
TELLING TALES

*Colorful folktales brought
to life by master storytellers
before a live—and lively—
audience of children.*

Teacher's Guide

This guide accompanies the 16-program instructional television series *Telling Tales*, a production of KET, The Kentucky Network.

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INTRODUCTION

Telling Tales in the Classroom

Imaginative stories appeal to students of any age, from any background, and at any ability level. The KET series *Telling Tales* brings you 16 stories (plus several songs and poems) with this universal appeal, told by a variety of storytellers. Ten of the stories come from the Appalachian Mountains, four have African roots, and two are grounded in Native American tradition.

For each tale in the series, this guide contains a story synopsis, notes on the story's origin, discussion questions, and activities that can be used to enhance the use of the series in the classroom.

Before showing the *Telling Tales* programs to students, you should watch them yourself to judge the appropriateness of particular stories to the grade level you teach. Some stories might work best with older students, while others appeal to students of all ages.

When you are ready to start using the series in your classroom, a good way to start would be to lead a general discussion of folktales: What is a folktale? Who created these stories? What are some folktales students have heard at home, in the community, or from their families and friends? Have students studied any folktales in school?

As a follow-up activity for any story in the series, or for the entire series, ask students to collect stories from home. What are some special words, expressions,



riddles, or stories they've heard from their parents, grandparents, or other special people?

Telling Tales also shines the spotlight on the storytellers themselves and the way they tell their stories. The storytelling process actively draws in students and teachers—as listeners; as learners; and sometimes as direct, active (and acting) participants. A storyteller like Anndrena Belcher, for example, actually involves students in the story. As the children act out their parts, each child offers something unique to the storytelling—creative—process.

Each storyteller in this series pulls listeners into the story in different, but effective, ways. You might take cues from each of them in developing your own style of telling or reading stories in the classroom. Like the storytellers in the series, you might help your

young storytellers craft and perform their own stories.

Fortunately, storytelling does not fit neatly into any one curriculum area. Many of the activities in this guide reinforce important language arts skills—using colorful language, remembering the sequence of events, retelling the story either orally or in writing, writing a new story. But stories can add insight into other areas of the curriculum—and life—as well.

When students find places where stories were collected or trace the migrations of peoples and stories on maps, they are learning something about geography and history. Social studies students can learn something about economic systems based on barter from “Cat and Rat” or about child labor laws from “Ash Pet” or about the feudal system from the “Jack tales.” Environmental issues and living in tune with nature are central to “Two Gals” and “Little Deer and Mother Earth.”

For any of the stories in this series, you may want to talk about parallel stories from other cultures, leading into a discussion of common threads in all cultures as well as important differences. We've included some suggestions of parallel stories in the “Notes on the Story” section in each chapter.

The possibilities for extending stories into other areas of the curriculum depend entirely upon how you want to use them, and

INTRODUCTION *continued*

are limited only by your imagination. But in any storytelling lesson, opportunities exist for

- encouraging creativity, the use of the imagination, and self-expression;
- integrating stories into the curriculum—motivating students to read, improving communication skills (listening, speaking, body movement), and enriching lessons (language arts, history, and geography);
- building self-confidence and leadership skills (as children are actively involved in the stories);
- helping children understand their cultural history and roots;
- helping children to be more open to cultures and histories different from their own;
- developing oral history / family history projects;
- entertaining and showing that learning is fun and exciting.

Telling Tales in the Library

The following introduction was contributed by Elrene May Davis, the librarian for three elementary schools in Estill County, Kentucky. She developed a librarian's guide to the original eight-program Telling Tales series in conjunction with a KET Teaching with Television grant she received in the spring of 1989. Teaching with Television grants are awarded to encourage the effective and creative use of high-quality ITV series.

Elrene attended Morehead State University and earned her B.S., M.A., and Rank I degrees from Eastern Kentucky University. She comes by her love for storytelling naturally, having been raised in Appalachia. She is herself an excellent storyteller.

I consider myself somewhat of a “Jack” of all school trades. I have been an intermediate grade classroom teacher, a middle school reading teacher, a high school librarian, and a K-6 librarian. Presently I serve as librarian for three elementary schools in Estill County, a school system in the Kentucky foothills.

I grew up in Elkhorn City in Pike County, Kentucky, where my parents owned a rural general store and later a market in town where I spent many of my hours. (Pike County is also Anndrena Belcher's birthplace.) After college, I, like the country mouse, moved to the city and served as a librarian in Jefferson County (Louisville), the state's largest

school system. Following my marriage to a native of Perry County (another Appalachian county), I settled in Estill County, where we have lived for the past 16 years.

During my teaching years, I found the one thing my students seemed to enjoy most was storytelling—most of all when I told “Jack” tales. A storytelling occasion could even serve as a reward or a bribe! The humorous part of my educational experience is that in telling Appalachian tales, I have had to incorporate the language Mother continually corrected me for using. It took a while to overcome guilt for defying the educational principles she had instilled in me. [See the next section of this Introduction for more on this subject.]

My goals now include striving to develop in my students an appreciation for reading which they will share with their families, in order to help promote a higher educational and reading level in our county. I believe we can use stories in this effort.

Originally, I applied for a KET grant to use *Telling Tales* in my library program because I felt it would enrich the storytelling I was already doing in the library. One of the things I wanted to do was select books that related in some way to the stories in the series. These I would either read to the students or encourage them to check out and read at home. But once I began watching the pro-

grams—which I used with 26 classes, at grade levels from K to 4—I began to see all kinds of possibilities.

Each time I viewed the tape, I would get another idea or book to correlate with the program. (I think you will, too, as you watch the programs and read through the suggested questions and activities.) Also, because of my involvement with two writing grants, I could see many ways to incorporate these stories into a writing curriculum.

I also got lots of ideas from my students. I would ask them what other books we had read that reminded them of the story we had just watched; or I would ask them to think of stories about, for instance, someone who is misunderstood.

In choosing books related to the stories in *Telling Tales*, let your imagination roam beyond the “obvious.” A book may update the story or contain elements of the story. Or the stories may be completely different but share the same theme or moral. Or they may all be animal stories or “why” stories.

Many well-known stories will relate to several different programs; thus, they may be referred to rather than read again. You can decide when is the best time to use a story. But I’m sure you have found, as I have, that small children love to hear old favorites read again and again.

Library skills for the primary

grades may be easily incorporated into the presentation—author, title, illustrator, Caldecott Medal winners, and book care. Many of the stories provide opportunities for study of both “fact” or non-fiction books and fiction—and discussion of the difference. For older students, there are research opportunities which require them to use the card catalog or find nonfiction books in the library.

I believe we need to use different types of literature, including stories, in the elementary school. My personal “soap box” is to encourage reading as fun and to encourage teachers to correlate library books with the classroom curriculum. The stories in *Telling Tales* offer a golden opportunity.

Notes on Language

The Appalachian stories in this series are told in a language that differs, often widely, from standard English. The archaic words, non-standard grammar, and regional accents used help create the atmosphere. But they also may raise questions in the minds of teachers who are trying to convey “correct” usage to their students.

The white settlers who came into the Southern mountains in the 18th and early 19th centuries were country people, largely from lowland Scotland (often by way of northern Ireland; hence, “Scotch-Irish”). The physical and cultural isolation of the mountains sheltered innumerable songs and stories and allowed the language spoken by these immigrants to hold on to many words and usages that fell into disuse elsewhere.

Mountain speech has often been ridiculed; it is a prominent part of the “hillbilly” stereotype. But linguists recognize Southern mountain speech as a dialect of English. Many of its usages, sometimes called “ignorant” or incorrect, are actually of great antiquity. “You was” neatly distinguishes you-singular from the plural “you were,” a nicety modern English has lost. “Hisn” and “ourn” are part of a set of possessive pronouns of which standard English keeps only “mine.” When Ashy Lou “redds up” the old woman’s hair, she uses a word Chaucer used; when the Devil hands Wicked John a

INTRODUCTION *continued*

Notes on Language *continued*

chunk of “far,” he says F-I-R-E the way Shakespeare did.

This speech is a vivid, colorful, robust language. It is also the “native tongue” of many storytellers. Storytelling is a spoken art form; it depends on sound, rhythm, imagery, and timing as well as the literary tools of plot, character, and theme. Bringing a story to life requires a storyteller to use his or her own voice—in whatever language comes naturally. Several of the storytellers featured in *Telling Tales* use a lot of Appalachian speech in their storytelling because it fits with the stories and with the way they were raised.

In fact, telling stories is a wonderful way to find your own voice. In encouraging students to tell stories, and in telling stories yourself, don’t be judgmental on matters of standard grammar and “good English.” Don’t try to “clean up” the language the story wants to be told in. Conversely, don’t try to force a hillbilly or Irish or African-American tone into your voice if it doesn’t want to come. The best thing is simply to tell the story, again and again and again. The story itself will tell you what it wants to sound like in your mouth.

