



Abiyoyo

by Pete Seeger

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Story Synopsis: The African folktale “Abiyoyo” takes place in a small village. It centers on a boy and his father and their encounters with Abiyoyo, a giant. The story is intriguing to children because the giant who terrorizes the village is made to disappear through the efforts of the boy and his father.

Classroom Use: The Abiyoyo unit has proved to be a favorite with children in preschool classrooms. Teachers report that “this unit is our all-time favorite” and that “*disappear* has become a part of the children’s vocabulary.” The story is appropriate for any season; however, it is longer than many stories read to young children and contains some unfamiliar words, such as *ostracize* and *disappear*. Even though the story is longer and more complex than many preschool stories, many teachers link it to their Halloween theme. It may be grouped with units based on monster stories, African stories, or families. The themes and concepts on which the daily activities are based are *disappear*, *shadows*, *faster*, and *happy*.

Considerations: The illustrations contain stereotypical pictures of people from different cultures. If you use this unit, you may want to discuss the fact that the story is based on a folktale, and the fact that the pictures show people in their traditional dress, not in the contemporary clothing they wear now.

Special Materials: Most of the materials used for this unit are typically found in early childhood classrooms. The first day’s activities suggest the use of bubble solution.

ACTIVITY MATRIX

Abiyoyo

Day	Concept	Music Activity	Art Activity	Make-Believe Activity
Day 1	Disappear (Cognitive, Science)	Make sounds disappear by holding hand over mouth, turning off tape recorder, and stopping vibrations of instruments.	Paint with water, product disappears as it dries.	Pretend to be magician. Make bubbles disappear by touching them with wand.
Day 2	Shadows (Cognitive, Science)	Make dancing shadows by moving to music before strong light (streamers).	Make junk structures that cast shadows.	Toy figures make shadows (flashlights).
Day 3	Faster (Cognitive, Language)	Sing, move to drumbeat, move and play instruments faster to a drumbeat.	Fingerpaint faster to a recited rhyme. Mix blue and green paint, make circles with a craft stick.	Race toy vehicles on ramps to determine which one is faster.
Day 4	Happy (Social)	Sing happy songs, move or play instruments to "happy" music.	Make a happy collage by cutting out magazine pictures and gluing them and other items such as sequins, glitter.	Pretend to be clowns (face paint).
Day 5	The Circus			



Theme of the Day:
Disappear

Day 1 Group Time: Introducing the Book

What to Do:

Read the story. Read the book slowly, singing the song and giving the children plenty of time to look at the illustrations. As the story progresses, adapt the way you sing the song, singing it faster and faster until Abiyoyo falls to the ground. If you don't know the melody to the song, the words can be sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Discuss the story. Ask the children why people told the boy to leave their houses at the beginning of the story. What did he do to make people want him to leave? Show the picture at the beginning of the book that shows the boy playing his ukulele. Ask if they think the people were angry because they didn't like music, or because he played the music too much—maybe at the wrong time? Relate this kind of behavior to bedtime in the children's home or to classroom rules. For example, adults are happy when children play with toys, but at cleanup time, adults feel angry when children don't stop playing. Summarize by saying that there is a right time to do things and a wrong time to do things.

Ask the children why people were angry with the boy's father. Do people usually like magic tricks? Again, were they angry because he did magic tricks too much, and maybe at the wrong time?

Introduce the theme of the day: Disappear. Discuss the word *disappear*. What happens when something disappears? Tell the children that when something is there and then it's gone, people say it "disappears." Use the bubble solution to make some bubbles. Clap your hands on one to make it disappear. Tell the children that you made the bubble disappear. Make more bubbles, giving the children an opportunity to make them disappear.

Introduce the arts activities.

Music and Movement Center

What the children will do: Make musical sounds disappear. Show the children the bell. Strike the bell, then make the sound disappear by pushing down on the bar of the resonator bell, or by pressing the bell with your hand. Tell them that in the music and movement center they can play musical instruments and try to make the sound disappear the way the boy's father made things disappear.

MATERIALS

- Book, *Abiyoyo*
- Bubble solution and wand
- Resonator bell and striker, or any bell that can be silenced quickly
- Paintbrush and water
- Chalkboard
- Piece of paper
- Picture of a magician
- Piece of fabric

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Theme of the Day: Disappear

Day 1: Music and Movement Center

What to Do:

Relate the activity to the story. Remind the children that in the story the boy's father made Abiyoyo disappear and that they are going to make sounds disappear.

