

Kindness, Compassion and Courage: Telling Stories for Character Education Study Guide K-6



The Program

Storytelling is doubtless the oldest educational method in the world. Long before the written word, stories were told to teach children how to—or how not to—behave in the world. Because stories are slightly removed from real life, children are often able to hear important lessons more easily through stories.

Priscilla tells folktales, stories from books and some of her own stories to highlight specific character traits, such as kindness, courage, respect and more. After each story, she invites the listeners to reflect on the traits and how those traits might manifest in their own lives. Programs for younger kids include lots of audience participation, while the older kids get more sophisticated stories. The stories include plenty of laughter and lightheartedness, as well as important lessons.

Want a different program? Check out the full program list on www.priscillahowe.com. As well as residencies and performances, Priscilla offers workshops and in-services for teachers. She is available for program customization and consultation.

Details

Each session lasts approximately 45 minutes. Length can be adjusted if necessary. Priscilla is comfortable with up to 250 listeners. She brings her own sound system for large groups.

Kindergarten through second grade sessions are highly interactive and include stories, songs and puppets. Third through fifth grade sessions include some participation, but are more appropriate to the older student. All of the sessions include time for reflection and discussion.

Priscilla is committed to making the entire experience fun, educational and easy to set up.

Curriculum Connections

Character education, reading, writing, listening, speaking, social studies, music, theater, cross-cultural appreciation, communication.

Instructional Objectives

- Students learn valuable character education lessons in an enjoyable way, through listening, reflection and discussion.
- Through listening to stories, students learn story structure, sequencing, prediction of events and expanded vocabulary. Use of gesture, voice and movement underlines the meaning in the stories. Storytelling is an excellent pre-writing tool.

- Students learn communication techniques by observing a professional storyteller.
- Students strengthen listening skills and understand many facets of oral literature through participation in live performance.
- Students who are visual, aural and kinesthetic learners respond appropriately and enthusiastically to storytelling.

Pre-visit activities (choose a few as time allows)

- Discuss character traits.
 - Make a list of character traits and their synonyms.
 - Ask the students to give examples of these traits in their own experiences.
 - Have the students choose a trait and pair it with an animal.
 - Invite the students to cut out pictures from magazines demonstrating character traits.
 - Create a poem about a trait, using the senses, for example "Kindness looks like____.; Kindness sounds like____.; Kindness smells like____.; Kindness tastes like____.; Kindness feels like____.; Kindness is____."
- Discuss the art of storytelling.
 - Have the students heard storytellers before?
 - Did any of the kids attend storytime at the public library when they were little?
 - Did the librarians tell stories or read aloud, or both?
 - Do their parents or grandparents tell stories of "the olden times"?
 - What stories do they know already?
 - Is there a student in the class who is known as a joke teller?

Post-visit activities (choose a few as time allows)

- Discuss the traits highlighted in the stories.
- Some of the characters in the stories behaved badly. What could they have done differently?
- Write a letter of advice to a character. How does the character respond?
- Which were the favorite stories told. Why? Were there stories the students didn't like?
 - Did everyone remember the names of the stories?
 - Was there anything in the stories that seemed unusual?
- Make comic books of the stories. Add word bubbles for dialogue and thought.
- Map out the setting, with labels. Draw the scenes.
- Describe the characters and setting using at least five descriptive words.
- Write a different story with the same characters.
- Write headlines and newspaper reports of that story.
- Act out one of the stories Priscilla told. What was the sequence of scenes? How do the facial expressions, voice and body movements portray emotions and character?
- What happens when the class changes the ending, gender, setting or time period?
- Pass a tale around the room: each student adds a line or just a word to the story.
 - Pass a ball of yarn around as the story goes around: the person beginning the story holds the end, and passes the ball to the next teller, who passes it on, and so forth.
 - Pass a story stick around; whoever holds the stick tells while the others listen.

Books on Storytelling for Teachers

Writing as a second language: from experience to story to prose by Donald Davis. August House, 2001). Storyteller Donald Davis gives simple ideas for getting kids to write—and like it! See also *Telling your own stories*, a fabulous book for prompting stories for telling or writing.

Storyteller, storyteacher: discovering the power of storytelling for teaching and living by Marni Gillard. Stenhouse, 1996. Not a how-to book, but a wonderfully warm "learner's journey," this is one storyteacher's tale, encouraging us all to tell stories.

Children tell stories: a teaching guide by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss. Richard C. Owen Publishers, 1990. If you've ever wanted to teach kids storytelling, this book will guide your way.

Storytelling: process and practice by Norma J. Livo and Sandra A. Reitz. Libraries Unlimited, 1986. (See *Storytelling activities* by the same authors.) Nuts-and-bolts advice on storytelling.

The storyteller's start-up book by Margaret Read MacDonald. August House, 1993. This is a good how-to book for beginners. Also check out her *Parents guide to storytelling* and her many story collections.

The moral of the story: Folktales for character development by Bobby Norfolk and Sherry Norfolk. August House, 1999. An excellent introduction to connecting stories with character education.

The storytelling classroom: applications across the curriculum by Sherry Norfolk, Jane Stenson, and Diane Williams. Libraries Unlimited, 2006. Lesson plans and inspiration for K-8 teachers, librarians and storytellers.

The grammar of fantasy: an introduction to the art of inventing stories by Gianni Rodari, translated by Jack Zipes. Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 1996. A quirky, funny book, full of ideas on how to play with stories in unusual ways.

Internet resources

<http://www.storyteller.net>

<http://www.storynet.org/>

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teachingstorytelling>

<http://www.storyarts.org/>

<http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/index.html>



About Priscilla Howe

A former children's librarian, Priscilla has been a storyteller since 1988, full-time since 1993. She travels the world with a head full of stories and a bag full of puppets (Mexico, Belgium, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile and Colombia, to date), entertaining and educating listeners of all ages. Priscilla lives in Lawrence, KS with her cat, Frankie Bacon. She's also looking for the best restaurant pie on earth.

Don't miss her website at www.priscillahowe.com and videos at www.youtube.com/priscillahowe!