

The Man Who Planted Trees

Notes for The Man Who Planted Trees school assembly

Green text = notes for speakers

Black text = spoken text to accompany presentation

Introduce yourself - explain who you are and why you are there, for example:

My name is Karen Letten, I work for the Woodland Trust where we look after trees and woodlands.

I'm going to tell you a story. You need to listen carefully and I'll ask you some questions at the end. Pictures for the story are woodcuts – explain how these are made (you can get further information about woodcuts at Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodcut>)

Slide 1 - story title + Woodland Trust logo

The Man Who Planted Trees

There was a man called Jean-Paul who went on a long walk through the hills of southern France.

Slide 2

The land wasn't very green, in fact all he could see growing in these bare hills was scrubby bits of wild lavender and little else - certainly very few trees.

Tired from a long morning's walk, Jean-Paul came to a village.

Slide 3

Unfortunately he soon realised it was deserted, the ruined houses huddled together and silent. There were no roofs to give protection from the cruel wind that was blowing, no trees to shade him from the sun and the natural spring where the villagers used to get their water had dried up. He'd had no water to drink since the previous day so he walked on.

Slide 4

After five more hours he spotted a lone shepherd with sheep nearby. The shepherd had a weather-beaten but kind face and a gentle manner. He gave the stranger a drink from his bottle and then invited him to share some of his soup. The shepherd's name was Elzeard (*El-zay-ard*).

Slide 5

They entered the shepherd's stone house, and Jean-Paul soon forgot the bleak and wild landscape outside. The house was clean, neat, friendly and warm.



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The Man Who Planted Trees

Slide 6

After they had eaten, Elzeard fetched a little bag and emptied a pile of acorns onto the table.

Then he began carefully separating the good acorns from the bad. When he had collected a large enough pile of good acorns he divided them up into groups of 10. Once he had sorted out one hundred perfect acorns he stopped and went to bed.

The next day the shepherd took the little bag of acorns and dipped it into a bucket of water then off they went.

Slide 7

When they reached the place Elzeard was heading for, the shepherd began making holes in the ground with his rod and put an acorn into each hole. Then he covered the acorn with soil. He was planting oak trees. And so, with great care, he planted all 100.

He told Jean-Paul that he'd been planting trees in the wilderness for three years. And, in that time, he had planted a total of one hundred thousand.

The shepherd said that when he first came to the area, he noticed that this part of the country was dying for lack of trees and, having nothing better to do, decided to put things right.

Jean-Paul thanked the shepherd for his kindness and continued on his journey over the hills.

It was 10 years later that Jean-Paul returned to the area, and can you guess what it looked like?

Slide 8

This time, when he reached the deserted village, he could see that where there was previously a barren landscape, small trees had started to grow. 'So that is what a young forest looks like', he said to himself.

Slide 9

He then saw the shepherd in the distance. They walked to where the carefully selected acorns had been planted all those years ago to see the young oak trees. They were taller than both of them.

Over the next few years the young trees continued to grow and grow until the area became a wonderful green forest. Families with children started returning to the area and the wildlife came back too. Instead of rough gusts of wind blowing over an empty landscape, there were soft and scented breezes, the wind in the trees sounding like running water.

Slide 10

Indeed water did flow once again from the springs that were previously dry and people repaired the ruined houses. Hope returned and the area grew healthy and prosperous.

All because of The Man Who Planted Trees.



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Ask questions, to reinforce the message of the story:

1. What was the land like before the shepherd planted trees?
2. How did the shepherd plant trees?
3. What did the acorns grow into?
4. What happened to the village when the trees started to grow?

All this was achieved through the action of just one person. In this room there must be XXX young people. Just think how exciting it would be if we planted trees just as the shepherd had done. That's what the Woodland Trust is trying to do.

Slide 11 – More Trees More Good

More Trees More Good is an exciting new campaign that aims to encourage everyone to plant more trees. We hope to double the number of native trees in the UK.

Slide 12 - Children wearing More Trees More Good hats

Some will be single trees planted in a back garden; some will be in small woods.

Slide 13 - Two boys planting

Some lucky children get the chance to plant trees on a Woodland Trust site and help us create a new wood. These two boys had a great time with us...

Slide 14 - Two girls with spade

...and so did these two girls, as you can see. It is good to wear wellies and warm clothes when you go out tree planting.

Your school can plant 30 trees in your school grounds – just ask your teacher if they can order a free pack of trees from the Woodland Trust.

Slide 15 – Silhouette of tree planting

This dramatic picture was taken at Victory Wood in Kent on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. It shows children (sea and army cadets) planting trees on part of this flagship site managed by the Woodland Trust.

Slide 16- Screen grab of online planting activity

If you can't plant a real tree you can still learn about trees on our Nature Detectives website.

What will these trees look like in years to come? I am going to show you some photographs of wonderful woods that are cared for by the Woodland Trust. The Trust owns more than 1,000 woods throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



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Slides 17-23 *7 slides of woods*

Woodlands and trees are not just out in the countryside. Mention the importance of woodlands / trees to people in towns and cities.

Slides 24-26 *Last 3 slides*

Discussion / Questions

1. Why do you think woods are good?

Some possible answers/prompts:

Health Benefits: Clean our air, provide oxygen, help stop noise pollution, pleasant to look at, places to play and relax – spend our leisure time, a venue for recreational activity – walking, running, cycling, help us feel good, provide shade, provide some medicines

For us: Provide timber and wood products, food and drink, can help prevent flash floods by acting as water reservoirs and stabilising soil, soaks up sunlight and reduces Greenhouse effect, can provide renewable fuel which is carbon neutral

Slide 27 – Thrush

2. What wildlife lives in woodlands?

Wildlife: Provide shelter, shade, habitats and food

Final slide 28 – More Trees More Good logo

What are you going to do to help trees?

Ask them for some of their answers, think about what has already been mentioned:

- Planting trees
- Planting acorns
- Planting an on-line tree
- Finding out more about trees
- You could also highlight recycling, especially Yellow Pages directories and Christmas card recycling, making the connection between paper and wood and trees. (The Woodland Trust has been involved in recycling schemes for both of these.)

Finally, ask them what sort of world they would like to live in. One that has trees and woodlands and everything that lives in them and enjoys them, or a place with wastelands and buildings everywhere?

Whose responsibility is it to look after the environment? – Everyone!

Thank you for listening.



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