Another reason to be non-judgmental about non-standard language is that many students don’t hear standard grammar at home and have to struggle with it in school. Sometimes these students lag behind in written

work but, given the chance to use their own voices, turn out to be star storytellers. They get excited about being able to use natural speech in some aspect of their schoolwork and really enjoy finding something they can do well.

To close, of course, with a story:

A couple from the city were driving through the mountains when they passed an old farmer tending a huge garden. They stopped, and the man got out of the car and went over to the fence.

“Sorry to bother you,” he said, “but we’re just curious. When the crops come in all at once, what do you do with it all?”

“Well, we eat what we can,” said the farmer, “and what we can’t, we can.”

“Oh.”

The man got back to the car, looking unconvinced. When his wife asked him what the farmer had said, he answered:

“He said that they ate what they could, and what they couldn’t, they could.”

ABOUT THE STORYTELLERS

Anndrena Belcher



Anndrena Belcher was born in Pike County, Kentucky but migrated with her family to uptown Chicago when she was very young. It was in Chicago that Anndrena learned what it meant to be a “hillbilly.” “We always thought of the mountains as our real home,” she says. “Indeed, we went home every chance we had. The summer and holidays spent with my grandparents were magical. Their stories and songs of everyday life strengthened my identity as a child of the mountains.”

Anndrena spent one year at Berea College in Kentucky and then returned to Chicago to enter an experimental community-based program offered through Northeastern Illinois University. There she earned her bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s in social sciences, with a major concentration in Appalachian studies and rural in-migration. During her years at Northeastern,

she organized a cultural center for rural in-migrants, started an old-time dance group, and conducted Appalachian programs in neighborhood schools.

In 1976 Anndrena returned to the mountains, first to a job in post-secondary education and then to a life as a storyteller, singer, dancer, and actress. She has performed and conducted workshops in countless schools and libraries and at numerous festivals and other events throughout the region.

In *Telling Tales*, Anndrena tells five stories, demonstrating her personal brand of storytelling, which blends acting out the stories, music, dance, and audience participation. In the final program of the series, “Passing It On,” Anndrena tells a little of her own story.

John O’Neal



Playwright, actor, and stage director John O’Neal tours widely with one-man shows and ensemble productions featuring Junebug Jabbo Jones. The character and his stories draw heavily on John’s experiences in the civil rights movement as a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a co-founder of the Free Southern Theater, a pioneering African-American arts organization.

John began his playwrighting career as a student at Southern Illinois University, where he received a bachelor’s degree in English and philosophy. Since then, he has won numerous grants and awards for his writing, including the Louisiana Artist’s Fellowship and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation. He also has written under commission for the Play Group of Knoxville, TN and the world-renowned San Francisco Mime

ABOUT THE STORYTELLERS *continued*

John O'Neal *continued*

Troupe and served as guest director at the Play Group, Chicago's Kuumba Theater, and his alma mater.

John is no stranger to educational settings, either. Many of his residency programs as a touring artist have included formal and informal presentations for students ranging from elementary to post-graduate levels.

In explaining the appeal of storytelling, John has said, "Storytellers are grounded in oral history. If people enjoy your performance, it's not because they're getting information about you, the actor, but because they're learning about themselves. You have to impart the quality and character of their own lives, and that's what I try to use as grist. I try to figure out what's happening in people's lives that I have an emphatic response to, and then build stories that communicate that."

Rich Kirby



Rich Kirby inherited his love for old-time music and tales from his grandparents, who were born and raised in Eastern Kentucky in the 19th century. His grandmother had an extraordinary store of old ballads and hymns, and his grandfather was "a grand old storyteller whose life spanned the Kentucky mountains, the Mississippi River, and the Old West."

His family moved to New York City when Rich was young; he didn't move back to the mountains until after college and graduate school. He returned at a time when "all across the region, folks were beginning to think of themselves as 'mountain people,' reaching back to their roots to find perspectives on the present."

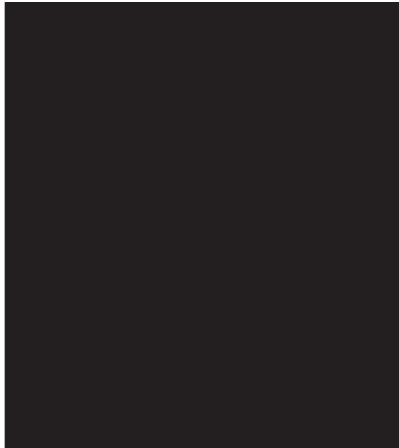
Rich began playing professionally in 1971 and since then has played everywhere from kindergartens to political rallies to fiddlers' conventions. He plays banjo, fiddle, guitar, and mandolin and has spent a lot of time with

master musicians of an earlier generation.

In 1974, Rich began performing with Tom Bledsoe. They teamed with John McCutcheon to create Wry Straw, a string band that toured the country for four years. Rich and Tom continued as a duo, performing and recording for June Appal Recordings, a branch of Appalshop, the media collective in Whitesburg, KY that has gained widespread respect for its work documenting the history and traditions of Appalachia.

A variety of material can be heard in Rich's current solo performances—old ballads, new mountain songs, and music from his experiences in southern Africa. "My life seems to include several different cultures," he says, "and I've found that storytelling and music can cross those barriers and bring things into focus."

Tom Bledsoe



Tom Bledsoe grew up in a farming family on the banks of the Clinch River in Scott County, Virginia, where he was surrounded by traditional music and stories sung and told by family members and neighbors. He began learning guitar as a teenager and became inspired to learn more about his own musical traditions while serving in the U.S. Navy in 1970. "I was stationed in Washington state when I heard two young guys playing fiddle and banjo together. It immediately reconnected me to my family and home community, but also showed me that the musical tradition was much larger than I had imagined," he says.

Tom has played with many traditional masters since returning home. He has recorded with Uncle Charlie Osborne, the Home Folks, Wry Straw, Rich Kirby, and others. In 1981, he joined Roadside Theater, a part of Appalshop Inc. of Whitesburg, KY. With Road-

side, he performs *Mountain Tales and Music*, *Pretty Polly*, *South of the Mountain*, and *Leaving Egypt*. When not touring, he can be found with his wife, Joy D'Elia, on their mountain farm in Snowflake, VA. Tom and Joy sometimes perform as "Skin and Bonz," combining banjo and bones with powerful harmonies.

Marilou Awiakta



Poet/author Marilou Awiakta says she has had to build her own life's story from pieces of three cultures: Cherokee; Appalachian; and high technology, which she describes as "a culture in itself." Born in Knoxville, TN into a family that had lived for generations in the mountains from Virginia to northern Georgia, she moved to Oak Ridge, TN at the age of 9. At the time, Oak Ridge was a fenced-off, top-secret city—the "atomic frontier."

"My parents had always taught me to be proud of my Cherokee/ Appalachian heritage," she says. "But very early I had to cope with 'outsiders' who came into Oak Ridge, many of them feeling they were 'missionaries to the natives.' I'd never heard the word 'hillbilly' till then.... But not all outsiders were alike either, as my mother pointed out. Some were kind and respectful. So my interest in multicultural respect began very early."

ABOUT THE STORYTELLERS *continued*

Marilou Awiakta *continued*

Marilou's unique vision has brought her international recognition. In 1986, the U.S. Information Agency chose her books *Abiding Appalachia: Where Mountain and Atom Meet* and *Rising Fawn and the Fire Mystery* for its global tour of American writers. At Le Havre, France, her poem "Out of Ashes, Peace Will Rise" was the only American work featured in a ceremony for the survival of the world sponsored by French poets. In 1989, she received the Distinguished Tennessee Writer Award.

Marilou's work appears regularly in magazines and anthologies and was featured in the KET production *Voices of Memory*, a documentary about the oral traditions of the southeastern United States. The March/April 1991 issue of *Ms.* featured her essay "Red Alert! A Meditation on Dances with Wolves."

Through Tufts University, she is currently working with a team of 80 national scholars to "develop a new model of American Studies, using black, ethnic, and feminist perspectives to integrate the sciences and humanities."

A *magna cum laude* graduate of the University of Tennessee with a degree in French and English, Marilou lives in Memphis with her husband, Dr. Paul Thompson. They have three children.

Marilou's new collection of poems and essays, *Selu: Spirit of Survival*, was scheduled to be published by Tradery House in Memphis in the fall of 1991.

Mama Yaa



"Mama Yaa" (Gloria Bivens) developed her love for stories through listening to and learning from her grandparents, parents, and other relatives, as well as a neighborhood librarian she remembers from her years growing up in Louisville, KY. Her later travels through the West African countries of Togo, the Ivory Coast, and Gambia, as well as to the Virgin Islands, confirmed her interest in the African oral tradition and African culture.

Gloria studied political science at the University of Louisville but was drawn to social work after graduation. She is director of social services for the Presbyterian Community Center in Louisville. The arts are an important part of her job and her life. Although the community center keeps her busy, she still finds time to tell stories and says her telling has spread from front porch stoops, picnics, and family weddings and gatherings to university campuses (such

as the University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, Tennessee State University, and Berea College) and to one very memorable time on a dark country road in Kpalime, Togo, when the van broke down in the middle of the night.

