

Discovery Time

3 Paengawhāwhā | April 2020

-  Get Creative!
Auaha-tia
-  Research
Kia hurahura
-  Think
E Whakaaro
-  Ask
Kia pātai

JOY GERMS

Have you ever heard of a Joy Germ?

These porcelain **Joy Germ** figures are 100 years old!

They were made in Germany in the 1920s to spread joy and fight away bad thoughts after the first World War and the Spanish Flu.

Joy Germs have their mouths wide open to spread lots of joy.

Why do we need to be careful about spreading germs, especially right now?

Joy Germs are like a Billiken. "The Billiken is a mythical good-luck figure who represents 'things as they ought to be'"

Read on to discover more about these little guys!

Joy Germs come in lots of different forms. This one is a tape measure.

Can you see where the tape measure is hidden?



This **Joy Germ** is an ashtray.

In the 1920s people were not aware that smoking is very bad for our health!



This **Joy Germ** has a compartment under it to store jewellery or treasures

MY JOY GERM AND ME

Kia ora! I'm Kirsty and I am an educator at Te Manawa.

This **Joy Germ** belonged to my great grandparents and sat on the mantelpiece at my grandparents' house here in Palmerston North. When my grandmother moved to a rest home she said I could have this very special family treasure!

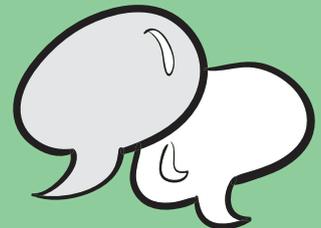
My great grandad Jackson Mason was born in 1885 and married his first wife Maud in 1915. Sadly, Maud died in 1918 due to the Spanish Flu epidemic. Only 12 days later Jackson's older brother Walter also died of the flu that he had contracted while volunteering to care for sick, returned servicemen in Hastings.

As you can imagine Jackson was incredibly sad about losing two very close family members. We don't know how he got the Joy Germ, but we know that it was his and it brought him joy!

Can you guess what my Joy Germ is?



It's a salt shaker!



Do *you* have a family treasure? Ask someone from your family if there is a story about the treasure.

Was anyone in your family affected by the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic?

What is a Billiken?

Joy Germs are often referred to as Billikens.



The **Billiken** is a charm doll created by an American art teacher Florence Pretz in 1908. She is said to have seen the creature in a dream!

The Billiken is monkey-like with pointed ears, a mischievous smile and a tuft of hair on his pointed head.



There were songs written and recorded about the Billiken. The Billiken Rag used the popular style of music at the time called rag time named after its 'ragged' or syncopated rhythm



Carving Billikens out of Bone was popular in Alaska. Many Bering Strait Inuit carvers would sell Billikens to tourists to make money.

This Billiken is carved out of whale bone.



What other objects have been used to spread cheer?

There are many poems written about Billikens to encourage people to buy them. Here is one of them!



Make up your own poem or turn this one into a song!

Draw, sculpt or carve your own Billiken or Joy Germ!

*I'm Billiken whose lucky grin
Makes gloom run out and joy run in
I'm fond of little boys and girls
I love to nestle 'gainst their curls
And so that it could be arranged
Into a doll myself I've changed.*

Just like Joy Germs Billikens were also made into tape measures!



What was the Spanish Flu?



The Spanish Flu is sometimes called the 1918 Flu Pandemic which started in January 1918 and lasted until December 1920. The Spanish Flu infected 500 million people, which was about a quarter of the world population at the time.

We can't be sure how many people died from the Spanish Flu but its estimated that the toll ranged from 50 - 100 million people, making the Spanish Flu the deadliest pandemic in human history.

Although the 1918 influenza pandemic was commonly referred to as 'the Spanish Flu', it did not originate in Spain. It was given the popular name by journalists when the Spanish King, Alfonso XIII, fell seriously ill with a form of influenza in May that year.

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/>



In just two months of 1918 New Zealand lost about half as many people to influenza as it had in the whole of the First World War.

