

**THE STORY OF JACK-O'-LANTERN.** Directions. Print out. Read the story. Please do not read this story to young children or others who might find it scary. **p.1.**

On Halloween, pumpkins are carved into jack-o'-lanterns of every size and shape. But, how did this idea come about? Do you know the story of Jack-O'-Lantern? In Ireland and the British Isles, it was the custom to hollow out turnips, beets or potatoes and use them as candle lanterns. When the Irish immigrants arrived in America, they transferred the traditional turnip jack-o'-lantern to the larger and irresistible orange pumpkin. But, there is also a story about Jack-O'-Lantern. O'Lantern is an Irish name and the Jack-O'-Lantern is thought to have originated with a stingy blacksmith named Jack who drank too much and almost lost his soul to the Devil. The story goes like this:

### **THE STORY OF JACK-O'-LANTERN**

One Halloween night, Jack chanced upon the Devil (Old Nick) in a pub. Having many more than one over eight drinks, Jack was about to expire. The Devil moved in to claim Jack's doomed soul. But, Jack convinced the Devil that he would happily follow him to Hell if he could only have one last drink. "The trouble is that I have no money," Jack told the Devil. "If you could change yourself into a sixpence, I can have my drink and we can be on our way." The Devil loved showing off his ability to change shapes and was only too happy to oblige. Jack grabbed up the sixpence and popped it into a purse refusing to let the Devil out for ten years. Ten years later, as Jack was walking through an orchard, the Devil came to collect but Jack had another trick up his sleeve. "Before you carry me off to my fate," he asked the Devil, "would you be the gentleman I have heard that you are, and fetch me one of those apples?" You would have thought the Devil would have learned from their last encounter. "You can stand on my shoulders to reach it," said

Jack. Sure enough, the Devil climbed up on Jack's shoulders and while he was reaching for the apple, Jack quickly took out his pocketknife and carved a cross in the trunk of the tree. This left the Devil suspended in mid-air. "Get me down, get me down," he yelled. "Only if you promise that you will never again ask for my soul," Jack replied. The Devil, tricked again, was forced to promise, but he would soon have the last laugh. One year later, Jack died. When he arrived in heaven, St. Peter turned him away for all the sins he had committed so he had no choice but to apply for entrance into Hell. Upon seeing him, the Devil said, "I cannot break my word." Jack had nowhere to go. He was condemned to become a wandering nomad. "At least give me a light so I can find my way," he pleaded with the Devil. The Devil obliged by hurling a burning coal at him from the fires of Hell. According to tradition, Jack placed it inside a turnip he happened to be eating and he has used it as a lantern ever since while wandering around the earth waiting for Judgment Day.

The End.