Poisson d'avril

April Fool's Day

Background information

In France, on the 1st of April, children stick paper fish to the backs of other people for a joke. When the fish is discovered, they shout '*Poisson d'avril!*' (April fish). They also play practical jokes, like we do in the United Kingdom.

Some believe that April Fool's Day originated in France. April 1st was the beginning of the new year according to the pre-Gregorian calendar. When the Gregorian calendar was introduced, the new year's celebrations changed to January 1st. Those people who resisted the date change and still celebrated on the first of April were known as '*Poisson d'avril*' and people would play practical jokes on them.

Here are some French 'toc, toc' (knock, knock) jokes.

Toc, toc,	*Knock, knock*
Qui est là?	*Who's there?*
Anni	*Anni*
Anni qui?	*Anni who?*
Anniversaire.	*Anniversaire (birthday)*

Toc, toc	*Knock, knock*
Qui est là?	*Who's there?*
Sam.	*Sam*
Sam qui?	*Sam who?*
Samedi.	*Samedi (Saturday)*

Teaching activities

- Can you make up any of your own jokes in French?
- Make some paper 'fish' to stick on people!
- Write an acrostic poem about jokes and tricks using 'April Fool' as the title.
- Make a poster of your favourite jokes.
- Ask each member of your family for their favourite joke and write it down to add to a class anthology.
- Tell the class some jokes, in English. Others can score them out of ten for content and delivery.
- Children can use the guided sheet on page 22 to compare April Fool's Day in Britain and France.

Vocabulaire

le poisson d'avril	April Fish (Fools)
un poisson	a fish
toc, toc	knock, knock
Qui est là?	Who's there?
l'anniversaire	birthday
samedi	Saturday

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Nom: Date:

I understand how and why April Fool's Day is celebrated in France.

How is April Fool's Day different in France?

Can you write down an April Fool's Day joke, or trick, that you know about?

Can you make up your own 'Toc, Toc' joke in French? Ask your teacher for help.

Extension activity

- Use the Internet to find out some more information about how April Fool's Day is celebrated in different countries.

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