



Storytelling Tips

1. Create a Physical Space

Choose a place in your home that is filled with love and warmth; a place where your family finds itself gravitating at the end of a long day.. There should be a comfortable place for the storyteller to sit: perhaps a favorite rocker or a large chair. Allow for extra room in this space as your children may choose to curl up in your arms as the story unfolds. You may find having a small stool or table nearby for a drink of water or a candle to be handy as well.

2. Prepare a Ritual

Imagine a small gesture or two that will signal to you and your children that the storyteller is about to begin. Nancy Mellon suggests always lighting a candle as this engages many levels of our soul. Many storytellers choose to put on a shawl, scarf, or a hat to signal that they have now slipped into the role of storyteller. If you choose to add a physical accessory, keep it simple, yet full of beauty. You may even decide to include a small verse to precede the tale. Most importantly, choose what feels true to you and plan a time in each day, preferably at the same time of day, to offer a story to your children.

3. Create a Storyteller Space

Now, you need to imagine the storyteller that lied within. This is an important step. Nancy Mellon suggests that you begin by simply taking a moment or two to close your eyes and take several, slow, deep breaths. Imagine yourself breathing in the life of the storyteller. It is all around you, coming from the earth below and the heavens above, from the trees behind you and the flowers before you. Everywhere lies the breath of the storyteller, and imagine filling your inner self with the stories of the world. Imagine the universal spirit of the storyteller, and open yourself to whatever comes.

4. Trust Yourself

Dive in. "Once upon a time, there was a small red fairy named Fire Sprite..." Try not to fret over where the story is going and what you are trying to say, just offer the story as a gift and trust that you will be filled with images and words to take the story just where it needs to go and to say what needs to be said. Make the story come alive for you and the story will be alive for your children. Also, remember that you are not offering a polished piece of literature, but rather a piece of life for the soul and the spirit of your child. You can create a world of imagery by simply taking your child on a tour of the woods around a character's home or by leading a character to a stream to collect water. Trust that whatever comes to you is exactly what your child's soul is needing at that moment. Be open to the experience and see what happens; you



never know where you may end up.

5. Fill a bag of Storyteller Tricks

When you dive in, it is handy to have a simple character or place on which to build your story. Having a recurrent character or place provides an opportunity for your child to connect deeply with the images. You may wish to focus each story on one child, and to take a moment to look at that child, take in his/her physical, emotional, and spiritual state, and close your eyes and trust what comes. Do not engage your adult, cognitive thinking, but rather open yourself to what you feel and what you imagine. Perhaps a fish, or an elf, a tree, or an ocean comes to mind. Simply begin by describing what you see when you close your eyes.

Stories to Tell Different Ages (suggestions from Barbara Dewey, www.waldorfwithoutwalls.com)

For 3 and 4 year olds:

Sweet Porridge – Grimm
The Turnip – Russian (not Grimm!!!)
The Bun – Russian
The Hungry Cat – Plays for Puppets by Bronja Zahlingen
The Little Boy Who Wanted to be Carried Along – Plays for Puppets
My Household – Grimm
Goldilocks and the Three Bears

For 5 and 6 year olds:

Star Money – Grimm
The Frog Prince – Grimm
Mother Holle – Grimm
The Spindle, Shuttle and Needle – Grimm
The Queen Bee – Grimm
The Snow Maiden – Plays for Puppets
The Seven Ravens – Grimm
Little Briar Rose – Grimm
The Hut in the Forest – Grimm
The Donkey – Grimm
Rumplestiltskin – Grimm
Snow White and Rose Red – Grimm
The Swan Geese – Plays for Puppets
Twiggy – Acorn Hill Anthology, Waldorf Early Childhood Assn.
The Princess and the Flaming Castle – Acorn Hill Anthology



Bremen Town Musicians – Grimm

Tom-Tit-Tot – English Fairy Tales

Little Jack – English

Little Red Cap – Grimm

Grade 1

Russian Fairy Tales

English Fairy Tales (Joseph Jacobs, Dover Books)

Gnome Stories, Over the Hills and Far Away (Boekelaar and Verschuren, Floris Books)

Norwegian Fairy Tales

Grade 2

Aesop's Fables

Nature Stories (Thornton Burgess)

Giant at the Ford (Ursula Sygne - Saints)

Grade 3

And There Was Light & Journey to the Promised Land (Jacob Streit)

Bible Stories (books by Perl Buck and Walter de la Mare)

Old Testament Stories

Keepers of the Earth (Bruhac & Caduto – Native American)

Voices of the Winds (Edmonds and Clark – Native American)

Grade 4

Gods and Heroes from Viking Mythology (Brian Branston)

Grades 5 and 6

Myths of the World (Padraic Colum)

Chapters from Ancient History (Dorothy Harrer)

Ancient Mythologies (Charles Kovacs)

Roman Lives (Dorothy Harrer)

Storytelling Resources

Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon (Hawthorn Press, 2000)

Storytelling and the Art of Imagination by Nancy Mellon (Yellow Moon Press, 2003)

Therapeutic Storytelling by Susan Perrow (Hawthorn Press, 2013)

Healing Stories for Challenging Behavior by Susan Perrow (Hawthorn Press, 2008)

The Power of Stories by Horst Kornberger (Floris Books, 2008)

www.healingstory.org