

SERGEANT SEAMOOR OF THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY

Captain Lewis: Good day boys and girls. Thank you for inviting us to your school. My name is Captain Meriwether Lewis and this is my good friend Sergeant Seamoor. At the request of our great President Thomas Jefferson my partner Captain Clark and I are beginning a journey on this boat, called a keelboat, to explore new lands in the western part of America. We hope to find a way to travel by boat from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean. We are calling ourselves the Corps of Discovery. Have you heard of our famous journey? The President asked us to stop in Illinois and recruit more members for our team of explorers.

Seamoor: President Jefferson is really a nice man isn't he Captain.

Captain Lewis: He is a nice man Seamoor. And he has a great vision for this country. He wants us to claim the lands we explore as new territory for the United States.

Seamoor: I can't wait to get started sir. Where is Captain Clark?

Captain Lewis: Captain Clark is in town buying supplies for the journey.

Seamoor: What kind of supplies do we need sir?

Captain Lewis: We need clothing and medicine and food. We may be gone for a long time Sgt. We need to plan well and **know before we go** all the problems we may face on our journey.

Seamoor: Please sir. May we bring along plenty of my favorite food?

Captain Lewis: What is your favorite food my friend?

Seamoor: Squid sir.

Captain Lewis: Squid?

Seamoor: That's right sir. I love it. Barbecued, broiled, fried, baked, or shishkabobed!

Captain Lewis: I'm sorry Sgt. We can't pack squid in with our supplies, but when we get to the Pacific Ocean you can have all the squid you want. If we pack everyone's favorite food our boat will become overloaded and will likely sink.

Seamoor: What will we eat Captain Lewis?

Captain Lewis: Food is important for our survival. To be safe we have to know what to take before we go. Our boat will carry a small amount of food but we will have to hunt for food along the way to keep from starving when our food supplies run out. Bear, buffalo, and antelope meat should keep us strong and healthy. We need hunters to keep our team supplied with fresh meat.

Seamoor: Let's choose our hunters now Captain Lewis.

Captain Lewis: Right you are my friend. I'll bet we have some fine hunters right here in the Kindergarten or first grade. Who would like to volunteer to be a part of our Corps of Discovery team?

DO HUNTING ACTIVITY

Captain Lewis: Great job everyone.

Seamoor: They were so good. Let's take them all with us.

Captain Lewis: Excellent idea Sgt. I would also like to present each member with a special medal that I have brought along. This medal is called the peace medal and I will only give it to only the most important people I meet along the journey. (Pass out the medals to all the hunters.)

Seamoor: Before we go, I need to know. Will we have to fight any sea serpents on our way to the Pacific Ocean?

Captain Lewis: Sea serpents? Surely you don't believe in purple animals with long tails and horns on their heads?

Seamoor: I've heard stories Captain.

Captain Lewis: Sgt, please close your ears. I have some information that's just for the kids.

Lewis to kids: Seamoor thinks he's human. He doesn't know he's really a sea serpent. Can you help me keep the secret? OK Sgt. You can listen now. Don't worry. Sea serpents aren't real. If they were real, I'm sure sea serpents would be friendly.

Seamoor: That's a relief. When will Captain Clark be back?

tain Lewis: He'll be back soon, Sgt. He is out buying supplies for our trip and recruiting more men. It will take a good team, with special skills to make it all the way to the Pacific and back.

Seamoor: What kind of skills, captain?

Captain Lewis: We will need gunsmiths, carpenters, tailors, and so on. Each man will have to pull his own weight and be part of the team at all times, if we are to be successful.

Seamoor: What kind of team do you think we will make Captain?

Captain Lewis: I think these soldiers will make a great team, once we have taught them a few things.

Seamoor: Like what, Captain?

Captain Lewis: Well, for example, we need to teach them to work together like Buddies. Say, we have only one man on deck and he falls over board. If he doesn't have a "Buddy" to trust, there would be no one to save him. If these men work together, everyone will be safer.

Seamoor: What else do they have to learn to work as a team?

Captain Lewis: They have to learn to trust us Sgt. Seamoor. They need to know that we will watch out for them and help to keep them safe. It would be like these students going swimming without an adult watching them. They would never do that without someone there to keep them safe.

Seamoor: I think we should recruit some new soldiers and see what kind of team they will be.

Captain Lewis: That is a wonderful idea. Lets have 4 soldiers come up here and show what they are made of.

Exercise

Have the students try to move the two boards to walk to the end of the Keelboat. Stress how they have to work as a team to get the job done.

Seamoor: They did great captain. Much better than the soldiers did at the Falls of the Ohio. Remember when we got into a bit of trouble when we met Captain Clark in Louisville. That was a terrible experience. Let's tell the kids about it.

Captain Lewis: Of course Sgt. A few days ago we were floating peacefully on the Ohio River. It was a beautiful sunny day. Some of the men were fishing off the side of the boat. Off in the distance I began to hear a low roaring sound.

Seamoor: I thought it was thunder sir.

Captain Lewis: It was certainly a curious sound. The farther we moved down the river, the louder the sound. The river was flowing faster too. I looked ahead and saw a great

cloud of mist rising from the river. All of a sudden I realized what was happening. We were about to see the Great Falls of the Ohio River.

Seamoor: We were about to go over the Great Falls of the Ohio River.

Captain Lewis: Yes indeed. I called all the men on deck and everybody began rowing as hard as they could to get us to shore, but the river was stronger than we were.

Seamoor: Our boat went right over the falls.

Captain Lewis: The boat plunged over and began rocking right and then left. Whitewater began washing over the deck of the boat as we bounced off one rock and then another. The men hung on for dear life. Poor Private Gibson was immediately washed off the boat and into the river. We watched as his head bobbed up and down in the water but we didn't know what to do to help him. We thought he would drown. Then Private LaBeche jumped into the river to help Gibson. He was immediately sucked under the water and he was drowning too.

