



Meet a Pilgrim Child

OBJECTIVE: Read to learn about the lives of Pilgrim children long ago.

STANDARDS: Social Studies (NCSS): Culture; time, continuity, and change

“I’d like to go back in a time machine and see what it looked like.” —Paul

BEFORE READING

Activate Prior Knowledge

Use the cover to see what children already know about Pilgrims.

Have children look at the cover. Explain that the photo shows a boy from today dressed up like a Pilgrim from long ago. There are no photos of real Pilgrims because they didn’t have cameras. Ask, “How can you tell the Pilgrims lived long ago?” Then ask, “What else do you know about Pilgrims?” Explain that the Pilgrims traveled from England to America on a ship called the *Mayflower*.

DURING READING

Main Idea and Details

Help children organize their learning by finding the main idea and details.

After reading page 2, ask, “What is this issue about?” (*life as a Pilgrim child*) Then ask, “What two things have you learned about Pilgrim children’s lives so far?” (*what they wore and what they ate*) Explain that these are details about the main idea. After reading page 3, ask: “What other details did you learn about the lives of Pilgrim children?” (*how they helped and how they had fun*)

AFTER READING

Evaluate

Have children share their reactions to Pilgrim life.

Ask, “Do you think life is easier or harder for children today? Why?” (You may want to share information from the Read-Aloud Background first.) For instance, some children might say life is easier today because Pilgrim children had harder chores; some might say life is harder today because Pilgrim children didn’t have to go to school or do homework.

READ ALOUD BACKGROUND

Life as a Pilgrim

- **Home:** Most Pilgrim homes had only one room and a few small windows. Some had a space under the roof called a **loft**. It was used to store food or as a place to put an extra bed. Pilgrims used a ladder to climb up.
- **Clothes:** Both men and women wore **aprons** so their clothes would not get dirty. Women’s aprons were long, and men’s were short. Most Pilgrims also wore a piece of cloth around their necks called a **collar**. Some had ruffles, and some were flat.
- **Work:** Pilgrim children woke up very early to do their chores. They helped clean, cook, sew, hunt, fish, and plant. Children did not go to school; they learned how to read and write at home.
- **Fun:** Pilgrim children played some games that children still enjoy today. They played marbles, catch, and **noughts and crosses**, or tic-tac-toe. They also played a game called **ninepin**, which was a lot like bowling!

Working at Plimoth Plantation

- Paul and his father both work at Plimoth Plantation. Paul’s father plays a **blacksmith**. That’s a person who makes horseshoes for horses. Paul says he would not like to have lived in Pilgrim times, but he would like to go back for a visit. “I’d like to go back in a time machine and see what it looked like,” he says.
- The girl in the photos works at Plimoth too. Her name is Miranda. She says she likes her life today better than she would have liked being a Pilgrim. One reason is the heavy clothes. “It would be too hot in the summer to wear them all the time!” she says.

We would like to thank Jennifer Monac of Plimoth Plantation for her help with this issue.