Gloria is a member of the Kentucky Coalition for Afro-American Arts, the International Order of E.A.R.S., the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling, and the Association of Black Storytellers.

Like the other storytellers in this series, Gloria is fascinated by the similarities among cultures and their stories. "Hearing stories opened me up to the whole world," she says. Gloria tells two stories of African descent for *Telling Tales*.

Joy D'Elia



As “Skin and Bonz,” they have performed at festivals, at rallies, in schools, and on radio. She is working on a children’s book called *Dessert Island* that combines her experiences as a sailor, baker, and storyteller.

“I have always had many interests in life, and storytelling is a way I can combine all these experiences and share them with others,” she says.

Joy Marie D’Elia grew up in Greenwich, CT listening to stories told by her Italian grandparents about “the other side.” She graduated from St. Joseph’s College with a degree in elementary education, specializing in early childhood education.

Joy started telling original and classic stories to her preschool and elementary students in 1975, using those stories to stimulate the children’s interest in reading and writing their own stories.

After college, Joy lived in Athens, OH; in St. Augustine, FL; and on a sailboat in Denmark before moving with her husband, Tom Bledsoe, to their mountain farm in Snowflake, VA. Over the years, she has also taught gardening; made baskets; sailed the Atlantic Ocean on the Danish ketch *Fri*; and been a restaurateur, baker, and street musician.

Joy plays fiddle and two Irish rhythm instruments, the bodhran and bones, with banjo player Tom.

INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING

by Anndrena Belcher

I sit now on a rock at the top of the Clinch Mountain at Mendota, VA. I have, from here, a flying view of the world. Clouds, hawks, butterflies, hummingbirds, and dry leaves fly by me. Big Moccasin Valley lies below. This big blue mountain gives way to green rolling waves of hills at its base. These waves of green are inlaid with the corrugated rectangular patches of earth plowed for growing tobacco. Some strips of brown earth lie empty, riddled of growth; the tobacco is in the barn. Others lie part empty, part inhabited by yellow and green variations of the one cash crop left to farmers in this part of the world.

These days only a small percentage of our population lives on small farms. My friend who knows says 2% of our nation's people make a living at farming.* Times have changed drastically since the agrarian society of Thomas Jefferson. The problem-solving machines and industry that were meant to save us time and toil have only served to complicate our lives and pollute the world. Even the new "clean" technologies take us farther and farther from our original hostess: the big, grand, wild, and nurturing Mother Nature. We seem to be, as a society, confused about

our role here. We have lost our sense of purpose, our sense of belonging, our sense of connection with the whole. We know, innately, that we are a part of this "eco scheme"; but, as Jack might say, "Bedads, if it hain't hard to figger out!"

Every bird, every flower, every plant and tree has a story to tell. The winds and the water talk to every human being who will take time to listen and learn the language of the Earth. The Earth doesn't just belong to us. We belong to it. And it is in the old stories that we learn to respect and take care of ourselves, and to take care of our Earth in the process.

It is a reciprocal relationship. To really know our own story, we have to know the story of the natural world we live in. Urban dweller as well as country dweller must know his or her kinship roots. Then we can set a true path; then we can function as whole human beings connected with each other, connected with the past, connected with our Earth home. When we know this connection, we can go forward with a sense of the circle we travel—with a sense of security and responsibility in how we make our world.

Mobile society makes more challenges for us in this venture. Times have changed. Most people do not grow up in one place. The family home place, the family cemeteries ... the *community* that my generation knew has under-

gone drastic changes. People of rural cultural roots and values the world over are being pushed and shoved and pounded to fit a mainstream idea of how people should live.

In these times, when values and mores and language and art are dictated to us from someplace on the academic, didactic high, how can natural learning take place? How can the rainbow-colored, rainbow-talking peoples of the world survive and perpetuate the ancient myths, the stories, the arts and survival skills of the agrarian past? How can the ancient and the modern-day peacefully coexist and dance together? How can a child of Appalachia learn to take pride in his culture, know his archaic language, and still "succeed" in a mainstream academic environment? How can the Native American grow up learning the ancient arts and farming methods, the language of the ancestors, and still deal with a mainstream world run by white people? How can African-Americans feel proud of their ancestry, know their languages and dialects, pass on the old ways, and live in the world of mainstream America today?

In a time when our Earth is being ravaged, our rain forests massacred, our air and water polluted, our young people magnetically drawn to a world of rampant consumerism through high-powered technological advertising wizardry, how can we see our connections? How can we

* From *A Time To Reap*, a radio series produced by Maxine Kenney in 1988 for distribution to public radio stations around the country.

“figger” out where we belong in all this? Bedads!

Sometimes, in order to go forward, we have to go back. We have to go home. We have to learn our histories. We have to know that each of us has a home in this world’s history, that each of us has a home in our own individual story, and that each individual story of the past is tied with every other story of the past. Each human history is tied with the history of the birds, the plants, the waters, and the winds.

We take our stories with us wherever we go. We can take some, choose to leave some; but they’re there for the journey. Try not to think of story as a lot of old baggage to lug around, but more as a journey cake to nibble on for sustenance as we travel.

Telling Tales is a series of folktales and literary pieces that help us look at the ways in which people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds viewed themselves and the world around them. The tales teach morals and survival lessons for those ready to listen.

Some tales are about people, some about animals, some about that which extends beyond the natural world. In the storytelling and the story listening, we learn cultures, we learn history, we learn language, we learn to imagine. It is through this creative process that we gain understanding. And is not this the aim of every educator?

1 HARDY HARD HEAD

told by Anndrena Belcher

A princess does nothing but cry all day long—the result of a witch’s hex. Jack and his brothers, Will and Tom, set out to trick the witch and break the enchantment.

Their mother gives Will, the first to try, \$2 for a bet with the witch and spice cakes and milk for his lunch. Along the way, Will refuses to share his lunch with a little old man. At the witch’s, Will bets he can jump onto a hackle, which is a board full of spikes, and bounce off like the witch can. He can’t. Tom’s adventure turns out the same.

By the time it’s Jack’s turn, his mother has no money left to give him and only cornbread fritters and spring water to pack for his lunch. But when the old man approaches him, Jack generously invites him to eat. To show his gratitude, the old man changes the fritters into a chocolate cake, gives Jack a magic stick, teaches him a magic incantation, and lends him \$1,000 for his bet with the witch.

Using the old man’s magic, Jack conjures up a boat and puts together a crew that helps him win his bet with the witch. Then he splits his winnings among his crew, repays the little old man his \$1,000, and returns home to find the princess smiling. Besides winning three bushels of gold and the chance to court the princess, Jack has learned that “two heads are better than one.” ■

Notes on the Story

This story is a “Jack tale.” Richard Chase’s preface to his book *The Jack Tales* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943) is a good source for background on Jack tales. The appendix refers readers to the myths and folklore of Ireland (Jeremiah Curtin’s *Hero Tales*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1894) for additional information.

For related stories, see “The Six Servants” in the Brothers Grimm collections; “How Six Men Travelled the Wide World” from the *Andrew Lang Fairy Tale Treasury*; a Russian version in *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* by Arthur Ransome (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968); and a version from Chile, “The Talented Companions,” in *Danny Kaye’s Around the World Story Book*.

Before Viewing

◆ Information from *The Jack Tales* by Richard Chase will help you introduce students to Jack and “Jack tales.” This book gives some of the fascinating history behind the discovery of these tales in the 1940s.

Chase says that most of the Jack tales find their way back to Council Harmon, who lived in Beech Mountain, NC during the 19th century. Where did they come from originally? Have children find the Appalachian Mountains, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia on a map.

◆ Talk about Jack as a universal character, a character who can be found in the tales of many countries (e.g., the English Jack, the German Hans, John in African-American stories, Ivan in Russia).

You may also want to discuss the culture out of which these tales arose. Topics you might touch on include subsistence farming and the values of a rural society—sharing, showing respect for elders, acknowledging kinship of elders and others in the community, cooperation. Have students watch for evidence of these values in the story.

◆ To prepare the students for the language in the story, you may want to discuss the history of the mountain dialect, relating it to Queen Elizabeth I and Elizabethan English. How and why did the language of the British Isles

survive longer in the mountains? Can students come up with some examples of archaic words or expressions they have heard? Ask students to listen for examples in the story.

All of these topics can be returned to after students watch the program. Either before or after viewing the program, you may want to have students watch *Fixin’ To Tell about Jack* (Appalshop Films, Whitesburg, KY) in order to meet one of the master storytellers of the mountains, Ray Hicks. A recording featuring Hicks is also available (*Jack Alive*, June Appal Records JA0052). Hicks, a winner of the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, is said to have one of the “purest examples of the speech of the Scotch-Irish and English pioneers who settled Appalachia in the late 1700s.”

For Discussion After Viewing

? Discuss Jack as a character. What do you think Jack looks like? List Jack’s characteristics. Do you know someone like Jack? How are Jack, Will, and Tom alike? How are they different?

