

CLA 2009 STORYTIME SPARKS PRESENTATION – CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULT SERVICES INTEREST GROUP

Penny Peck, “Crash Course in Storytime Fundamentals,” Libraries Unlimited, 2008.
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Tips on Making Storytime More 21st Century, and Making it Easier on You

1. Bilingual storytimes done as a “duet” – Many libraries have seen a need for storytimes in English and another language, such as Spanish, Cantonese, or something else. But the children’s librarian or library assistant doesn’t speak that language. So give a bilingual “duet” storytime, where the regular storytime presenter reads a line in English, then a partner reads a line in Spanish or another language, and go through a book that way. More picture books are being published in the Bilingual format, so it isn’t as hard to get books as it once was. And the Spanish reading partner can be a library clerk or other staff member, or a trained volunteer. Having the regular children’s staff be one of the partners helps the non-English speakers who attend get to know a friendly face at the library.
2. Crafts at Preschool Storytime – for some of us, this is not new. But many libraries still do not have a craft project at Preschool storytime. If you are not getting very good attendance, it can motivate the parent or caregiver to attend, because it can be something “extra” they can’t do at home. It also ties in strongly with Kindergarten Readiness skills, which include using scissors, coloring, and other skills related to doing crafts. Here are several websites with craft ideas for storytime:

<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/craftprojectsbytheme> Large selection of free craft projects sorted by theme. Make crafts related to everything from animals to transportation.

www.bayviews.org From the Association of Children’s Librarians of Northern California, a monthly Storytime themed outline is posted along with craft ideas.

www.abcteach.com This is the place for kids, parents, student teachers, and teachers. Free Printables: 5000+ free printable pages and worksheets. Subscription required for many of the resources, however much of it is free to visitors.

www.activitiesforkids.com Provides information regarding family activities, childcare, private schools, after school activities, and products and services for your children, all within your state or area code.

www.atozkidsstuff.com Free lessons and activities for Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers, and School-Age children. This sight also includes links to reviews of Children's music, movies, and books.

<http://childfun.com/> Provides craft ideas, printable coloring pages, and other activities parents can do with young children.

www.coloringbookfun.com a division of childfun.com ColoringBookFun is still the largest free

coloring page site on the internet.

www.coloringpages.net Choose from hundreds of printable coloring pages for kids! Disney coloring pages like Winnie the Pooh and other characters like Scooby Doo are favorites. Includes a large selection of Bible and Christian pages, and of course, many, many holiday pages!

www.crayola.com Find rich, hands-on learning experiences that can be searched by subject, theme, grade, media, and completion time.

<http://www.dltk-kids.com> Features a variety of fun, printable children's crafts, coloring pages and more including projects for holidays, educational themes and some of our children's favorite cartoon characters.

www.enchantedlearning.com Full of craft ideas, coloring pages, and other reproducibles.

www.familyfun.go.com Great ideas. Practical advice. Fun stuff to do. Lots of activities and crafts sorted by theme or age group.

<http://www.first-school.ws> First-School features free fun preschool lesson plans, educational early childhood activities, printable crafts, worksheets, calendar of events and other resources for children of preschool age. The preschool crafts, lesson plans and activities are appropriate and adaptable for toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarten level (ages 2 to 6).

3. Dialogic Reading at Storytime – Dialogic reading is something we need to model for parents, so they will do it at bedtime and it is proven to increase emergent literacy skills. Basically, it is to create a dialogue while we read, asking open ended questions like “What do you see in this illustration,” or “What do you think will happen next?” Many who have attended the ELF grant training will remember discussing the need for Dialogic reading. To find out more, check out this great book: *Early Literacy Storytimes @ Your Library: Partnering with Caregivers for Success* by Saroj N. Ghoting and Pamela Martin-Diaz, ALA, 2006, \$48, ISBN 0838908993.
4. Repetition at Storytime – If you have taken the “Mother Goose on the Loose” training offered at an ELF grant training, or elsewhere, you will remember that 80 percent of their storytimes are songs and activities that are repeated from one session to the next. So, even if you only know a few songs and fingerplays, feel free to repeat them at your storytimes, especially if you are the substitute. Kids need repetition. For more on “Mother Goose on the Loose,” go to: <http://www.mgol.org>
5. Baby Storytime – Some libraries have been doing a baby storytime for a while, in addition to the customary Preschool Storytime, but many libraries still haven’t done so. Baby storytime has proven to draw a big audience of loyal attendees, both mothers and fathers, since many of them spend part of the day with their babies even if the parent works. It is a great way to model readaloud techniques so that by the time their children are old enough for preschool, they have been read to regularly and gotten into the reading habit. Waiting until a child is three is almost too late to start reading to him or her, so the baby storytimes create that

habit and it becomes a regular activity. Baby storytime also doesn't need a lot of preparation since repetition is so important, reading many of the same books from time to time is not just acceptable, it is desirable, and repeating the same songs and fingerplays is also important.

