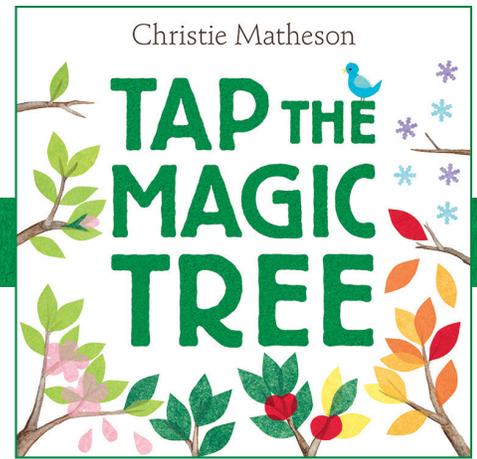


# TAP THE MAGIC TREE

BY CHRISTIE MATHESON

## TEACHING GUIDE



### About the Book

Young children will experience the joy of the changing seasons close up as they read and interact with this charming book. Tap the page, then turn it, and leaves magically appear. Touch, jiggle, and finger wiggle, and pink blossoms gently scatter. Shake and knock, and apples drop! Just as the seasons change mysteriously and beautifully before our very eyes, so too does the lovely tree in this story, with just a little magic from the reader to help it along.

### Before Reading

Take a nature walk outside with the class and stop to look closely at a tree (choose one that's not an evergreen!). Observe the tree and ask the children to describe it. Then ask the children if they think the tree looks like this all year round. Why or why not? Does it change? When? Why?



### Discussion Questions

1. What does "change" mean? Can you name some things that change?
2. How did the tree change in this story?
3. Do YOU change over time? In what ways?
4. List the seasons on a chart and ask children to describe each season. What is the weather like during that season? What happens during that season?
5. Ask the children to think about their favorite season. Have them "turn and talk" to a partner to share reflections about their favorite season. As an extension, create a class graph representing students' favorite seasons and analyze and discuss the results. Ask questions such as, "Which season is the class favorite?" "How can you tell?" "Why do you think so many children chose it as their favorite?"
6. Do you have a favorite tree near your home? Why is it your favorite? What does it look like? Does it change throughout the year?
7. Do all trees change with the seasons? Why not?
8. Why are trees important? Discuss the many benefits of trees, such as providing oxygen, shade, fruit, and wood.
9. Discuss the word "cycle." Can students think of something that happens over and over again? Discuss the cycle of the seasons.
10. What kind of tree was shown in this story? (Answer: an apple tree.) What other kinds of fruits grow on trees?
11. Sometimes people use apples to create different foods. Can you name some of these foods? (Possible answers: applesauce, apple pie, apple fritters.)

#### Common Core State Standards

(Reading Standards for Literature): *RL.PK.1, RL.PK.5, RL.PK.7, RL.K.1, RL.K.7, RL.K.10, RL.1.1, RL.1.7, RL.1.10*

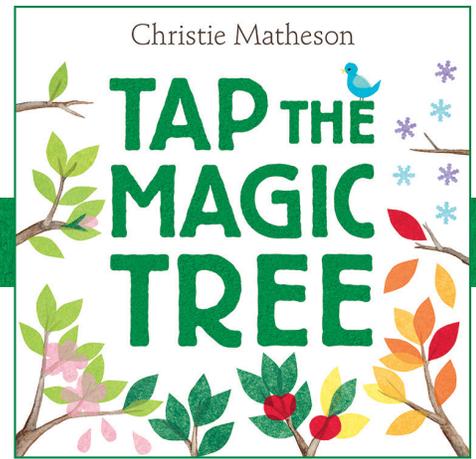
Common Core State Standards (Speaking and Listening): *SL.PK.1, SL.PK.4, SL.PK.6, SL.K.1, SL.K.4, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.4, SL.1.6*



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### Classroom Activities

- 1. The Magic Tree.** Give the children a large piece of paper that is divided into quadrants. (If possible, give them a large *round* paper divided into quadrants, to better represent the cycle.) Pre-label the paper or help children to label the seasons according to the book, each season at the top of one quadrant. In each quadrant, have the children draw a bare tree, like the one at the beginning of this story. Then have the children add details to each tree, representing the seasons. The first box (winter) can show only the bare tree or can include snow. In the next box (spring), they should draw green leaves. In the third box (summer), they should draw pink blossoms, and in the last box (fall), they should draw red apples.
- 2. See the Seasons.** Create seasonal collages as a class, using a long piece of roll paper or four separate pieces of roll paper. Assign each season to a small group of children, and have them write the season on top of the paper and then draw a background. Each collage should show a tree that changes with the seasons as well as seasonal details that children can cut out and glue on. For example, on the summer collage, after drawing or painting the sky, grass, and tree, the children might design a pool using blue paper to glue onto the collage. Then they can draw, paint, or glue cutouts of children swimming in the pool. On the fall collage, the children can glue piles of leaves and draw or glue cutouts of children jumping in the leaves. On the winter collage, they might glue a snowman or a foil paper lake, and then add cutouts of children ice-skating and sledding.

*Common Core State Standards (Writing Standards): W.PK.2, W.PK.11, W.K.2, W.K.11, W.1.11*

*Common Core State Standards (Speaking and Listening): SL.PK.1, SL.PK.4, SL.PK.5, SL.K.1, SL.K.4, SL.K.5, SL.1.1, SL.1.4, SL.1.5*



Photo by Becca Worple

### About the Author

**CHRISTIE MATHESON** is an editor for the *StrollerTraffic* website and has written about lifestyle, design, and green living for many websites and publications, including the *Boston Globe*, Martha Stewart's *Whole Living*, and *DailyCandy*. *Tap the Magic Tree* is her first picture book. She lives with her husband and two small children in San Francisco, California.

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Teaching guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

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