? Discuss class systems. Which class did Jack come from? How did Jack outdo the witch? Who might the old man be? What does he represent?

? Discuss the witch. What do you think she looked like? What kind of people were viewed as witches earlier in our country’s history?

? Discuss the King. Who do you suppose the King is in this story?

? How were old people viewed in Jack’s time? How are old people viewed now? Do you know anyone 70 years old or older?

? What lessons can be learned from this story?

? How did you react to the language in the story? List some examples of archaic words or expressions you heard in the story. How is this language usually viewed? Discuss stereotypes. Compare standardized textbook English to archaic language.

These questions can lead into a discussion of bilingual cultures—the mountain people of Appalachia, black Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans.

HARDY HARD HEAD *continued*

What would happen if we all talked, looked, and acted the same?

? Imagine a time before written language. What were stories meant to do? Are survival skills modeled in this story? Discuss the power of storytelling.



Follow-Up Activities

✦ It is often effective to have students tell the stories in *Telling Tales* in their own words. Here are some variations:

- Tell the story in the dark. What is the effect of telling a story in the dark? What kind of mood or tone is set in the darkness? How is it different from listening to a story being told in the light?
- Tell the story with action and facial expressions.
- Paint faces on each finger of both hands, with each finger representing a character in the story, and tell the story with fingers acting their parts.
- Divide the class into groups and have each group tell and act out the story. Compare the different versions.

✦ Talk about the role of the narrator in the story. How can one person portray all the different characters and narrate the story? Discuss the differences between telling a story and putting on a play.

✦ Have students create a magic ship out of cardboard (or whatever materials are handy). Have them get into the boat and describe how it feels to fly. (This magic ship can be used as a prop in a dramatic retelling of the story.)

✦ Another common follow-up activity is writing the story down and illustrating it, perhaps in the

form of a homemade book, which can be produced individually by each student or by the class as a whole.

As a variation on this writing activity, ask students to rewrite the story, making the characters and situation contemporary. Make sure the new story contains elements of the original: magic, characters working together to solve a problem.

✦ Invite in grandparents who are willing to talk about the differences between “then” and “now.”

✦ How can this tale be viewed and told if the players are world countries? For example, replace See Well, Hear Well, and the others with the names of countries such as the United States and the USSR. What task(s) must the countries work together to accomplish? How does the theme of cooperation carry over?

✦ Here’s a research project for older students. Ask them to find other Jack tales in the library or to find and read similar versions of the “Hardy Hard Head” story.

2 THE TWO GALS

told by Anndrena Belcher

An old woman has two daughters: one sweet, kind, hard-working, and considerate; the other her complete opposite. One day, the sweet daughter is pulled into the well while fetching water and finds herself in another land. She walks along looking for work and comes to a creek with a log lying across it. Just as she is about to step on the log, it asks her to go around. So she hops over it. She also grants the requests of an apple tree, a woolly sheep, and a cow. Finally she arrives at a funny-looking house and asks the old woman who lives there for a job.

After three months of drudgery, the girl asks for her pay. The woman gives her a choice of three boxes. The one she picks, at a bluebird's suggestion, is filled with the old woman's silver and gold. The woman chases her, but the cow, the sheep, the apple tree, and the log all hide her as she makes her way back to the well.

Once she is home, her mother takes the money and sends the girl back out to the pigsty. Then she sends the lazy girl off to fetch more gold and silver. But the lazy girl refuses the requests of the log, tree, cow, and sheep; and at the old woman's house, she's too lazy to do any work. When the woman offers her three boxes, she takes the purple, again at the bird's suggestion. As she runs off, the old witchy woman decides to teach that lazy girl a lesson and chases after her to give her a spanking. The log, tree, cow, and sheep ignore her pleas for help, and the old woman whacks her.

Somehow she makes it home; but when she and her greedy mother open the box, they find it full of rattlesnakes and copperheads. Those two women take off running—and, according to the story, they're running still. ■

Notes on the Story

"Two Gals" is a story collected by folklorist Leonard Roberts and published in his collection of Southeastern Kentucky tales entitled *Old Greasybeard: Tales from the Cumberland Gap* (Detroit: Folklore Association of Gale Research, 1969). The traditional version of the story has the greedy woman and her lazy girl eaten up by the snakes. This adaptation softens the punishment.

THE TWO GALS *continued*

Before Viewing

◆ Use a map to locate the Appalachian Mountains. Look at the southeastern part of Kentucky, where this particular story was collected. Explain the immigration of peoples from the British Isles and other parts of the world into this country and into the Appalachian region.

◆ Again, you may wish to discuss archaic language and the use of dialect in the story. Are there children in the classroom who come from this region? Are there children from other rural areas of the United States? From rural areas in other countries? What kinds of towns/urban areas are the other children from?

Explain that people have been traveling from one place to another, from one town to another, from one country to another, and from the farm to the town for hundreds of years. Help the children first speculate about and then understand the reasons for migration.

◆ Discuss the ways in which stories travel, just as people do, and how they change along the way, so that we may have many different versions of the same story.

For Discussion After Viewing

? Discuss language. Were there words or pronunciations different from what you are used to hearing? What are some examples of the colorful language Anndrena used? Make a list. Look at the different ways to spell and pronounce these words.

Students from an urban environment or another region of the country might make a list of words peculiar to their community that might be unfamiliar to children elsewhere.

? Discuss point of view. How would the tree, the cow, or the old woman tell the story? How is each of us like the characters in the story? How are we different?

? Discuss motivations and family relationships. What motivated the mother and the second daughter in the story? Discuss relationships between brothers and sisters. Do you see similarities to/differences from the two girls in your own relationships?

? Discuss the “morals” in the story:

- our relationship with nature and the ideas of interdependency and reciprocity
- stereotypes of “good,” “bad,” “witch,” and “lazy”

? Can you draw parallels between the journey the girls took and some sort of journey you have taken? What did you learn on your journey?

Follow-Up Activities

+ Have children draw pictures of what they saw in their imaginations as they watched the program. Did Anndrena give them any visual clues during the story to suggest what characters or places in the story might look like? Can they remember the sequence of events in the story? Ask them to write down as much of the story as they can remember.

Once they have completed their drawings and versions of the story, discuss their pictures and reconstruct the story. Put together a class book.

+ Set the story in another environment—a contemporary urban setting, for instance. Instead of falling in a well and landing in the countryside, have the characters discover another kind of land. What will they meet along the way? Students can illustrate this story and make it into a book.

+ Have children act out the story, experimenting with ways of using their bodies, voices, and facial expressions. For example, have them show the difference between the sweet girl and the lazy girl by their voices and facial expressions.

JUNEBUG: A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME

by John O'Neal

Background for Programs 3-4

Junebug Jabbo Jones is a genuine folk character, a legend in his own time. Junebug was created by members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to stand as a symbol of the wisdom of the rural working people who made up the rank and file of the civil rights movement. I learned of him when I began working as a field secretary for SNCC in 1962.

By 1965, SNCC was beginning to fall apart. Knowing that oral literature tends to evaporate when it isn't used, I had begun collecting "Junebugisms" as a sort of hedge against his disappearance. At first I thought I might use those stories and aphorisms to create a newspaper column like Langston Hughes' "Simple Speaks His Mind," which featured Jess B. Simple; his wife, Joyce; and a host of other characters. It was 1979 before I realized that it was better to present oral literature in performance than in written form. Working with a talented group of theatre artists, I have since developed several plays featuring Junebug, collectively referred to as *Sayings from the Life and Writings of Junebug Jabbo Jones*.

That part of Junebug's history is fairly straightforward. But as with other mythic folk heroes, there's considerable speculation about Junebug's earlier days. In the late '50s, students at Howard University shared a bit of campus folklore about a character they called "Dr. Jabbo." The character

was a satiric attack on the type of professor who is more concerned with the form than the substance of education. Dr. Jabbo was so concerned with how to "look smart" that he talked too much and often did very dumb things.

Dick Gregory, who was just becoming popular as a stand-up comic, came to Howard to perform a show that included a section about some of the unique names African-Americans use. "Junebug" was one of his examples. Gregory's Junebug character reminded the students of their own Dr. Jabbo, so they combined the two names. When several Howard students later went south to work with SNCC, they took Dr. Junebug Jabbo with them.

Over time, Junebug lost his Ph.D., picked up a surname, and was transformed from a satiric attack on dumb professors into a symbol of the wisdom of the common people. As such, he is heir to a long tradition of trickster characters found in the folklore of African and other oppressed peoples who have been obliged by history and circumstance to oppose power with wit. While he is always concerned with important, "serious" problems, Junebug wields humor and guile as indispensable weapons in his arsenal.

The plays we have developed for Junebug under the aegis of the Junebug Theater Project are intended for adult audiences. But because we have chosen to present

Junebug as a storyteller, and because of the popularity of storytelling with young audiences, we have also developed material like the traditional stories in *Telling Tales* for young audiences.

When telling to young audiences, I make a special effort to share useful historical information that they are likely to have missed. Junebug also has a strong sense of values that he shares, but the primary presumption of the approach is that our task as artists is to present strong, clear images that have an emotional impact on audiences. They will then decide for themselves what they think—regardless of how young or old they are.