Clap your hand over your mouth so that sound disappears. Have everybody sing a note (any note, just so there is a singing sound). Then have them clap their hands over their mouths to stop the sound. Say that the sound disappeared. Repeat the process several times, as long as the children seem interested.

Stop the tape to make the music disappear. Put the cassette player down on the floor where the children can see it easily, and start the music. Ask the children how to make the music disappear. Show them how to turn off the cassette player. Ask them if they can hear the music after you turn it off. When they say no, say that the music disappeared.

Allow children to turn the tape on and off. Let the children take turns turning the cassette player on and off. Say that the sound of the music disappears when it is turned off. (If a small radio is available, give children turns to turn it on and off.)

Make music disappear on the Autoharp. Show how to strum the Autoharp and then put your hand on the strings to stop the sound. Ask the children what the sound did. If they do not use the word "disappear" when they respond, remark that the sound disappeared. Encourage each child to strum the Autoharp and then make the sound disappear.

Try to make sounds disappear on different instruments. Set the music instruments on the floor where they are easily accessible and encourage each child to choose an instrument. Let them play freely, experimenting with the sounds and trying to make the sounds disappear.

Encourage children to demonstrate how to make sounds disappear on instruments. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Let each child demonstrate how to make the sound disappear on the instrument he chose.

Sing the Abiyoyo song from the book. End the activity by singing "Abiyoyo" with the children.

MATERIALS

- Cassette player
- Recorded music that sounds happy
- Small radio if one is available
- Bells, drums, tambourine, triangle
- Autoharp or other stringed instrument (optional)
- Strikers



Theme of the Day: Disappear

Day 1: Art Center

What to Do:

This activity is most successful when it is done outdoors; however, it may also be done indoors on a chalkboard. You may need a fan to make the chalkboard dry quickly.

Relate the activity to the story. Sit with the children to discuss the activity before you start. Remind them that in the story, the father made things disappear. Say that they are going to paint and their paintings will disappear.

Take the materials outside to a sidewalk. If the weather permits, take the children, a bucket of water, brushes, rollers, sponges, and small containers outside to where there is a sidewalk.

“Paint” on the sidewalk. Give each child a small container full of water and a brush, roller, or sponge. Join the children in painting circles, squares, large lines, small lines, and other shapes with water on the sidewalk. Encourage them to work together. Discuss the marks they make with the different equipment: What type of mark did you make with the roller? What kinds of marks can you make with the sponge? Encourage older children to make drawings of people.

“Paint” on another place on the sidewalk. After a short time, have everyone move down the sidewalk to another place to make another group painting.

See if the first painting has disappeared. Go back to the first artwork to see if it is still visible. Has it disappeared? What made it disappear?

MATERIALS

- Bucket of water
- Paintbrushes (large and small)
- Paint rollers
- Sponges
- Small containers



Theme of the Day: Disappear

Day 1: Make-Believe Center

What to Do:

Relate the activity to the story. Ask the children what the father in the story did with his magic wand. Help them understand that he made things disappear. Say that he was a magician and that they are going to pretend that they are magicians who can make bubbles disappear.

Discuss magicians' capes and wands. Discuss what magicians look like when they are putting on a show. Show the fabric or the capes, and the paper and tape to make magicians' wands. Say that these are the kinds of props that magicians use and that when they get their magic wands made, they will use them to make bubbles disappear.

Make wands. Roll a sheet of paper into a tube and tape it in place to make a model magician's wand. Help the children make their own wands.

Select fabric for capes. Wrap a piece of fabric around your shoulders to transform yourself into a magician. Help the children put on capes.

Blow bubbles; make them disappear. Use the bubble solution to make bubbles. Use your wand to tap a bubble, and say "zoop!" like the magician in the story as it disappears. Encourage the children to zap the bubbles with their magic wands.

Allow one child to make bubbles. After a few moments, ask one child to make bubbles that the other children can zap with their magic wands.

Take turns making bubbles. Let the children take turns making bubbles for the other children.

MATERIALS

- Capes, or fabric for capes and large safety pins or clothespins
- Sheets of paper to make wands
- Tape
- Bubble solution and wands