6. Toddler Storytime with Movement Activities – The one area of storytime that is growing by leaps and bounds is Toddler Time – storytimes for nonstop two year olds. These sessions feature short picture books, lots of repetition, and movement activities like “The Hokey Pokey” and “Head and Shoulders.” Sometimes these are even called “Noisy Storytimes” where more noise is acceptable due to the development stage of a two year old, and experts in educating boys say this can be an essential element in making boys feel comfortable in library storytimes.
7. Parenting Skills at Storytime – It can sound patronizing to lecture parents at a storytime, so including some parenting skills should be subtle, almost off-hand. This can include handouts for parents to read later, but covering important topics like dental health, nutrition, or other information of interest to parents. Many parents may be unaware of the new Calif. law requiring a dental checkup certificate to enroll in Kindergarten for example. But storytime can be a place to connect with parents, and offer timely information for them to read and follow up if they have questions.
8. Kindergarten Readiness – Most children's librarians have heard “Kindergarten is the new first grade,” where teachers now begin more reading, writing, and testing in Kindergarten than they did even five years ago. So preschool storytime can have an important roll in communicating what is required for Kindergarten Readiness, and even teach some of those skills like using a scissors, coloring, standing on one foot, and other physical motor skills and knowledge. Here are some websites on what some schools consider necessary for kindergarten readiness:

<http://www.kindergartenreadiness.net/>

Founded by a teacher, this gives very practical advice to parents on preparing their children for Kindergarten, as well as listing books and articles on the subject.

Polk School Readiness List

<http://www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/prek/readiness.htm>

Polk School in Florida offers a printable checklist for parents on Kindergarten Readiness.

Poway School District Kindergarten Readiness

<http://powayusd.sdcoc.k12.ca.us/news/ebulletin/december03/kindergarten-readiness.htm>

From the Poway School District in California, their website lists 26 topics, one of each letter of the alphabet, on Kindergarten Readiness.

9. No Registration or Nametags – Many libraries still require registration for storytime, but more are getting away from that to be more inclusive. Registration can close a storytime just to the first 25 who signup, and can turn away working parents who cannot get away to stand in line and sign up, but can come to

storytime on a drop in basis. It also can be prohibitive to immigrant families who may find the process frightening if they don't have all their paperwork at hand. Or, it can be hard for our adult literacy learners and English as a second language learners, two groups we really want to have at our storytimes, to help break the cycle of illiteracy.

10. Using Volunteers at Storytime at the Library, or for Outreach Storytimes at Headstarts, Daycares, etc. – San Mateo Public Library is the model for using volunteers at storytime. They have a storytime every day at the library, and it is a program conducted by volunteer readers. San Mateo has offered workshops on this at CLA, and has more information on their website:

http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/dept/library/events/prog_children.html

Some libraries also conduct storytime programs where teen volunteers read to young children, or listen to children read to the teen for practice. Sometimes this program is called “Reading Buddies” like the one at the San Leandro Public Library:

<http://www.booksite.com/texis/scripts/bookletter/showlist.html?sid=6131&list=CNL10>

Many of our Literacy programs do outreach to Headstart or other preschool programs, by sending trained volunteers to read to the children and give out free books.

Storytime Sparks!

Theme: Winter Daze

Presenter: Penny Peck

Opening Song: “Wheels On the Bus” or “Hello Everybody, Yes Indeed.”

Movement Song: “Head and Shoulders” (toddlers) or “If You’re Happy and You Know It” (preschoolers)

Introductions: “Hi, I am Miss Penny. Welcome to storytime! Today we are celebrating Winter! In some places, it snows during Winter. Does it snow near your house? Has anyone here seen snow? What does it look like? Let’s read some stories about snow!”

Set Expectations: Remind everyone to turn off cell phones, children need to sit on their bottoms, parents should participate, or any other rule you feel is vital. You can also have these posted as people enter, so the latecomers also know your expectations. I try to stay positive: “We need to have your hands empty to do the fingerplays” instead of “No food or toys in your hands!”

Listening Song: “Open, Shut Them.”

First Book: *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats.