Seamoor: He wasn't much help was HE?

Captain Lewis: No. That was a mistake for him to jump in like that. Those men were lucky to have survived.

Seamoor: We were all lucky.

Captain Lewis: We had a little damage to the boat and lost some supplies in the river. I believe when we get on the Missouri River we may come across more falls and rapids and other dangers that may harm us. We need a good crew of boatmen that can help us stay safe on the water.

Seamoor: Let's choose a crew>

WATER SAFETY

Captain Lewis: First of all my friends, we don't want to make the same mistake in the future that we made at the Falls of the Ohio. What could we have done better?

Seamoor: We have to know before we go what problems we may have on the river.

Captain Lewis: That's right Sgt. We should have had a plan for encountering problems like waterfalls or men falling overboard.

Seamoor: My father had a saying about how to help someone who is in trouble in the water.

Captain Lewis: What is the saying Sgt.

Seamoor: It goes **Reach Row Throw and Don't Go.**

Captain Lewis: Interesting. We could have used that knowledge to help Gibson and LaBeche when they fell in the River. We could have reached or thrown something out to them in the river and pulled them back on the boat. We could also have launched our canoe and rowed out to them and pulled them to safety. But what is the Don't go part Seamoor?

Seamoor: Ah yes. Don't Go. LaBeche never should have jumped in that water to save Gibson. He nearly drowned himself.

Captain Clark: And if he had gotten close too Gibson, Gibson probably would have panicked and pulled him under. Never swim close to a drowning person or you may become a victim too.

Seamoor: What could LaBeche have done to help Gibson?

Captain Lewis: I think that's where Reach Row and Throw come in. LaBeche was standing right by this pile of equipment here on deck. Pick something out he could have used to help Gibson by reaching, rowing, or throwing.

Pole: The pole is actually a tool we use to push the boat along against the river current. We put men on both sides of the boat to move upstream, but LaBeche could have reached out with the pole and let Gibson grab on. Let's try a man overboard drill using the pole.

Row: This paddle is actually a tool we use to move the boat in deeper water. We also use paddles on our smaller canoes. Someone could safely help a drowning person by paddling close to them and pulling them to safety onto a boat. Lets try a man overboard drill.

Throw: We use this rope to pull the boat over sandbars and through shallow water. We call it cordelling the boat. However you are right, this rope can be thrown so a drowning person can grab ahold and be pulled to safety. Lets try a man overboard drill.

Barrel: Someone chose the barrel. Actually that's an excellent choice. We use barrels to store our supplies. These barrels float. Anything that floats can be thrown to a drowning person to help them keep their head above the surface of the water.

These tools are all excellent for helping a drowning person but someone has to be at the right place at the right time to help a person in trouble.

Seamoor: What do you mean Captain?

Captain Lewis: In order to be safe around the water we have to use the buddy system. No one is allowed to be alone around the water. You must always work in pairs in case one of you gets in trouble and needs help.

(explain how to recognize a drowning person)

Seamoor: I'll be your buddy Captain.

Captain Lewis: And I'll be your buddy Sgt. I think we are ready to begin our expedition.

Seamoor: Pacific Ocean. Here we come!

Captain Lewis: Right you are. I think we are well prepared now and we have a fine team. Teamwork will get us to the Pacific Ocean Captain.

That's right. Teamwork and good planning, that's the best way to be safe and successful.

And now girls and boys I would like to introduce another valuable member of our Army team. Ranger _____.

Ranger: Hello. My name is _____ and I'm a park ranger with the US Army Corps of Engineers at Rend Lake. The Lewis and Clark expedition taught us some valuable lessons. If I were going on a water voyage today I would be sure to include one very important piece of equipment. Can anyone guess what that equipment would be? It is

called a PFD. IN 1804 they didn't have life jackets. They had to work as a team to stay safe. Can you remember how they might have worked as a team to get someone, who might be in trouble, out of the water if they fell in. There were 4 ways you can save a person who is in the water. Do you remember the 4 ways? REACH, THROW, ROW, AND DON'T GO.

This is why you **never go around the water alone**. You always need someone to help you out if you get into trouble. Lewis and Clark had a team of 37 members on the expedition. It took the whole team to get the job done.

I would like to thank you all for inviting us to your school to talk about the Lewis and Clark voyage and water safety. Remember that you can all be real heroes, just like Lewis and Clark, by doing everything the safe way. Thank you.

Background info:

Keelboats were generally built in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and it was here that Meriwether Lewis commissioned the boat used by the Corps of Discovery. The keelboat used by the Corps was sketched by Clark in his journal. It was 55 feet long and 8 feet wide, with a 3- to 4-foot draft. For propulsion it had a 32-foot sailing mast, 22 oars, a rudder, and a tiller for steering. Protection against hostile encounters were a swivel cannon on the bow and two smaller guns called blunderbusses. The boat included a cabin and lockers for storage that also served as walkways for poling, and had a total carrying capacity of 12 to 14 tons.

Proceeding into what is now Montana – farther west than any white men had ever gone on the Missouri – they are astounded by the wildlife: herds of buffalo numbering up to 10,000, and other game “so plenty and tame,” John Ordway writes, “that some of the party clubbed them out of their way.” (The men are eating 9 pounds of buffalo meat a day.)

(They travel in big keelboat (55 long, 8 feet wide, capable of carrying 10 tons of supplies) and two smaller boats called pirogues. Proceeding up Missouri River involves sailing, rowing, using setting poles, and sometimes wading along the bank to pull the boats with cordelling ropes. 14 miles is a good day's progress.)