3

THE BUZZARD AND THE MONKEY

told by Junebug Jabbo Jones (John O'Neal)

It is a time of terrible drought, and all the animals are hot and hungry. The buzzard comes up with a selfish plan to feed himself: He convinces Sister Rabbit to take a ride on his back, then goes into a power dive and shakes her off onto the ground, where she splits open, providing him with a good meal.

After the buzzard manages this trick with a second victim (Brother Turtle), the monkey hears about it and decides to put a stop to it. He lures the buzzard with his “buzzard-attracting dance” and agrees to go for a ride. But before the buzzard can start his dive, the monkey gets a stranglehold on the bird by wrapping his tail around the buzzard’s throat and grabbing onto his feathers. Then he makes the buzzard fly by the rabbit’s and turtle’s houses so their relatives can scorn the buzzard. The monkey doesn’t turn the buzzard loose until the buzzard has promised never to eat another animal — unless it is already dead.

The storyteller begins and ends the story with the Nat King Cole song “Straighten Up and Fly Right.” ■

Notes on the Story

This story is one of the most widely known of its type in the world. John’s version is based on one he learned from Louise Anderson of Jacksonville, NC. He reports that “Ms. Louise is also the one who freed me from the tyranny of scripts and a certain kind of ‘acting’ when she told me, ‘Sometimes I have to tell a story two or three years before I feel like I’m doing it right.’”

Before Viewing

◆ Because this story is based on an African-American tale, it presents an opportunity for discussing the immigration of Africans to this country and the advent of slavery. In tracing how a story moves from one place to another, use maps, history books, and discussion to learn about the migration of Africans from Southern plantations to the mountains and to cities and to find out about the underground railroads and their routes.

◆ Using the essay by John O’Neal, introduce your students to the Junebug character. You may need to give a little background on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and its place in the civil rights movement.

◆ This story and the following one are different from others in *Telling Tales* because they are told by an actor speaking as a character (Junebug Jabbo Jones), rather than in the storyteller’s “own words.” Talk about this difference with your students. What are the similarities and differences between “acting” and “storytelling”?

For Discussion After Viewing

? How does the monkey punish the buzzard for what he has done? Is the punishment effective? Think of different ways you’ve been punished. How do different punishments make you react?

? How would you describe the character of the buzzard at the beginning of the story? At the end? What has the buzzard learned by the end of the story?

? The monkey in the story is an “authority figure”: He teaches the buzzard a lesson about what his proper place is. How do people learn where they “fit in”? Who are the authority figures in your life? What kinds of lessons do they teach?

? Before the monkey decided to take action, how were the other animals dealing with the problem of the buzzard? If you avoid a problem, will it go away? Can taking direct action have bad consequences? How do *you* decide how to deal with a given problem?

? Like all the animals, the buzzard needed to eat to stay alive. What was wrong with the way he chose to go about it? Was he wrong because he was being deceitful? If so, was it OK for the monkey to use deceit to teach him a lesson? Why? Are certain things (like being dishonest or killing) *always* wrong, or can they be justified by circumstances? Some

people believe it’s wrong for humans to kill animals, even for food. How do you feel about that point of view?

? This story offers an explanation for why buzzards eat things that are already dead. Can you think of other animals that “scavenge” this way? What important functions does this activity serve? What would happen if there were no scavenger animals to “clean up” after other animals have died?

THE BUZZARD AND THE MONKEY *continued*

Follow-Up Activities

✦ Read some other “why” stories involving animals. A good place to start is with Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories*. Various collections exist, and several (“Elephant’s Child,” “How the Camel Got His Hump,” “How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin”) have been published separately. Pick one to tell as a class or in small groups, with students acting out the parts.

✦ Assign short reports on animals that live primarily by scavenging (vultures, jackals, carrion beetles). How many examples can your students discover? Talk about the function of these animals in recycling nutrients through the food chain. Ask your students to compare this natural “garbage disposal” with the way humans dispose of waste. What problems does our approach to garbage cause? What are some examples of ways we can recycle or reuse things we normally would just throw away?

✦ Lead a class discussion on the civil rights movement. Most students will have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but what other important figures and events from the movement can they name? Talk about civil rights as a *current* issue. What individuals and organizations are active in this movement today? How have the issues involved changed over the last several decades?

One recent publication on this topic, designed specifically as a

classroom resource, is *Free At Last*, published by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, AL to commemorate the dedication of its Civil Rights Memorial in 1989. It is available through the Civil Rights Education Project, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36177.

✦ John uses the song “Straighten Up and Fly Right” at the end of this program to show how the

same story idea can be told or sung. Ask your students for other examples of songs that tell stories. Bring in recordings and hold a class listening/singalong session.

“Straighten Up and Fly Right” was written by Nat King Cole, who was the first black man to host a TV variety show. See what else you can find out about him from magazines and biographies. What other sources of information can you think of?



4

THE POSSUM AND THE SNAKE

told by Junebug Jabbo Jones (John O'Neal)

A possum is out for a walk when he hears a voice crying for help. When he investigates, he sees a snake down in a hole with a brick on its back. "Please take this brick off my back," the snake pleads. The possum has his doubts, but he decides to help by removing the brick.

Next the snake begs, "Please get me out of this hole." So the possum pulls the snake out of the hole. "Please let me ride in your pouch—I'm cold and I know it's warm in your pouch," says the snake. "But you'll bite me!" says the possum. "Oh, no, I won't," the snake promises. But as soon as the snake has been in the pouch long enough to warm up, he gets ready to bite the possum. "But you said you wouldn't bite me!" cries the possum. The snake replies, "That's true—but you knew I was a snake!"

The possum gets the snake to agree to arbitration, and the two animals ask the wise old bear for his opinion. By telling them that he needs to recreate the events in order to make a judgment, the bear convinces the snake to get back into the hole. Then he puts the brick back on top and walks away, leaving the snake exactly as the possum found him.

The moral of the story: Don't trouble trouble unless trouble troubles you. ■

Notes on the Story

John O'Neal reports that he still tells this story with two different endings because he hasn't figured out the best way to resolve the issues it raises. A musical version of the story, in which a woman takes a snake into her home, was recorded by Oscar Brown Jr.; you may have heard it on the radio. It ends with the "You knew I was a snake ..." statement and the snake biting his helper. The alternate ending, including the bear's intervention, is based on a version told by Atlanta-based storyteller Cynthia Watts.

THE POSSUM AND THE SNAKE *continued*

Before Viewing

◆ Discuss the statement “Don’t trouble trouble unless trouble troubles you.” Without having seen the program, how do you react to this statement? What do you think it means?

NOTE: You may want to discuss these questions again after the students have seen the program.

◆ Talk about the idea that people are the way they are “by nature.” Are some people just naturally “good” or “bad”? Can people change their natures?

◆ Play a word association game with the word “snake.” What words immediately come to mind? Talk about other stories and sayings relating to snakes or serpents. (The serpent in the Adam and Eve story, the hypnotic python in the Disney movie of *The Jungle Book*, and the expressions “snake in the grass” and “speaking with a forked tongue” are some examples.) What qualities do snakes represent in these instances? Why do snakes have such “bad press”?

For Discussion After Viewing

? Why did the possum agree to help the snake in the first place? If you were the possum, would you have helped? Why or why not?

The biblical story of the Good Samaritan teaches that you should always try to help someone in trouble, even if helping involves some cost to you. In this story, the bear seems to agree with people who say “Don’t get involved.”

Which of these points of view do you agree with? Why? How do you decide when to “get involved”? Does the decision depend on the potential for reward? On possible danger? Think of the last time you really needed someone else’s help. What happened?

? The snake excuses his bad behavior by telling the possum “You knew I was a snake,” implying that the possum has only himself to blame for being bitten. Is he right? Do bad things happen to people because they somehow “ask for it”?

? How would you describe the snake’s character? The possum’s? The bear’s?

? What function does the bear serve in the story? Is his solution just? Is it really a solution? Has the snake learned a lesson? What do you think will happen when the next passerby comes upon the snake down in the hole begging for help?

? Which of the story’s two endings do *you* like better? Why? Would you have answered that question differently immediately after watching the program?

Follow-Up Activities

- ✦ Have small groups of students play the part of the bear in the story and see what alternate courses of action they can come up with. After their ideas have been presented to the class, ask the students to think of real-world situations the story relates to (a bully demanding favors or money, terrorist threats). Discuss various ways of responding to the threat of evil. What options have people tried (avoidance, negotiation, nonviolent resistance, physical confrontation, etc.)? What have the results been?
- ✦ Have students research various real-world snakes and possums and write short reports on their habits. How do these animals' real lives compare with their popular reputations?
- ✦ Talk about how Junebug used voice characteristics and body language to "show" you the different animals in the story. Have students mime other animals and see whether their classmates can figure out which animals they're impersonating.
- ✦ Students may be interested in hearing more from or about Junebug Jabbo Jones. The Junebug Theater Project makes available various materials for staging short plays, discussions, and related activities in the classroom. For information, contact Western and Southern Arts Associates, P.O. Box 50120, Austin, TX 78763, (512) 477-1859.



