









Using storytelling to talk about...

understanding the world

Stories, Poems and Activities to teach and learn in the Early Years

Contents

Introduction	2	
Storytelling tips	3	
Community events: The Parade	4	 POEM
Different birthday traditions: Zig's Birthday	10	 STORY
Different traditions: The Lion Dance	16	 STORY
Sharing events: Busy Week!	22	 STORY
Our different homes: Where I live	30	 POEM
Caring for our environment (litter): The Sticky Lollipop	36	 STORY
Caring for animals: I Love My Pet	42	 POEM
Changes in animals and plants: In My Garden	48	 POEM
EYFS Learning Goals Reference Chart	54	
Storytelling assessment record	55	
Observation suggestions	56	
Observation record	57	

Published by Practical Pre-School Books, A Division of MA Education Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, Herne Hill, London, SE24 0PB.
Tel: 020 7738 5454 www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com

© MA Education Ltd 2022

Design: Mary Holmes [fonthillcreative](http://fonthillcreative.com) 01722 717036

All images © MA Education Ltd. with the exception of p7 © Sergey Apushkin/Adobe Stock; p15 © Ohaiyoo/Adobe Stock; p31 © greenpicstudio/Adobe Stock; p33 © GraphicsRF/Adobe Stock; p35 © Zdenek Sasek/Adobe Stock; p37 © rea_molko/Adobe Stock; p51 © Vikivector/Adobe Stock and Kazakova Maryia/Adobe Stock. Border images; p5 © Sylverarts/Adobe Stock and SpicyTruffle/Adobe Stock; p11–12 © Sritlana/Adobe Stock; p17–18 © MITstudio/Adobe Stock; p23–24 © Somartin/Adobe Stock, Sze Wei Wong/Adobe Stock, BRN-Pixel/Adobe Stock, Primus44/Adobe Stock, Svaga/Adobe Stock and alex_cardo/Adobe Stock; p43 © Inkley/Adobe Stock; p49 © Cobolt/Adobe Stock and olga_igorevna/Adobe Stock.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopied or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-912611-36-2

Introduction

About the series

This book is part of the 'Using storytelling to talk about...' series which gives teaching practitioners the support and resources to develop and use storytelling and poetry/song performance skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each book has specifically-written short interactive stories and poems/songs that are linked to the three different learning and development areas, 'Personal, social and emotional development', 'Understanding the world' and 'Health and self care'. The prime area 'Communication and language' is a running thread throughout all five books.

How to use the series

All the stories and poems/songs deal with issues or experiences that would be familiar to young children. They are short, interactive and simple to perform, with repetitive texts that offer the children the opportunity to respond and join in at their own level of understanding and language development.

The stories and poems/songs can be used in a variety of ways, for example:

- as a 'Let's have a short story (poem/song)' session at a set time each day or on a particular day of the week.
- as a way to help introduce, support or consolidate a topic or theme.
- by choosing a themed story/poem to support or discuss a particular issue, e.g. sharing.
- as an assembly or class performance resource.
- as a book corner recording for play sessions or quiet time.

How to use this book

This book contains eight themed sections that are linked to different early learning goals listed in the focused learning and development area. Each section has a story or a poem icon to show what type of text it is. Use the contents page to select the theme or type of text that you require.

Each section is divided into the following parts:

A. Teacher's notes

- **Theme name:** main learning skill or idea focus behind the story or poem/song and accompanying activities.
- **EYFS learning objectives:** relevant early learning goals from the book's main learning and development area.
- **What you need:** list of resources such as props, images/pictures, puppets and resource sheets.

Before the story or poem/song

- **Getting ready:** tips on what resources to collect, prepare and have ready in advance.
- **Introducing the story or poem/song:** suggestions on how to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination

about the theme, story or poem, e.g. telling and sharing an experience, introducing a character puppet and using props or images.

- **Performance suggestions:** suggestions on how to tell or perform a story or poem/song, e.g. body movements, use of voice and child participation ideas.

After the story or poem/song

These two parts are designed as springboards for further exploration and discussion about the story or poem/song as well as its theme. They could be carried out straight after the story or poem/rhyme or over several days or weeks.

- **Ideas to reinforce the theme:** discussion ideas, activities and question examples to help consolidate the children's understanding and response to the story or poem/song and its main theme.
- **Consolidation activities:** interactive activities to reinforce the story or poem/song and its theme, e.g. using puppets, circle games, music, performance ideas, role play, parachute games and display suggestions.

B. The story or poem/song texts

Body and voice actions suggestions are included for some of the stories and poems/songs. As you get to know the stories and poems/songs, you may want to add in your own ideas and actions.

