

The Jack-o'-Lantern Story

Halloween is a time for scary tales and things that go bump in the night. While your Beavers get ready for Halloween, tell them this story about the origin of the pumpkin Jack-o'-Lantern. It originates in ancient China.

Once upon a time, there was a remote little village at the bottom of some very high mountains. Often the men from the village would travel to other places to work, leaving the women, children and old people alone at home.

Sometimes when the men left the village, evil spirits from the mountain swooshed down to steal a child. The stolen children were never seen again, so you can understand why the villagers were very scared each time the men went away.

One year, a young boy called Jack had a clever idea. Just before the men went away to help with the harvest in a distant valley, he collected as many pumpkins as he could find. He scooped out the centres of the pumpkins and carved a horrible face in one side of each one. When the men left, he set a pumpkin in the window of every house in the village, and placed a lighted candle inside each pumpkin.

That night, when the evil spirits swooped down on the village, they were met by glowing, wicked faces that seemed to float in every window. The evil spirits were so scared that they swept back up to the mountains and never came down again.

Jack soon became known as Jack of the Lanterns and, ever since then, children have made Jack-o'-Lanterns to scare away evil spirits on Halloween.

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