

## Fun for the Whole Family: Storytelling with Folktales

**Description:** “Storytime provides an invaluable resource for families, but selecting exactly the right stories to engage your audience (and keep them engaged!) can be a challenge, especially if you feel like you're out of ideas. For the days when you can't seem to find that perfect book to read aloud or want something extra special, try telling a folktale! In this presentation, we will demonstrate how to adapt folktales of all types to suit young audiences, use repetition and rhyme to encourage participation, and work with puppets, props, or even just your voice to tell the story.”

**Contact Info:** Feel free to contact us with questions!

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### Introduction

- who we are
  - Library technicians in Youth & Adult: Services & Collections
  - Central job duties include information desks, storytime, programs, and outreach
- Storytime
  - We are passionate about storytime because it develops literacy & language skills and brings families together.
  - AADL offers storytime year-round so we have a big team of people who constantly need new material.
  - AADL storytimes are all drop-in (no registration required), so we need methods that work for a wide range of attendance (15-120) and a wide age range of kids (birth-age 10).
  - different types of storytimes we do include: outreach (Community Action Network, homeless shelters, Mott Children's Hospital), regularly scheduled storytimes, school visits, puppet shows)
- Folktales
  - Due to this level in variety in storytimes, we have come to rely on folktales. They are adaptable to a lot of different audiences (group size, age etc.)
  - Folktales are multicultural and diverse.
  - Folktales often have a level of humor that appeals to older listeners while equally entertaining younger listeners.
  - Many of them follow a meaningful and satisfying story structure, since they've been honed over decades and spread around the world!

### Walkthrough (Short Story)

- Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock
  - Adapting a folktale for storytime
    - **puppet choices:** do you have what you need on hand? if not, change the story! Puppets add a lot of visual interest for all and make it real for young

listeners. However, if the story is complex this can become cumbersome. Other things to try: make a "mask" by sticking a picture of an animal/character to a stick, make simple felts, find sound effect props!

- **include audience participation:** this helps give the story structure and keeps audiences paying attention. They want to help you tell the story and feel a part of the experience! Make a simple rhyme or song or sound effect so they can remember and repeat. Tip: Use the melody of a popular song!
- **cutting parts of the story:** You might have that "gut" feeling that it's just too long. Are there parts you can cut from the story that wouldn't really affect the story arc? Ex. Does your main character talk to 7 other characters about the same thing? What if they only talked to 3 or 4 characters instead?
- **modifying for a child audience:** Sometimes folktales end with a cliffhanger or a joke that only adults understand. If you choose to keep that ending, be prepared for confused faces or follow-up questions from the kids! Other parts of the story might be too scary or not totally appropriate for kids. You can change the story here to make it fit for you!

### **Favorites (Quick Overviews of Adaptations)**

- Seven Chinese Sisters (sound effects, multicultural)
- The Vingananee and the Tree Toad (repetitive song/use of one puppet)
- The Leopard's Drum (sound/rhythm, puppets)
- The Squeaky Door (participation from kids, repetition)
- The Magic Bojabi Tree (repetition and easy adaptation to other themes like Star Wars!)

### **Finding a Good Candidate for Storytime**

- story structure
- characters (diversity)
- natural repetition
- excitement/humor
- possibility for puppets/props/sounds/song