



KATIE ADAMS' MAKE BELIEVE THEATER PRESENTS:

An Educator's Guide to

AMERICAN TALL TALES AND SONGS

WELCOME TO THE SHOW!

Step back in time to America's early days and hear tales from the legendary lives of Paul Bunyan, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett, and Pecos Bill. Katie Adams spins these tall tales entwined with old-time songs like "This Land is your Land", "Home on the Range" and more. Young audiences will sing along and thrill to the big, bold stories of America's mythical men and women of power and wonder. 45 minutes.

BEFORE THE SHOW

Synopsis of the Stories

Read through the following synopsis and discuss with your students what to look for in the performance.

American tall tales are folk tales from the early days of the United States that may be greatly exaggerated. The fictitious parts of the stories are told as if true, and are part of the fun. Are the stories true? It is up to you to decide.

Paul Bunyan

Katie will ask the audience to participate with actions and sound effects

Paul Bunyan was a giant of a man who was born in Maine and grew up to be a famous lumberjack. Because of his huge size, young Paul got into lots of trouble, causing his parents to come up with creative solutions to help him – like using his baby cradle as a boat. Paul had many adventures growing up, from living on his own out in the woods, to rescuing Babe the Blue Ox, to starting a business as a lumberjack.

Pecos Bill

Katie will ask the audience to participate with actions and sound effects

Pecos Bill was born out in West Texas. People say he was the greatest cowboy that ever lived. As a baby, Bill fell out of his family's covered wagon and was raised by coyotes. A chance encounter with a cowboy lead Bill to become a cowboy – but he never seemed to fit in. So Bill went searching for the wild cowboys from Hell's Gulch. During his search Bill had many adventures; he carried his horse, tamed a rattle snake and rode a mountain lion. Finally, in order to be a great cowboy, Bill needed a great horse. Along came Widow-maker, the wild, white stallion whom Bill be-friended by howling like a coyote. With Widow-maker as his horse, Bill became the greatest cowboy that ever lived.

Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett

Katie will ask the audience to participate with actions and sound effects

This story starts with Davey Crockett, one of the most famous Tall Tale characters. Davey was a great hunter and a great storyteller. One day Davey got his head stuck in the crook of a tree and Sally Ann rescued him with the help of her snake friends. As Sally Ann and Davey got to know each other, Davey heard stories about how Sally Ann could tame any animal there ever was, including a bear that visited her cabin. Davey fell in love with Sally Ann's unusual ways and eventually, the two of them got married.

AMERICAN FOLK SONGS AND LIMBERJACKS

Audiences are invited to sing along with the songs played in the show. Songs include:

“This Land is your Land” by Woodie Guthrie
“Home on the Range” by Dr. Brewster Higley
“Oh! Susanna” by Stephen Foster

Katie brings volunteers on stage to play the Limberjacks with the music

Limberjacks - Limberjacks, Paddywhacks, Dancing Jacks, or Clogging dolls are old-time mountain toys played along with music. Children and grownups could keep the beat to dance tunes with the limberjack.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WITH THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling is an active performance of a story that uses many theater skills. Here are some features to look for in this storytelling performance.

Character voices -
Storytellers change their voices to take on the personality of the characters.

Facial expressions - Katie uses facial expressions to convey emotional content and comedy. A storyteller's face helps inform the audience how to interpret the story.

Mime movement - Katie uses her hands, face and body to create imaginary objects (props) and scenery in the stories.

Audience Participation-
This takes many forms from call and response, to finger plays, to inviting audience members onstage to be characters in a story.

Repetition - This is the storyteller's invitation to join in the story. Repeated words and phrases are a chance for the audience to join in and help tell the story. Repetition also helps us remember the stories.

Props – Props are any object carried by an actor. Often storytellers use real objects to educate an audience, or add interest and focus to the story.

Standards connected to the performance

Language Arts: LAFS.K12.SL.1.2 – Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Theater: TH.2.C.1.2 – Respond to a play by drawing and/or writing about a favorite aspect of it.

Music: MU.K.H.2.1 - Respond to and/or perform folk music of American cultural sub-groups.
MU.1.H.1.1 - Perform simple songs, dances, and musical games from a variety of cultures.

MU.2.H.1.1 - Perform songs, musical games, dances, and simple instrumental accompaniments from a variety of cultures.

MU.3.H.1.1 – Compare indigenous instruments of specified cultures

MU.3.H.2.1 - Discuss how music in America was influenced by people and events in its history.

Language Arts Activity

Check out versions of *Paul Bunyan*, *Pecos Bill*, or *Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett*, by Steven Kellog and read the story to, or with, your class.

- Have your students name the characters in the story and discuss cause and effect of their actions.

You may also choose to read other versions of these stories from the list below.

