

John Murray Coming to America (RR)

Materials: Blue underlay Chapel
Two green underlay strips Boat
John Murray piece Felt dream bubble
Mr. Potter piece 5 felt hearts

Presentation:

Unfold the underlay. As you smooth out the wrinkles say . . .

What could this be? It could be a big blue book. Maybe it's a big blue box? Sky is often blue. Maybe it's the sky? The ocean can be blue. I think it's the ocean? Let's see what else we have to work with.

Unfold the two strips of green felt and lay them horizontally on the blue underlay manipulating these strips as you say things like . . .

Maybe these two pieces can help. They could go on top of each other like this? Let's see if they might work better end to end? Maybe they could work like this? I think that will help.

Lay one green to the left of the underlay so it butts up against it like an extension. Do the same on the right with the other piece of green. Point to the two pieces of green.

That does help. These could be land. A shore. One here. And one here.

Point to the blue in between the two shores.

And in between these two shores there is water. So much water. I wonder how much water there was between those two shores?

Find the John Murray piece and place him on the left hand shore.

There is a story told about a boy who was born on one of these shores who when he grew up took the long journey to the other shore.

Run your finger between the two shores.

This boy's name was John Murray. John became a minister when he grew up. He rode around from city to city teaching people how to love each other and love God. Many of the people where John lived believed that God punished people, sometimes in horrible ways. They also believed that God only cared about a very few people

Place a heart near the John Murray piece.

John Murray
Unitarian Universalist
Heroes and Heroines

But John couldn't believe that God was angry and punished people. In fact he was certain that God was loving. He also had a hard time believing that God only loved a few people. God was so big and so loving, John was certain that God loved all people.

Begin moving John Murray around the green strip on the left, letting him stop three different times. Each time he stops place a heart near that spot. As you do this say . . .

John traveled around letting people know that God loved them, that God loved all people, and that God wasn't angry and wasn't going to punish them. But people couldn't always believe John. They would get so angry at him that they would tell him to leave their towns.

Place your hand on the John Murray piece.

John finally decided that he was through. He had many sad things happen to him and on top of that people didn't like hearing that God loved them.

Place the boat piece on the left side of the underlay so that it is just touching the green shore felt. Then place the John Murray piece beside the boat on the green felt.

John decided that he wasn't going to preach anymore. He also decided that he was going to leave his country, which was England, and take the long journey to America.

Place John in the Boat and begin moving it slowly across the blue underlay from the left-hand green felt toward the right hand green felt, stooping in the middle of the blue underlay. As you do this say . . .

John got a job on a boat which was sailing for America. It was a long trip.

Place the Mr. Potter on the right-hand green felt.

Meanwhile there was a man in America, named Potter. He was a farmer who owned a lot of land.

Lay down the Mr. Potter piece as if he is sleeping. Then set the white felt dream cloud above Mr. Potter's head.

Potter had been having the strangest dreams. He began to think that God was talking to him in his dreams.

Place a heart inside the dream bubble.

Mr. Potter dreamt that God told him to build a church on his land, near the ocean, and that God would send a minister to preach from that pulpit. God also told Mr. Potter that the minister would preach a wonderful message of love that would change people's hearts.

Return the Potter piece to a standing position. Set the Chapel on the right-hand green felt near Potter.

Mr. Potter did as he was told in the dream. He built a church building. And then he waited. I wonder if the minister will ever come? I wonder who that minister is?

Continue moving the boat with John Murray in it. Bring the boat to shore a few inches above where the chapel stands.

The ship on which John Murray was sailing finally made it to America but the water got shallow and the it got stuck just off shore. They had been traveling for a long time and had begun to run out of food. The captain of the ship asked John to go ashore and buy some food.

Take John off of the boat.

John came to shore. And where was he? He was on Mr. Potter's land and he ran into Mr. Potter.

Place Potter beside John.

Potter met John saying the strangest thing. He said, "You are the preacher who will speak the good news from the pulpit I have built." John didn't know about Mr. Potter's dream that he was to build a chapel and that a preacher would come and preach God's love. But as strange as it all was, John liked Mr. Potter and spoke with him for a long time. He finally admitted that he was a minister and later, finally agreed to preach that Sunday.

Place John and Mr. Potter in front of the chapel. Place a heart on the chapel.

That Sunday he climbed into the pulpit and told the people there to go out and give people a glimpse of God's love. "Give them not hell but hope...." John did stay in America and he started preaching again. He founded many churches devoted to spreading the message of love.

Wondering Questions:

I wonder what part of the story you liked the best?

I wonder what part is most important?

I wonder where you are in the story?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?