The Apple Tree's Discovery

In a great oak forest where the trees grew tall and majestic, there was a little apple tree. It was the only apple tree in that forest and so it stood alone.

Winter came. As the snow fell to the forest floor, it covered the branches of the little apple tree. The forest was quiet and peaceful.

One night the little apple tree looked up at the sky and saw a wonderful sight. Between the branches of all the trees, the little apple tree saw the stars in the sky, which appeared to be hanging on the branches of the oak trees.

"Oh God, Oh God," whispered the little apple tree, "how lucky those oak trees are to have such beautiful stars hanging on their branches. I want more than anything in the world to have stars on my branches, just like the oak trees have! Then I would feel truly special."

God looked down at the little apple tree and said gently, "Have patience! Have patience, little apple tree!"

Time passed. The snows melted and spring came to the land. Tiny white and pink apple blossoms appeared on the branches of the little apple tree. Birds came to rest on its branches. People walked by the little apple tree and admired its beautiful blossoms.

All summer along, the apple tree continued to grow. The branches of the tree formed a canopy overhead as they filled with leaves and blossoms.

But night after night, the little apple tree looked up at the sky with the millions, and millions, and millions- and millions of stars and cried out, "Oh God, I want more than anything in the world to have stars in my tree and on my branches and in my leaves- just like those oak trees."

And God looked down at the apple tree and said, "You already have gifts. Isn't it enough to have shade to offer people, and fragrant blossoms, and branches for birds to nest on so they can sing you their song?"

The apple tree sighed and answered simply, "Dear God, I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but that is not special enough! I do appreciate how much pleasure I give to others, but what I really want more than anything in the world is to have stars, not blossoms, on my branches. Then I would feel truly special!"

God smiled and answered, "Be patient, little apple tree."

The seasons changed again. Soon the apple tree was filled with many beautiful apples. People walked in the forest. Whoever saw the apple tree would reach up to pick an apple and eat it.

And still, when night came to the forest, the apple tree looked at the stars in the oak trees and called out, Oh God, I want more than anything in the world to have stars on my branches! Then I would feel truly special."

And God asked, "But apple tree, isn't it enough that you now have such wonderful apples to offer people? Doesn't that satisfy you? Doesn't that give you enough pleasure and make you feel special?"

Without saying a word, the apple tree answered by shaking its branches from side to side.

At that moment, God caused a wind to blow. The great oak trees began to sway and the apple tree began to shake. From the top of the apple tree an apple fell. When it hit the ground, it split open.

"Look," encouraged God, "look inside yourself. What do you see?"

The little apple tree looked down and saw that right in the middle of the apple- was a star. And the apple tree answered, "A star! I have a star!"

And God laughed a gentle laugh and added, "So you do have stars on your branches. They've been there all along, you just didn't know it."

Directions: Turn an apple on its side and cut it in half. Show the star inside.

Script

"Usually, when we cut an apple, we cut it by holding the apple with its stem up. But in order to find its star, we needed to open it up from another angle. Often times it is when we change our perspective, or look at ourselves in another way, that we see the star- the brightness, the spark inside us. There is a brightness, like a shining star, within each of us. A goodness, a knowing, we are born with that never goes away. Sometimes we forget or get confused. The core of you is a star just like the core of the apple is a star. You might see your life as an opportunity to rediscover that brightness-goodness- wisdom in yourself and others."