

Create the Beanstalk Mystery

Teacher Directions | Anticipatory Set

Before the children arrive...

Create a little mystery that makes them stop, wonder, and start predicting before you ever open *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

What You'll Need

- A small pair of children's jeans - borrow a pair if possible
- Child-sized tennis shoes
- Lightweight stuffing, such as bulletin board paper, crumpled paper, grocery bags, or batting
- Artificial plastic vines, or vines/leaves made from green bulletin board paper
- Lightweight, secure fasteners appropriate for your classroom setup

Set It Up

1. Stuff the jeans lightly so the legs hold their shape without becoming heavy.
2. Securely attach the tennis shoes to the bottom of the jean legs.
3. Position the stuffed legs so they appear to be disappearing into the ceiling.
4. Arrange vines around the jeans and ceiling area so it looks as though a beanstalk has grown right through the classroom.
5. Leave the mystery unexplained. Let the children discover it when they enter.

Let Them Wonder

Resist the urge to explain what happened. Give the children time to notice, talk, laugh, and make predictions. You might ask:

- "What do you notice?"
- "What do you think happened here?"
- "Where do you think the rest of this person went?"
- "What clues do you see?"
- "What kind of story might have something like this in it?"

Safety First: Keep the entire display lightweight and secure it carefully. Nothing heavy should be suspended over an area where children sit, walk, or play. Follow your school or facility's rules for ceiling tiles, hanging displays, and fire safety.

Storyland Magic Tip: After the children have had time to wonder, gather them for the original *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Their curiosity has already opened the door to the story.