No event has killed so many New Zealanders in such a short time.

Vaccines can help protect us from viruses. We don't yet have one for Covid-19, but scientists around the world are working hard to create one.

How do vaccines work?

Learn more about the Spanish Flu epidemic in New Zealand at nzhistory.govt.nz



'The 1918 flu pandemic', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/influenza-pandemic-1918/>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 26-Mar-2020

How do we spread joy today?

Putting teddy bears in windows is helping cheer up many children. Have you been on a bear hunt?

This newspaper article is taken from the NZ Truth, Issue 1075, 1 July 1926. With thanks to the National library archives on Papers Past. *What ideas did Albert have to spread cheer?*

Think of some ways you can spread joy!

ONE likes to rub shoulders with the optimist, the man who believes that all is right with the world. Albert Russell, of Wellington, believes that this old word is a joyous place, and that the joy-germ is the most effective enemy of all the noxious germs that would overwhelm us.

When we were all down in the dumps a few years ago, Albert organized community singing to gladden our hearts in spite of ourselves. One might almost term him a pathological case, inasmuch as he is an obstinate and chronic carrier of germs—not of any deadly kind, but of a wholly beneficent character.

He is virtually a joy-germ merchant. Albert's conception of a joy-germ is a squat, tubby figure holding its sides in an abandonment of mirth. He has protected his idea by letters patent. Years ago he followed the stage as a profession, and knows all about the vicissitudes peculiar to the precarious calling of a travelling mummer.

He has a sense of humor, and does not mind telling you of the thunderous applause that greeted him once in a small town. Time after time he returned to bow his acknowledgments, but he was not to know until later that a conspicuous rent in his nether garment was the cause of so much enthusiasm. He has since forsaken the stage for commerce.

SMILE!
IT'S
NATIONAL JOY
GERM DAY

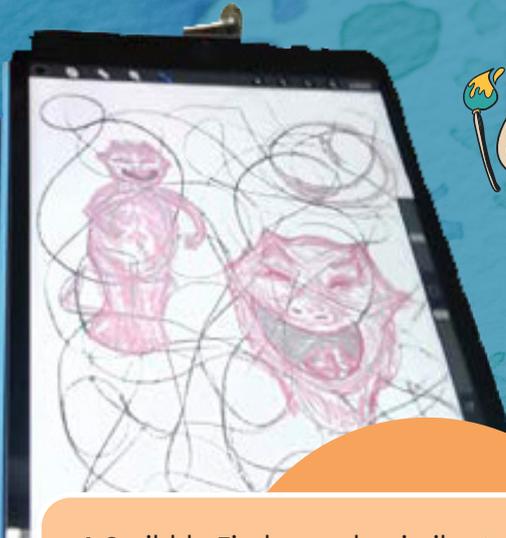
'Google' National Joy Germ Day - it's a thing!



Joy Germ Day (8th January)

Okay, so we weren't really sure at first what a "joy germ" even was, but it's just another way of describing how happiness is contagious. Yup, that ol...

Make a Joy Germ Scribble Finder!



Kia Ora! I'm Mirjam, and I'm an educator at Te Manawa. I run the NOA open studios where everyone is an artist! Here is a fun art activity you can try at home. enjoy!

A Scribble Finder works similar to a Word Finder puzzle but instead of having a list of words you need to find in a field of letters you can find the shape of your Joy Germ in the field of lines. The fun thing is that everyone will see something different.

Make your own scribble page by scribbling all over a page and see what you will find.

Now look at the field of lines from all different sides and angles. You can start by looking for parts of the Joy Germ. Shapes like a big smiling mouth, the happy eyes, the perky nose, the big round face, the big feet or round belly.

You can use any kind of drawing material to make the lines a bit thicker there or color in the shape. Start nice and gently and not too dark.

When you have found one part of the shape, you can probably find the rest of your Joy Germ around it. Your Joy Germ can be doing anything, it's up to you! It could be sitting, dancing, walking, sleeping... The fun thing is that everyone will see something different. *Remember to have fun and be creative!*

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