- Compare and contrast with your students the differences in the story versions.

American Tall Tales by Mary Pope Osborne, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

American Folklore and Legend published by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

The role of the Audience

This is a reflective exercise for students. Please read and discuss with your students.

- You are the audience - an important part of the performance. You help the performers by pretending and participating with them.
- Seeing a live show is not like watching TV or a movie. The performers are in the same room with you, and can see and hear you, the audience, and interact! What are some other differences? (no commercials, no eating, no lying down or running around...)
- Enter the performance space quietly and listen. Who might be giving instructions?
- The performers need you to watch and listen quietly. Talking to friends disturbs the performers and other members of the audience.
- Your job is to pretend along with the performers. They like it when you laugh if something is funny. They also like to hear you clap at the end of a performance when they bow.
- After the bows the audience stays seated. Who might give instructions on how to leave?

Standards for Theater Etiquette

TH.K.S.1.1-Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.

TH.1.S.1.1-Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.

TH.2.S.1.1-Exhibit the behavior necessary to establish audience etiquette, response, and constructive criticism.

TH.3.S.1.1-Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.

TH.4.S.1.1.-Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.

TH.5.S.1.1-Describe the difference in responsibilities between being an audience member at live or recorded performances.

AFTER THE SHOW

Curriculum connections: Language arts, Character education

Folk Tales – Earliest Form of Literature

Folk tales have been handed down, usually by word of mouth, for generations.

- Discuss with your students what can happen to a story passed down in this way.
- You may want to illustrate the point by playing the game “telephone” or “gossip” in which a whispered phrase is passed down the line of students and the beginning and ending phrases are compared to see how different they are.
- Do the students know of a story handed down through their own family or friends this way? (An example would be a story about the size of a fish caught.)

Folk tales contain elements unique to the culture they come from.

- Ask the students to describe something unique from each story, i.e. “What makes this a Pirate story?”

Folk tales also contain elements universal to all people.

- Ask the students to describe something from each story that “all people do”.

Folk tales always contain a message about how to live life.

- Discuss the messages in the stories - how are they similar and how are they different. In each of the stories, one or more of the characters helps another character. Ask the students to identify these characters and describe how they were helpful. (Good readers always do a text to self connection.)

LAFS.K.RL.1.2 - With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

LAFS.1.RL.1.2 - Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

LAFS.2.RL.1.2 - Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

LAFS.3.RL.1.2 - Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Storytelling and Theater

Go over the following theater definitions with your class. Then try some of the storytelling games.

Theater Concepts and Vocabulary

The storyteller and audience agree to "suspend disbelief", to pretend together that the action of the performance is real and is happening for the first time. This agreement means the audience members accept the use of theater conventions such as:

- Audience participation - the storyteller talks directly to, and interacts with, the audience. The audience is invited to help act out parts of the story.
- The storyteller plays multiple characters and uses many voices.
- The storyteller sings to provide information, move the action forward and set a mood.
- The storyteller uses mime movements to suggest props and scenery.

Storytelling Activities - Games

Go over the stories from the show with your students. Pick one of the stories (or pick one episode). Be sure to have a beginning, middle, and end.

- Ask the students to form a circle and let the first child begin telling the story. At a prearranged signal from you, the next child in the circle must take up the story. Keep going until everyone has a turn and the story is told.
- Turn a favorite fairy tale into a "fractured fairy tale". Example- Make Goldilocks a beauty queen and the three bears farmers.
- Find an interesting item or photo and invent a story about it.

Learn Stories from your Own Family

Visit an older relative and ask him or her questions. Stories will usually result. Some possible questions are listed below.

- What were holidays like when you were growing up? How were they different?
- Who was your best childhood friend and what did you do together?
- Is there a family event you wish you could do again in a different way?
- What was your grandmother's house like?
- Do you remember when I was little? What was I like?

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LAFS.1.RL.1.2 - Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

TH.2.H.1.1 - Read and dramatize stories with similar themes to show developing knowledge of, and respect for, cultural differences.

TH.5.H.3.4 - Act out a character learned about in another content area.

TH.5.H.3.3 - Demonstrate how the use of movement and sound enhance the telling of a story.

Want to do more Storytelling?

Become a storyteller at Tampa/Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival

Each year young people learn to tell a story and are selected perform at the Tamp/Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival in April. Encourage your students to start practicing in January by signing up at their nearest city or county recreation center, or by signing up with their school media specialist (at selected schools.) Hillsborough County Public Libraries can also help children get involved with storytelling. For more information go to www.tampastory.org

Attend a Tellebration! Event

Tellebration! An International Night of Storytelling is celebrated every year in November. This event is being celebrated in several storytelling guilds throughout Florida. Go to www.flstory.com to find the Tellebration! nearest you.