restrained.

Brayed – the hoarse sound that a donkey makes.

Sultan – a king or ruler especially of a Muslim state.

Procession – people or vehicles moving forward together in an orderly fashion.

Dreadful – filling one with fear.

Dungeon – an underground prison cell.

Wart – a small growth on the skin.

Awning – material connected to the side of a building to offer covering from the sun.

Notched – having indentations or etchings.

Prior to Reading

- Ask students if they have heard of Baghdad. On chart paper, create a Venn diagram and have students share what's similar about their city and Baghdad and what's unique to each of the cities. Note students' answers even if they're incorrect as you will go back and discuss the answers after learning more about the country
- Walk students through the Google Voyager Story to panel 8: <https://g.co/earth/folktales>. Students will learn about the city that is one of the settings of the book. Add additional notes to the Venn diagram as you walk through the experience.

While Reading

- Stop reading on the page that says, “He broke the jar’s wax seal.” Ask the students to guess what’s in the jar and to share their reasoning for their predictions.
- Stop reading on the page that says, “I could use some new shoes.” Ask the students what three wishes they think Joha will make.
- Stop reading on the page that says, “The poor animal didn’t like being carried any more than Joha liked carrying her.” Ask students why they think the wishing stick isn’t working. Ask what they would suggest Joha do to fix it.
- Stop reading after the line that says, “Perhaps sitting in a dungeon will change your mind?” the sultan asked.” Ask the students what they would do in Joha’s position.

Post-Reading Activities

- Lead a discussion about the tale. Ask students such questions as:
 - What wishes did Joha make for himself? What happened when he made them?
 - What wish did Joha make for the emperor? What happened when he made it?
 - How did Joha escape the sultan’s guards?
- Ask students to write a list of three wishes they would make and why if they had a magic wand.
- Have students complete the Criss Cross, Memory Matching, and Word Search puzzles about *Joha Makes a Wish* on RIF’s Literacy Central (<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central>).

Lesson Extensions and Activities

Here are some ways to further explore the story:

Primary Standard for all activities: RL.K.10 (Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.)

- **Math** – Have students measure how many miles there are between cities in Iraq using a map [like this one](#) and a ruler. Have them compare distances to determine which cities are the shortest distance apart and which are farthest apart.

Objective: Students will be able to measure represented lengths on a map and determine which are shorter and which are longer.

Standards: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.MD.A.2 (Express the length of an object as a whole number of length units, by laying multiple copies of a shorter object (the length unit) end to end; understand that the length measurement of an object is the number of same-size length units that span it with no gaps or overlaps. *Limit to contexts where the object being measured is spanned by a whole number of length units with no gaps or overlaps.*)

Materials:

- Rulers
- Printed maps of Iraq with a scale note
- Pencils

- Paper
- **Arts** – Have students compare the architectural style of their choice with Middle Eastern architecture. First, they should do research on both styles of architecture at their local library. Have them collect images that represent different components of architecture and have them present their findings of the similarities and differences between the two styles to the class.

Objective: Students will compare and contrast two styles of architecture.

Standards: National Core Arts Standards, Anchor Standard #9 (Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.)

Materials:

- Library cards
 - Backboards
 - Printers
 - Markers
- **Social Skills and Writing** – Have students write and present a journal entry about a time when what they wish for didn't come true in the way they expected.

Objective: Students will use the written word to recount a memory.

Standards: SL.K.6 (Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly.)

Materials:

- Journals
 - Pens
- **Social Skills and Writing** – Prompt students to write a “how-to guide” on the proper use of a wishing stick. Instruct them to include details about the consequences of misusing a wishing stick, as well as the suggested wishes for the possessor of the stick to consider making. Have students share their written accounts with the class.

Objective: Students will practice creative writing.

Standards: SL.K.6 (Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly.)

Materials:

- Journals
 - Pens
- **Author Study/Compare and Contrast** – Have students compare the Joha character from *Joha Makes a Wish* with the Joha characters in other Middle Eastern tales. Break students into groups and have each group read one additional Joha tale. Once they're finished reading, the students should discuss the similarities and differences between the characters and then present their findings to the class.

Objective: Students will explore the folkloric tradition of including recognizable characters in different situations.

Standards: RL.K.9 (With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures or characters in familiar stories.)

Material List:

- Copies of other Joha stories like those in [Goha the Wise Fool](#)
- Paper
- Pencils