GROUP STORYTELLING

by Rich Kirby and Tom Bledsoe

Background for Programs 5-6

Our traditional image of storytelling is of a single person telling the tale—granny gathered with the kids in front of the fire, the “good ole boy” down at the store, the *griot* performing for the village. But often enough, everyone present knows the story, and telling it is a sort of group ritual. Family stories are often like this: Everyone present throws in bits and pieces of the tale, and the telling itself is part of what draws the group together.

In recent years, some storytellers have expanded this sort of experience into a form called group or tandem storytelling. Anywhere from two to five or six people learn a story together and tell it as a group. Narration alternates with role-playing; and the tellers step in and out of character freely, sometimes describing the action, sometimes portraying it. Group storytelling is somewhere between traditional storytelling and acting. It relies heavily on imagination—no costumes, a minimum of props. And it can convey a story with a remarkable amount of power and energy.

Group storytelling works well in the classroom. Left to themselves, children are natural storytellers. In groups (with the proper encouragement), they can get caught up in the excitement of a story and become effective tellers, with all the advantages that follow whenever students become really involved with their education.

Telling Tales can serve as the beginning of a group storytelling project, since it presents not only stories but also examples of the technique. Following is an outline of the process as we have worked it in classrooms.

Please bear in mind that this is only an outline of a process that is sometimes rather intuitive. Each classroom has its own dynamics; feel free to change and adapt according to your own situation. The material, the process, and the amount of structure and guidance you provide can change, so long as the students are free to explore the story and express themselves with it.

1. Introduce stories and storytelling to the class.

Read, watch, or listen to the stories you want to use. Discuss them with the students. What interesting questions do the stories raise? Do the stories say anything about the students’ lives? (The material given with each story in this guide is the sort of thing to start with.)

2. Divide into groups.

Three is a good number for a group. You probably will need to get everyone involved, so larger groups may be necessary. But keep in mind that any group with more than five members gets cumbersome and needs extra energy (theirs and yours) to learn to work effectively. Try to avoid cliques while still putting together groups that will work together.

3. Select a story for each group.

Pick stories that are either known or easy to learn—perhaps some from *Telling Tales*. Good stories for group telling have several characters and a fair amount of action and movement. If at all possible, let the students pick the stories themselves; they will be a lot more enthusiastic.

4. Learn the story. Thoroughly.

Ideally, anyone in the group should be able to tell the whole story or any part of it. A useful approach is to go over the story with the class and outline it: List the characters, define the setting, summarize the scenes. When students write this information down, they will have, in effect, a “script” to work from when practicing. This script will help them learn the story in their own language, rather than trying to duplicate the book or video.

5. Assign parts.

Each tale will have a certain number of characters and a narrator. There may well be more parts than tellers, so people double up. The key here is the narrator, the person who talks to the audience in his or her own voice. The narrator keeps up the pace and rhythm of the story. This part can be shared among several tellers.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

This stage of the proceedings will closely resemble mayhem and

anarchy, especially if several groups are trying to work in one room (which is usually unavoidable). As the students learn the basic outline of the story, the focus shifts to the task of presenting it effectively. This is where characters begin to develop and the story starts to be fun. Work movement and variety into the story. Some of the exercises using voice and movement in other parts of this guide are useful. More than anything else, you will need to remind students to project their voices and actions and to slow down and take their time.

7. Help each other out.

It is hard (even for professionals) to visualize how an audience will see a presentation. It is really helpful, once the groups have their basic acts down, to get them to perform for one another, then critique the presentations. Constructive criticism from one's peers goes a long way. (It's up to you to ensure the criticism *is* constructive. It helps if everyone has a turn on stage.) If possible, videotape the presentations, or photograph them with an instant camera. It helps a lot to see what the presentation looks like.

8. Take it on the road.

When the group moves out of the classroom, the whole process really takes on excitement. Go do the stories for younger grades; they'll love it. Parents' nights, talent shows, school board meet-

ings, homes for older adults ...

A final note: Some people are just natural storytellers. Encourage solo storytelling if there's an interest.

For an account of a group storytelling project in a Kentucky classroom, see Hands On #30 (Fall 1987), page 20. Hands On is a magazine for teachers published by the Foxfire Fund, Rabun Gap, GA 30568.

5 JACK AND THE GIANTS

told by Tom Bledsoe and Rich Kirby

The storytellers begin with a song, pointing out that there are “lots of different ways to tell tales.” This song, “I Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground,” tells a story, too: a story “about wishing you’re something besides what you are.”

Today’s tale is about Jack, a poor mountain boy who lives with his mother. Jack needs a job, but the only person around with any money, the king, refuses to give him one. Jack pleads with the king, who in exasperation offers Jack a bushel of gold if he will rid the land of four giants. Jack figures any job worth that much money is too much trouble for him; but, before leaving, he takes some cold noodles and grapes from the king’s dinner for his trip home.

Jack lives south of the king’s house, but due to his poor sense of direction, he goes “south in a northerly direction” and winds up in a strange land. He climbs up a tree to get his bearings when the first giant, Baby Hugo, comes along. Because of his quick wit and foresight—to pack along the grapes, the noodles, and a mirror—Jack tricks Baby Hugo and the three giants who follow. A proud Jack returns to the king, but the king finds it impossible to believe that Jack could have gotten rid of four giants in just half a day. He sends his army out to check. Sure enough, they find no giants, forcing the king to give Jack the bushel of gold.

But that gold didn’t do Jack any good: “He spent it. He had corn flakes every morning. With bananas on ‘em.” ■

Notes on the Story

Jack has lots of adventures with giants. This version was put together from several stories that can be found in Richard Chase’s work (see “Big Jack and Little Jack” and “Jack in the Giants’ Newground” in *The Jack Tales*) and elsewhere.

Before Viewing

This story, like “Hardy Hard Head,” is a Jack tale, and much of the discussion about that tale applies here. However, there is no supernatural power in this story. Instead, it shows another side of Jack: the trickster, the ordinary person who must get by on his wits.

Stories feature several kinds of “heroes.” Perhaps the oldest and most common is the strong person who uses might and weaponry to solve his problems: Achilles, Sir Lancelot, Rambo. Jack belongs to another type: Odysseus, Huck Finn, Brer Rabbit.

Introduce your students to a hero from each group above, or use examples they are already familiar with. Compare these two kinds of heroes. What can either type teach us about solving problems?

For Discussion After Viewing

? Why do giants figure in so many old stories? Think of giants you are familiar with. Are giants always “bad”? Can you think of some “good” giants?

Examples of “good” giants are Paul Bunyan or Atlas holding up the sky. These images carry over into today’s world in the Jolly Green Giant and André the Giant. Other giants who are not “good” are the Cyclops and the Frost Giants in Norse myth. What are the differences?

? As you were listening to the story, did you expect that Jack would be able to defeat the giants? Why? Are there any clues to the kind of person Jack is early in the story, before he sets out on his adventure? Jack is neither rich nor powerful. How does he outwit the giants?

? This story is a good one to use with older students and in conjunction with a study of the Middle Ages. When Jack needed money, he had to go to the king, who was the only employer. In the social system of that time, money and cash-paying jobs were scarce. Read about and discuss the relationship between kings and their subjects under the feudal system. What were the mutual rights and responsibilities?

Jack was an ordinary person. He was under the power (in different ways) of both the king and the giants. What were the rights and responsibilities Jack

had to the king? What did the king owe Jack?

? What about the giants: What was their relationship to Jack? What did Jack owe them? They come out very badly in the story; two are killed. Would it be accurate to say they were “murdered”?

? Shakespeare wrote: “... it is excellent/to have a giant’s strength, but it is tyrannous/to use it like a giant.” Discuss what he meant.

? Many political philosophers have tried to distinguish between “rightful” and “wrongful” authority and use of power. Is there a distinction of that sort here, between the king’s power and that of the giants? Does the subject (the weaker person) have a “right of revolution” against authority that is abused? When? The Declaration of Independence recites a long list of injustices by King George to justify the revolt of the American colonies. Is Jack a real American hero?

JACK AND THE GIANTS *continued*

Follow-Up Activities

✦ Read “Big Jack and Little Jack” in the Richard Chase collection of Jack tales. Jack is the same in this story, but it involves a different king. Compare Jack’s attitude toward and relationship with the kings in the two stories.

✦ Have students take turns acting like Jack, the king, the giants. Play around with posture, tone of voice, and gestures to portray big, small, cocky, scared, angry, puzzled, and the other emotions portrayed in the story.

✦ Read the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops. A variation has been collected in Kentucky as “Jack and the One-Eyed Giant” by Leonard Roberts in *Sang Branch Settlers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).

✦ Using several Jack tales, make a character sketch of Jack. How would he handle various modern situations that might seem to require force? Would Jack have any success dealing with pollution, terrorism, and the like? What role would Jack have on a baseball or basketball team? Could we make up some new Jack tales featuring a contemporary Jack dealing with one of these contemporary problems?