C. Related activities within the learning environment

A mix of child-led and adult-led cross-curricular activities relating to the story or poem/song and its theme. The activities can be carried out within activity stations, play or in specific learning sessions. Areas include: literacy, mathematics, art and craft, environment, small world play.

D. Resource sheets

Most of the stories and poems/songs have character or picture images. These can be copied onto card, laminated and used as puppets or as story support. Other resource sheets include games, activity cards or templates.

Other resources

Storytelling and performance evaluation record

Use this record to self-evaluate your storytelling skills and performance after each of the stories and poems/songs and for future sessions.

Observation suggestions and chart

Use 'Observation suggestions' and 'Observation chart' as an assessment guide to help you identify and note the developing skills, knowledge and attitudes of individuals or groups of children.

Preparation

One of the most important elements of story telling and poem/song performance is good preparation. Areas to consider before you see the children are:

1. Choosing a place to read or perform

Choose a comfortable and spacious area to tell stories or perform poems and songs. This could be in a book corner or a place where there is a big rug for the children to sit on. Make sure that there is room for the children to move if they will need to use body actions.

2. Look, read and learn the texts

a. Reading the text – If you prefer to read the text to the children, practise reading it out loud several times on your own. Note any need for voice intonation and expression and simple body actions as well as repetitive words or phrases that the children could join in with you.

b. Learning a story or poem/song

- Read the story or poem/song out loud to yourself several times so you get to know the plot, characters, actions, voices and repetitive texts.
- Split the story or verses into easy sections to learn off by heart.
- You don't have to learn it exactly word for word but try and learn the repetitive text and choruses.
- Story memory aid: Have the skeleton of the story with the main repetitive words/phrases by your side or put it into a 'prompt envelope'. If you forget the story, tell the children that a character has sent you a letter or card about what happened next.
- Poem/song memory aid: Have the verses on a sheet of paper near you or add the verses onto the storyboard so you can read them if needed.

c. Props

Use props to introduce a story or poem/song, enhance the telling and message, encourage interactive participation by the children or aid discussion after the telling.

Prepare or collect your props before the session and plan out how they will be used. Have them close at hand and if possible away from the children's reach. If you need to show a number of props then make sure they are laid out in the right order so that you don't need to work out where each one is while you are performing.

When selecting props, think about the story or poem/song and decide which props would work well, e.g. a bucket and spade for a sandcastle story.

d. A special story and rhyme basket/box

Have a story basket (e.g. picnic hamper) or a box with a lid in which to store the props suggested in the story or poem/song. Over time, the children will become eager to find out what is in

the basket/box for that session. Keep them guessing or offer little clues, e.g. In the basket is something we can use to build sandcastles. What is it?

e. Story board – a visual aid

Some young children find visual images help reinforce story events or characters. These are especially useful for children who speak English as a second language. One way to do this, is to have a good sized storyboard in which you can attach pictures and characters (see Resource Sheets) before and during the performance or telling. Attach a sticky backing so they can stick easily onto the board.

2. Starting the session

Develop a routine where the children know that it is story time or poem/song time. Make sure children with sight or hearing disabilities are near to you and if possible, have adult support on hand for children with physical or learning difficulties.

Start with a simple rhythm or chant as a clear signal that it's time for stories or poems and songs, e.g. a clapping rhythm, word sounds or 'Time to sit, time to listen. 1-2-3 it's story time!'

Introducing the story or poem/song

It is important to engage the children's imagination and curiosity before you start telling your story or poem/song, e.g. a related prop such as baked bread for exploring senses; introducing a character image or puppet; using an image to encourage discussion or make up a small story about your own life that links to the story or poem/song theme.

Performance skills

A storyteller can use a range of different methods to tell a story or perform a poem or song to a young audience.

These include:

- speaking slowly and clearly to a point behind the group so that all the children can hear you
- looking around the group while you perform so that every child feels involved
- using different voice tone to distinguish between different characters and their moods, as well as highlighting sound effects, actions and events
- using body actions to illustrate movements and expressions
- using a small number of props
- involving the children where possible, e.g. join in with actions, words, sounds
- improvising the text or actions if you can't remember the words or in response to the children's involvement or reactions
- positively acknowledging any interruptions and then weaving back to the story.
- revisiting the story or poem/song several times so that the children recognise it and join in with words and phrases.

The most important thing is to enjoy, share and have fun with the stories, poems and songs!

