STORYTELLING HINTS

Below is a series of suggestions to use for a storytelling session. You may wish to select the suggestions that best correspond to the level or needs of your students.

For Students

1. Read many stories or legends, watch videos of stories or legends, or listen to audio tapes. Getting a feel for how different people tell stories will help you find a way that you like.

2. Determine your mode of learning:
   - Auditory learners: record and listen to your story and legend.
   - Visual learners: read your story over and over, silently and aloud, looking at illustrations.
   - Tactile and visual learners: collect objects as cues, for example: small dolls, puppets, fur, stones, etc. Use these objects to help you act out your story as you practise.

3. Summarize the legend or story on paper. Draw the setting, the characters and sequence of events.

4. Memorize the opening and closing of the story, important key phrases, refrains, dialogue, conversations, morals, etc.

5. Try performing your story in front of a mirror.

6. Tape your story or legend to hear how you sound.

7. As you perform, remember that each of us has a story to tell and that everyone loves a good story!

For Teachers

The following ideas will help you arouse your students’ interest.

- Give the place where the stories are told, a special name such as “The Story Corner.”

- Sit on a traditional storytelling backrest (made of willow and sinew), an interesting chair, or a decorated chair.
• Choose an object that is significant to the story. Display the object as an introduction to what is to follow. Use the object to generate interest in the story.

• Start and maintain a small tradition that adds color or mystery to storytelling such as using a colourful mask or other item.

• Have everyone sit around you while you act out scenes in the middle of the circle.

• Use a lot of sign language, gestures and vary your voice. You may, for instance, use different voices for each character, change your voice as the plot thickens, or place emphasis on specific words.

• Use felt cut-outs or flannel board to provide illustrations and movement in the story.

• Use stories that require participation. For example, use stories or legends that permit or require the group to chant a rhyme, answer a question or do an action or dance.

• Pick colors that may be connected with the story. Using pieces of construction paper or fabric, distribute these colors to several participants. Have students take turns suggesting ways in which they associate color with the story.

• Write a short rhythm or echo verse based on the story. In an echo verse, the storyteller chants the first line and the participants chant it back. This chanting continues through the entire piece. Rhythmic clapping may accompany the lines of the chant.

• Choose sounds that would enhance the story. Assign them to various people or groups at the appropriate times in the story. Have each group make the designated sound.

• Laughter is important. Sing and chant loudly. Have fun with it. Bring the story to life.

• Create a storytelling bag and fill it with props. Props hold children's interest and help the storyteller to remember the important parts of the story.