✦ Try writing a new ending for this story. What else could Jack spend his money on besides corn flakes with bananas?



6 SOAP

told by Rich Kirby and Tom Bledsoe

Once a woman told her son, James Henry, to go to the store and buy some soap. Her son had a tendency to forget things, so he left repeating “soap” to himself to help him remember. Along the way, he fell into a mudhole; once out, he realized he had forgotten what he was supposed to buy. An old man came along, saw the little boy walking back and forth between the dry ground and the hole, and heard him saying: “Right there I had it. Right there I lost it.”

Wanting to help, the old man started looking and asked what they were looking for. The little boy just kept repeating to himself, leaving the old man to think the boy was just crazy. As the old man walked off, he too fell into the mudhole. Blaming the little boy for his accident, he angrily told him to say: “Sorry I done it—won’t do it again.” And this is what the little boy repeated as he walked on.

Through a series of similar misadventures, the boy continued to get himself deeper and deeper into trouble by repeating what he heard from each person he met. Finally, a woman doing her wash at the river was about to paddle the little boy when she noticed what a mess he was. “Go home,” she said, “and tell your mommy to take some soap to you.” “SOAP!” said the little boy, and off he went to buy the soap.

His mother was proud of him for remembering. But she could also see and smell how dirty he was. She put him in the washtub, soaped him up, rinsed him, and hung him up to dry—clothes and all. ■

Notes on the Story

This tale is taken from *Grandfather Tales* by Richard Chase (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948). A similar story is “The Arrant Fool” in *Russian Fairy Tales* by Aleksandr Afanas’ev.

SOAP *continued*

Before Viewing

◆ Everyone has had the experience of being misunderstood, though maybe not as much as James Henry in this tale. Talk with your students about misunderstandings you and they have suffered. Were any of them funny? Annoying? Unfortunate? How do we handle them?

◆ Another universal experience is that of being a child in a world of big, powerful grownups. Talk about the feelings arising from that situation.

For Discussion After Viewing

? A “folk” tale, by definition, is a story that has been handed along from one person to another. The fact that it exists at all is evidence that whoever told it thought there was something worthwhile there, as did the person the storyteller learned from, and the person who taught that person, etc. Discuss the process of stories getting passed along. What are some examples of stories in circulation in your school or community? Can you tell which ones might be older than others?

(Note: It may take repeated asking, but you should be able to elicit quite a lot of examples. Early childhood is a great repository of real folktales, not all of them benign.)

? What happens to a story if people decide it isn’t worthwhile? What was the “something worthwhile” that caused “Soap” to be learned, remembered, and passed on?

? Some stories set out to try to teach us something (for example, Aesop’s fable about the boy who cried “Wolf”). Others seem to be intended just to enjoy. Should we dig around in the latter kind of story for some sort of “lesson”?

? Is “Soap” about the importance of a good memory or about the relationship between kids and grownups?

? What are some tricks to im-

prove memory? Think about rhymes (“30 days hath September ...”) and memory devices (“Every Good Boy Does Fine”).

? How does James Henry compare with Jack? How do the grownups in this story compare with the grownups in the story with the giants?

Follow-Up Activities

✦ Play with the way things get changed through repetition. Make a circle and whisper to the first person a saying, a simple story, or a tongue twister. Have him/her whisper it to the next person, and so on around the circle. When it gets back to the beginning, compare the end product with the original.

✦ Each episode in the story is described “frontward”—that is, we hear of a situation, then James

Henry comes in saying exactly the wrong thing. Ask students to improvise some episodes by thinking “backward”: Give James Henry something to say, then make up a situation where saying it would get him into trouble.

✦ An extremely old way of telling a story involves making a picture in which each episode happens in sequence. Draw James Henry’s journey and show all the things that happen to him.

✦ Pick a story to read aloud. Then assign parts for students to learn that will allow them to practice different voices and styles of movement. When they have practiced, read the story again and have them join in on the parts they have learned.

Two stories that work well for this exercise are *Three Billy Goats Gruff* by P.C. Asbjornsen (Harcourt, 1957) and *Wolf and the Seven Kids* from the Brothers Grimm (Troll, 1979).



6 CAT AND RAT

told by Rich Kirby and Tom Bledsoe

The cat and the rat were playing mumblety-peg one day, and the cat was losing. Now the cat didn't like to lose, so when the rat wasn't looking, he cut the rat's long tail off. He refused to give the tail back unless the rat would go to the cow and get the cat some milk. The cow said she would give the rat some milk—if he would go to the barn and get the cow some hay. The barn, in turn, sent the rat off on another errand.

This continued for quite some time, with the rat scurrying from one place to the next, until finally he arrived at the farmer's door. The farmer was so astonished to hear a rat asking for a key that he handed it over. The rat retraced his steps, giving everyone what he or she had asked for. When at last he gave the milk to the cat, the cat gave him his long tail back. "Rat wiggled it on and away he went." ■

Notes on the Story

This version was collected by Leonard Roberts from storyteller Dave Couch in Leslie County, Kentucky in 1952. Roberts published the story in *Sang Branch Settlers*. Roadside Theater recorded the story on its record *Mountain Tales* (June Appal Recordings, JA0036).

Before Viewing

◆ Cumulative tales and songs (ones that get longer with each verse or episode) have been popular for ages. It might be fun to “warm up” by singing “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” “There’s a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea,” or “The House that Jack Built.”

◆ This story is about finding ways to get what you need. Talk about various ways people (both children and grownups) fill their needs—by force and otherwise.

For Discussion After Viewing

? Animal stories are relatively scarce in white American tradition but quite common in the African-American tradition. “The Buzzard and the Monkey” and “The Possum and the Snake” are African-American animal tales. Compare the animals in them with the animals in “Cat and Rat.”

? A curious thing about “Cat and Rat” is that the two animals are not mortal enemies. (Compare “Cat and Mouse Keep House” in Grimm, an unrelated story in which the cat ends by eating the mouse.) How would you describe the relationship between the cat and the rat in this story? How would you compare it with the relationship of Tom and Jerry?

? Find Leslie County, Kentucky on a map. How did white settlers get there? When and why? The area is close to Cumberland Gap and the Wilderness Road. What parts did Daniel Boone and the Road play in the settlement of Kentucky? Why would an area so close to the main road in the 18th century become so isolated later?

? By story’s end, the rat has invented a complicated economy, based (like all early economies) on barter. How is everyone in the story better off after trading?

? Discuss trades people make today. What difference does it make that we use money? That we seldom see the people who make the things we use?

Follow-Up Activities

+ Have students use improvisation and the story as a framework to develop their own memory game. One person can be the “rat” and ask others what they want and from where. For example, the cat might tell the rat to go to the library for a book. The library (another student) might then ask for a pop from the store ... and so on until the rat loses track.

+ Almost every folktale has an internal rhythm. This one has a very obvious rhythmic pattern, using a chant. Find examples of rhymes, chants, and songs that help us remember things. Talk about why rhythm and repetition make remembering easier.

+ Read the story as given in *Sang Branch Settlers*. Look at the ways Tom and Rich have “expanded” the story by slowing it down and adding personality traits to the characters. Students might try this with other stories, either in writing or orally. (In “Goldilocks,” for example, develop separate personalities for each of the three bears.)

+ Try acting out this story. In addition to fitting well with the group storytelling technique described in Rich and Tom’s introduction, this story could be played out with puppets.

+ Ask students to write a story or draw a picture describing what they imagine it looked and felt

CAT AND RAT *continued*

Follow-Up Activities *continued*

like when Dave Couch told this story to his children. If anyone in their families tells stories, ask them to write or draw these family scenes.

✦ Draw a map showing trades that are made between parts of the U.S. (for example, Kentucky tobacco for Iowa corn) and between different countries. Why does it seem to be better to trade than to try to make everything we need here?

For Further Study

Sang Branch Settlers by Leonard Roberts is a unique book, giving an in-depth picture of the traditions of a family living in a time and place where stories and songs were a vital part of everyday life. It provides a remarkable chance to look at “Cat and Rat” in the total original context.

A similar work on record is *The Hammons Family: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions*, Library of Congress L 65-66. This two-record set and the accompanying book detail a large number of songs and stories from a family that was blessed with a large stock of them.

AMERICAN INDIAN STORYTELLING

by Marilou Awiakta

Background for Programs 7-8

In the novel *Ceremony* by American Indian writer Leslie Marmon Silko, the Storyteller says about stories:

There is life here
for the people ...
And in the belly of this story
the rituals and the ceremony
are still growing.

He speaks a truth and a caution.

A story spoken aloud *is* alive in a special way. Like its counterparts in other cultures, the traditional American Indian story entertains, instructs, and empowers. It teaches people how to live in harmony with one another and with their environment. It contains situations and characters with traits that are universal and constant from generation to generation. The story can be adapted to changing times without altering its basic truth. Passed through the oral tradition, it preserves the continuity of the culture and helps the people survive.

