

When you were a kid, did you fear that you would get into trouble with an adult for something you did? Well, this is what happened to George Washington, the very first American president, when he was just a young boy.

George Washington and the Cherry Tree

One day, when George Washington was six years old, his father came back from town and brought a surprise for his son George. It was a hatchet, a small axe that could be used with one hand. He said to George, "Have it but be very careful with it! It's sharp."

When it was time for dinner, George's mother told him to put the hatchet in the corner. During dinner, he kept looking at the hatchet and imagined that he was cutting many things. "George," his mother said, "Could you go cut up the twigs I have in the yard into kindling?" George was thrilled. He ran to the pile of twigs, which he wished were larger, and began to chop them into small pieces. He cut the little pieces smaller and smaller. Soon, there were no twigs left to cut. George then dashed over to one of the fence posts that surrounded the field of his father's prized cherry trees. The hatchet cut nicely into the fence post and left a hole in it.

"What good is a hatchet if I don't have anything to cut?" thought George. He circled around the farm cutting anything he could find. Finally, he saw a young tree in his father's orchard of cherry trees. "There are so many cherry trees, surely Father will not miss one of them if I cut one down," said George to himself. So, he swung his hatchet and the tree fell to the ground.

Later that evening, as they were sitting by the fire, Mr. Washington mentioned that it looked like someone had chopped down one of his cherry trees. "Did you do that, George?" asked his Father. George was still and quiet for a bit, but after a while, he said, "Yes Father, I cannot tell a lie, I did chop down the cherry tree."

He was expecting his father to be very mad, but instead his father pulled him close and held him tightly. "I am so proud of you, son," said his father. "In a very difficult situation, you still told the truth."