Fingerplay: <http://www.everythingpreschool.com/themes/snowmen/songs.htm>

Five little snowmen on a winter's day
The first one said, "Wake up, so we can play"
The second one said, "Let's stomp on the ground."
The third one said, "Let's roll around."
The fourth one said, "Let's run and run and run."
The fifth one said, "I'm afraid I feel the sun."
"Oh dear," cried the snowmen, As they looked toward the sky.
And the five melting snowmen waved a fond goodbye.

Flannel Board or Puppet Song:

Second Book: *There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow!* By Lucille Colandro, [participatory book].

Movement/Stand-up Song: “Jingle Bells” (pass out bells for children to ring)

Third Book: *Midnight Snowman* by Caroline Feller Bauer.

Counting Song: “Ten In a Bed” aka “Roll Over.”

Fourth Book: *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert.

Closing Song: “Wave High, Wave Low,” or “The More We Get Together.”

Craft or Activity: Glue packing peanuts or cotton balls to blue paper, to look like a snowman. Our use small (cake size) paper plates to make snowmen. *Show samples.*

Storytime Sparks!

Theme: *Winter Daze – Holiday Lights Around the World*

Presenter: *Penny Peck*

Opening Song: “Wheels On the Bus” or “Hello Everybody, Yes Indeed.”

Movement Song: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”

Introductions: “Hi, I am Miss Penny. Welcome to storytime! Today we are learning about the way several cultures use lights to celebrate a Winter Holiday. For example, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa both light a candle each night to celebrate the holiday. And Diwali, which is a holiday from the Hindu faith, is a festival of lights. In parts of California, Mexico, and Latin America, people make Farolitos for Christmas. So let’s hear some stories if winter lights and holidays.

Set Expectations: Remind everyone to turn off cell phones, children need to sit on their bottoms, parents should participate, or any other rule you feel is vital. You can also have these posted as people enter, so the latecomers also know your expectations. I try to stay positive: “We need to have your hands empty to sing the songs” instead of “No food or toys in your hands!”

Listening Song: “Open, Shut Them.”

First Book: *Light the Lights! A Story about Celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas* by Margaret Moorman.

Fingerplay: “Lights on the Tree,” from <http://www.everythingpreschool.com/themes/christmas/songs.htm>

The lights on the tree go, blink, blink, blink...
Blink, blink, blink... blink, blink, blink.
The lights on the tree go blink, blink, blink...
All Christmas Day.

The presents at the house go rattle, rattle, rattle...
Rattle, rattle, rattle...rattle, rattle, rattle
The presents at the house go rattle, rattle, rattle...
All Christmas Day.

Other verses:

- The train under the tree goes cho, cho, cho
- The baby in the house goes wa, wa, wa
- The mom at the house goes bake, bake, bake
- The grandma at the house goes hug, hug, hug
- The grandpa at the house goes kiss, kiss, kiss.
- The dog at the house goes snore, snore, snore

Flannel Board or Puppet Song: “I Have a Little Dreidel”

Second Book: *Hanukkah Lights, Hanukkah Nights* by Leslie Kimmelman.

Movement/Stand-up Song: “Jingle Bells” (pass out bells for children to ring)

Third Book: *My First Kwanzaa Book* by Deborah Chocolate, [participatory book].

Counting Song: “Five Little Candles”

Five little candles twinkling on the tree.
The first one said, "What do you see?"
The second one said, "I see Santa big and jolly."
The third one said, "I see Christmas wreathes or holly."
The fourth one said, "What do you hear?"
The fifth one said, "Children singing loud and clear,"
We'll Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Fourth Book: *The After-Christmas Tree: A Winter Story* by Linda W. Tyler.

Closing Song: “Wave High, Wave Low,” or “The More We Get Together.”

Craft or Activity: Make pinecone bird feeders, as shown in *The After-Christmas Tree*: I try to get the pinecones donated by anyone with a tree that produces pinecones (check with your Friends of the Library folks). I don't use peanut butter, I coat them with a mixture of half Karo syrup and water, and “paint” that on the pinecone. Roll the pinecone in bird seed, and hang up in a tree using a piece of yarn.

Another “Light” activity is to make an ornament using half a white pipecleaner, and clear tribeads and round beads to make an icicle. This is easy even for a toddler, and helps them practice their motor skills. Just remind parents to keep the kids from putting the beads in their mouths. You can also make a paper Menorah: <http://www.dltk-kids.com/world/jewish/mpaper.html> or paper Kinara for Kwanzaa: <http://www.dltk-holidays.com/kwanzaa/mpaper.html> Show samples.

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