But the American Indian story has an additional, crucial dimension: It is sacred. It has a spirit that is active and responsive, because within the story, "the rituals and the ceremony are still growing." To tell the story without respecting its spirit will bring repercussions on the storyteller and perhaps on the listeners as well. Most Indian storytellers give this caution; but in a society geared to technology, it often goes unheeded.

When someone asks me, "Will you tell my group an Indian

story?" I always say, "I appreciate your interest. But I also have to tell about the tribe it comes from, about their culture ... how, when, and why the story is told ... what it means to the people."

"We don't want all that. We just want the story." If the inviter responds this way and will not accept an explicit caution, I do not tell the story. Neither does any other conscientious storyteller, Indian or non-Indian. The story is a strand from a people's way of life. It must not be removed from that context, either orally or in print.

And so, if you wish to tell an Indian story, learn the authentic version and context from the tribal elder who tells it. Talk with the elder yourself and ask permission to use the story. Or, if you are using an anthology, make sure the author or editor has done so. This information should be provided in the introduction and/or the text.

Told respectfully, the stories do "entertain, instruct, and empower" in traditional ways. They also help erase the "drums and feathers" stereotypes of American Indians by reflecting the diversities of the tribes (there are more than 350 in this country) and by revealing what the tribes have in common—qualities such as love of family, respect for the elders, a sense of humor. At the root of Indian culture and Indian stories is the belief that the Creator made all beings in the universe "relatives"—members of one family.

The principles of reciprocity and right relation to the Earth sustain the Sacred Circle of Life.

American Indians have not "vanished"—despite wars, forced removals to reservations, suppression of language and culture, separation of families, racial discrimination, and despair. These powers of destruction have been mighty; but as the Storyteller in *Ceremony* says, "They can't stand up to our stories."

Recently, my work in the Memphis Arts Council's Arts-in-the-Schools program took me to a kindergarten. The teacher said: "Yesterday I asked the class, 'If you had one wish, what would it be?' One boy said, 'I don't want to die.' Even little children know the Earth is in trouble. Society is in trouble. The problems are right in the children's own neighborhoods."

So are the stories. Although they are as varied in ethnic origin as Americans themselves, the stories share the power of wisdom and hope. If we take the time to *tell* them, they are "life for the people."

7 LITTLE DEER AND MOTHER EARTH

told by Marilou Awiakta

The delicate balance between Mother Earth and Father Sky is being threatened by some of Earth's creatures. Humans are killing too many of their animal relatives, taking more than they need and threatening some of the animals with extinction.

The animals decide to take defensive action. The bears trim their nails in order to be able to use bows and arrows, but soon discover that they can no longer climb trees to get honey. So the plan is abandoned.

Then Little Deer comes up with another idea: The animals will talk to the humans and lay down the law. From now on, humans can kill animals only after they have asked permission from the animals and from Mother Earth, and they must eat all they kill and never take more than they need. Then they must thank the animal and Mother Earth. ■

Notes on the Story

Maintaining a right relationship with Mother Earth is at the root of Native American cultures and stories. One principle of that relationship is "Take only what you need, with respect and gratitude." Marilou's story tells how *Awi Usdi* (or "Little Deer"), a Cherokee spirit of respect, circles through time to teach this principle. It also shows the way a traditional story weaves into the lives of the people who created it.

The story of Little Deer and Mother Earth first appeared in a traditional Cherokee version. The earliest version in English is in *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* by James Mooney (pp. 250-51, 263-64). Mooney, an ethnologist from the Smithsonian Institution, was told the story in 1887 by Swimmer, a shaman* of the Eastern Cherokee

* A *shaman* is a tribal holy man. He is the repository of the tribe's collected wisdom, the keeper of its stories and songs, and he uses the magic they contain to conduct the rituals that preserve the well-being of the tribe and its individual members. In Western terms, he would be both "priest" and "doctor"—but traditional Native American cultures do not regard the spiritual and physical aspects of life as separate "specialties." Rather, physical or societal problems such as illness or crime are seen as manifestations of underlying spiritual disharmony. To cure the one, you must address the other.

in North Carolina. Swimmer also wrote down the story in Cherokee. (Mooney's book is now published in paperback by C. Elder of Nashville.) A source with a more complete text is *Keepers of the Earth* by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac (Fulcrum, Inc., 1988).

Awi Usdi next takes a contemporary form in Marilou's poem "The Coming of Little Deer" from her book *Abiding Appalachia: Where Mountain and Atom Meet* (Memphis: St. Luke's Press, 1978).

In the program, the storyteller brings Little Deer into the Atomic Age. Little Deer is a protector spirit, watching over the powerful force of nuclear energy to make sure it is used for good purposes and not harmful ones. Marilou's necklace, her own design, shows Little Deer leaping in the center of an atom, as alive in the high-tech world as he was in the Cherokee's deer-hunting past. It symbolizes her belief that if we have reverence for all that exists—the Creator, Mother Earth, and humanity—we can create a new

harmony for our environment and our people.

The poem used in the program is entitled "When Earth Becomes an 'It.'" Marilou wrote it for an address of the same name to the Governors' Interstate Indian Council in August 1988. (The poem is included in her new book, *Selu: Spirit of Survival*, Tradery House/Wimmer Co., 1991.)

When Earth Becomes an "It"

When the people call Earth
"Mother,"
they take with love
and with love give back
so that all may live.

When the people call Earth "it,"
they use her
consume her strength.
Then the people die.

Already the sun is hot
out of season.
Our mother's breast
is going dry.
She is taking all green
into her heart
and will not turn back
until we call her
by her name.

Before Viewing

◆ The idea of Little Deer as a living presence provides an excellent opportunity to dispel the myth that American Indians have "vanished." Little Deer is 2,500 years old, as old as the Cherokee themselves. They still tell his story, both in the Eastern Band in North Carolina, which has about 9,000 members, and in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, which numbers more than 100,000. The Cherokee tribe, in fact, is the second largest tribe in America.

Find Cherokee, NC on a map. This is the area of the Qualla Boundary, where the Eastern Band lives. Next, find Tahlequah, OK (near Tulsa). It is the capital of the Cherokee Nation there, which has a service area of 14 counties. Compare these two sites with the original Nation, which reached into eight Southern states (James Mooney's book has a map on page 23). Discuss the forced removal of the Cherokee—the Trail of Tears—in 1838, which divided the Nation. Talk about this question: How did the stories help the people survive?

◆ At the top of a chalkboard, write, "Take only what you need, with respect and gratitude." Also write the old Appalachian saying, "What goes around, comes around." Under these sentences, draw a large circle. Within it, draw a web. Ask the students whether they have ever touched a spider web. When you touch one strand, do the others move? If you

LITTLE DEER *continued*

Before Viewing *continued*

break one strand, what happens to the web? (It sags.)

Around the web, draw simple symbols—cloud, tree, plant, animal, water, fish, bird, humans (male and female). Discuss the American Indian belief that all things in the universe are connected in a Web of Life, a Sacred Circle; that we are all family, “relatives.”

This chalkboard drawing can be used throughout the study of this story and the “Rising Fawn” story.

◆ To illustrate the truth of the two sentences you’ve written on the board, discuss the destruction of the Amazon rain forest in relation to the idea of “taking more than we need.” How is the process affecting the sky (the ozone layer), the plants and animals, and humans? Discuss the meaning of “What goes around, comes around.”

◆ In the center of the circle, write the word “stories.” Talk about the function of stories in traditional Native American cultures. These stories teach how to live in a right relationship with the Web of Life. They entertain, instruct, and empower all at once. They are not subdivided, as Western oral stories are, into legends, myths, or folktales; nor are they strictly parables or fables designed to teach specific morals.

◆ Another important concept for

students to understand is the traditional American Indian attitude toward animals. Stories like “Little Deer and Mother Earth” are not “animal stories,” where animals speak like people or somehow symbolize people. Rather, the animals themselves are seen as “family,” relatives who are equal partners with humans on Earth. They speak for themselves about the wisdom of respect and cooperation, and their points of view must be taken into account by humans.

For Discussion After Viewing

? Look at the circle and Web of Life on the chalkboard. For centuries, the Cherokee depended on deer as a primary food. What ceremony and ritual did the hunters carry out to show respect and gratitude to the deer they killed? What happened when they were disrespectful? If the hunters took more deer than they needed, what would happen to the deer herds? To the people’s food supply?

? Name some animals and birds that are extinct or endangered. What happened to them?

? What problems has nuclear energy brought us? If radioactive or other toxic waste is not properly disposed of, what can happen? How do the poisons released travel around the Web of Life? What do they do to our “relatives”—Mother Earth, plants, animals, and so on? To us humans?

? On Earth Day 1990—a Sunday—Bette Midler portrayed Mother Earth on television and said, “You say you love me on Sunday. But what will you do on Monday?” What signs have you heard about that tell you Mother Earth is sick? Talk about the signs mentioned in the poem on the program: “She is too hot” (the greenhouse effect) and “Her breast is going dry” (desertification, draining of wetlands).

How would Little Deer explain