



An Educator's Guide to

Florida Folk Tales

Presented by Katie Adams Make Believe Theater

Welcome to the Show!

- The backwoods of old Florida meander through your mind's eye as Katie Adams tells Florida Folk Tales. The stories are adapted from Tellable Cracker Tales by Annette Bruce.
- To open the program Katie discusses the Florida Cracker Culture and how the name "Cracker" came about.
- Katie tells about meeting Annette Bruce and Annette's stories of writing the book.
- Stories include Epaminondas, Ol' One Eye and Need or Greed. Props, audience participation, and singing add color to these folk tales.

Before the Show

What happens in Florida Folk Tales? What to look for in the Show

Curriculum connections: Theater arts, Language arts

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

In the first story, Epaminondas, a young boy worries his mother when “he ain’t got the sense he was born with.” His comedic adventures continue until he makes the cattle rancher’s daughter laugh, bringing wealth and a sense of security to his future. Katie uses mime, repetition and a prop in this story.

The second story, Need or Greed, finds a poor old woman, Mema Driggers, who is helped by a raccoon that makes wishes come true. All goes well until Mema Driggers wishes for too much and ends up back where she started - with nothing. Look for the character voices and facial expressions in this story.

In the final story, Ol’ One Eye, robbers decide to steal a frugal old woman’s gold. By coincidence the leader of the robbers has one eye and the old woman has a one eyed fish. How this fact saves the old woman makes for a very funny conclusion. Katie brings students up on stage to participate in the story.

Southern dialect, cracker expressions - The ethnic background and culture of stories can be conveyed by using accents and expressions from the geographic region the stories come from, if used respectfully. For more on “Crackerisms” please see the section on Florida Cracker culture.

What to look for with the Art of Storytelling

Storytelling is a live 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.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

MU.4.H.2.1 - Perform, listen to, and discuss music related to Florida's history.

The Role of the Audience / Theater Etiquette

A reflective exercise for students in secondary grades. Copy this and pass it out to your students to read and discuss.

- **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 hear and see 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

Language Arts Activity

Check out *Tellable Cracker Tales* and read the stories to, or with, your class.

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

LAFS.K12.R.3.7 - Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

LAFS.K12.R.3.9 - Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

LAFS.K.SL.1.2 - Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

LAFS.1.RL.3.9 - Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

LAFS.4.RL.3.7 - Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

LAFS.5.RL.1.3 - Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

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

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

Books and stories to get you started:

- Tellable Cracker Tales by Annette Bruce, 1996, Pineapple Press, Inc. Sarasota, Florida
- The Little Old Woman Who Lived in a Vinegar Bottle
- The Fisherman and his Wife
- Jack and the King's daughter
- The Bremen Town Musicians

major events in a story, using key details.

at a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, and when appropriate, use temporal words to signal event order, and

provide a sense of closure.

LAFS.4.RL.1.3 - Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Storytelling and Theater

Curriculum connections: Theater arts, Language arts

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?

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.

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.

Florida Cracker Culture

Curriculum connections: Character Education (Ethnic Heritage, Respect), Language Arts

Discuss the following questions with your students.

Florida Folk Tales is set in Florida's Cracker culture. This is the heritage of many people living in the rural areas of Florida whose families settled here in the 1800's and earlier. There are still lots of Florida Crackers to be found today!

Who is a Florida Cracker?

Like most cultural groups it is hard to have a one sentence definition without stereotyping. Historically they are Florida's proud pioneers, or plain folks. They came from North and South Carolina and Georgia and were mostly of Scotch-Irish ancestry.

Where do they live?

Throughout the state, mainly in rural areas, but many people living in our cities call themselves Crackers too.

How do they live?

Many Crackers are farmers, or ranchers. Historically they were very self-sufficient, meaning they grew, hunted for, or made everything they had.

“Crackers were strongly individualistic and self-reliant, yet generous and proud even in poverty. These age-old character traits shaped a poor but courageous population of backwoods settlers who, long ago, carved out a life from a hostile land and, in turn, provided a spirited foundation for the peopling of the south.” Dana St. Claire, Cracker; The Cracker Culture in Florida History

Places to find out more about Florida Cracker culture and pioneer life

- Doyle Carlton Jr. Cracker Country Rural Florida History and Folk life Museum, Florida State Fairgrounds, P.O. Box 11766, Tampa, FL 33680., www.crackercountry.org
- Pioneer Florida Museum, 15602 Pioneer Museum Road, Dade City, Florida (904)567-0262

Books on Florida Cracker culture and history

- Dana Ste. Claire. The Cracker Culture in Florida History. 1998, The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach, FL
- Canter Brown Jr. Florida's Peace River Frontier. 1991, University Presses of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Cracker Expressions

Compare /contrast these vocabulary words.

- purtin' nigh - Pretty near, almost
- crossroads store - corner store, local grocery store
- Cardin' cotton - Carding; the process of loosening up and cleaning cotton or wool so that it is ready to be spun into thread

- smoked mullet - dried or preserved fish
- how to truck - how to act or behave
- sand road - dirt road, an unpaved road
- calamondin marmalade - marmalade or jelly made from the fruit and peel of calamondins; a small round orange citrus fruit similar to kumquats.
- MeMa - Grandma
- guava jelly - jelly made from guavas; a tropical fruit. Ranging in size and color, though they are generally orange, the smallest are the size of a plum and are called catlick guavas.

SS.4.A.4.2 - Describe pioneer life in Florida.

Folk Tales - Earliest form of Literature

Curriculum connections: Language arts, Character education

Folk tale: A story or legend forming part of an oral tradition. (American Heritage Dictionary)

An orphan boy sat on a great stone, mending an arrow. And the stone spoke: " Shall I tell you stories?" The boy said, "What are stories?" the stone answered, "All the things in the world before this." From that stone came all the stories that the Seneca nation tell to one another. -A Seneca Indian tale, from Tales as Tools

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 Florida Cracker 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 three 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.

Want to do more Storytelling?

Become a storyteller at Tampa/Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival

Each year over 500 young people learn to tell a story and are selected to perform at the Tampa/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.) City and County public

About the Artist

Katie Adams is a puppeteer and storyteller who loves to perform for children and family audiences. In 2000, Katie started her own company, Make-Believe Theater dedicated to entertaining, inspiring and enlightening young audiences. Recent performance highlights include the National Festival of the Puppeteers of America, the Smithsonian Discovery Theater, the Great Arizona Puppet Theater, Mahaffey Theater, and the Kravis Center.

Activity: Write a letter or email to Mrs. Adams at:

Katie Adams'
Make Believe Theater
206 S. Ward St., Tampa, FL 33609
email: Katesshow@aol.com