Theme: Community events

Learning outcomes

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society (ELG: Past and Present)
- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts, and maps. (ELG: People, Culture and Communities)

What you need:

- Our special story and rhyme basket/box' (optional)
- 'The Parade' – simple song
- Short film footage from the Internet of carnivals/floats and screen
- Story Board to display The Parade pictures – RS2 (optional)
- Carnival float photograph – Resource sheet 1 (RS1)
- The Parade pictures – Resource sheet 2 (RS2)
- Float template – Resource sheet 3 (RS3)

Getting ready:

Select suitable film footage of a carnival with bands and floats. Have a large copy of the 'Carnival float photograph' – RS1, available or in 'Our special short story and rhyme box'. Copy, colour and cut out 'The Parade' pictures – RS2, and place them close by or displayed in rhyme order on the story board (from left to right). Add sticks to them if you prefer the children to hold them. Practise saying the rhyme to the beat before you perform it with the children.

Introducing the poem

Show the film footage or the 'Carnival float photograph – KS1'. Discuss the different floats, groups and the marching beat music. Encourage children to share their own experiences of a carnival parade, e.g. local, theme park. Hold up or point to the marching band picture from 'The Parade' pictures – RS2'. Model the marching beat for the chorus, e.g. *boom (bang knees), bang, bang (two claps)* and let children join you. Once ready, perform the poem.

Performance suggestions

After performing the rhyme, a couple of times, you may feel the children are ready to do the rhythm as you also say the verses. As you say each verse, either point to the displayed float or pause before each one or let children hold the image or place it on the story board.

Ideas to reinforce theme

- Discuss how lots of different groups from the children's local area could take part in a parade. Encourage the children to suggest different groups and clubs and what they could do in the parade. Highlight how community parades help us feel that we all belong together.
- Display a large copy of a 'Float template – RS3'. Invite the children to help you decorate the float using collected themed materials or images. Invite pairs or individual children to attach the images as you discuss with the children what goes where.

Consolidation activities

Music

Play footage from the Internet of steel band music. Encourage children to move and dance to the music and enjoy getting into the rhythm. Give out drums, percussion instruments so they can join in with the beat and rhythm.

Play marching band music (including bagpipes and drums) and let the children clap to the marching beat and enjoy march up and down the room in time.

Role play

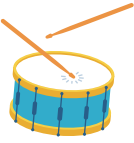
Ask children to mime the rhyme's verses. Encourage them to think about what the people on the float could be doing. Having practised the different verses, put the children into groups of five. Give four groups a verse to re-enact as you read the rhyme. Let the fifth group be the people watching and cheering the parade. These roles can be swapped around.

Display

With the children, design and make floats using the 'Float template – RS3' for a selection of different clubs, groups in your local neighbourhood. Add the names of each group above or on the float, e.g. Dolphin Swimming Club

Display the children's floats they have made in an arts and craft session (see Art and Craft). Link them across the wall or around the room with a tractor or lorry image pulling them at the front. Add a photo of each child and their name to their float.

The Parade



*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,*

Here comes the big parade,
Can you hear the beat?
Lots of different people,
Coming down the street.

*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,*

Here comes the big steel band,
Listen to them play.
Everybody's dancing,
See them move and sway.

*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,*

Here comes the swimming club,
All dressed up as fish.
Swimming round the mermaid,
As their tails go swish.

*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,*

Here come the children,
On their fun school float.
They all look like pirates,
In a cardboard boat.

*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,*

Here comes my granny,
With her gardening group.
I really like the flowers,
Growing round the hoops!

*Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom, bang, bang,
Boom!*

Related activities within the learning environment



Literacy

Put the children into a circle and give them each an alphabet letter and creature image that starts with that letter. Going round the circle, the children take turns saying, '*In our parade there is A for anteater*' until they reach 'Z'.



ICT

Let the children write, design and print off their names or names of their floats using large fun fonts. The names can be coloured or decorated.



Mathematics

Cut out a set number of floats from 'Float template – RS3' and number them (1-10, 1-20). Mix them up and spread them out on a table. Encourage the children to put them in the correct order. The floats could also be used for simple addition and subtraction activities.



Art & Craft

Give each child a copy of 'Float template' – RS3' to decorate using a range of collage materials, shape cut-outs, pictures, paints etc. Discuss the theme of their floats e.g. boat, farm, park, space. Display the floats.

Look at images of costumes worn in The Notting Hill and Mardi Gras parades. Using card, feathers, paint sequins and other shiny materials, let the children make a Mardi Gras head dress.



Small world

Leave out small play items, toy trucks, tractors, cars and small play figures for the children to create their own small play parades.



Role play corner

Leave out fancy dress costumes for the children to use for playing imaginary parades.