

Storytelling Options

1. Acting out scenes

Some stories, e.g. 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' lend themselves to being acted out by the children. Costumes and props may also be used, especially if the story is being acted out for parents or an event.

N.B. We never act out any of the central figures of the Faith, including 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

2. Puppet show

A puppet show is a variation of acting out the play, and may be used periodically.

Puppets may include:

- a) fingers with faces drawn on them
- b) finger puppets made of paper or cloth
- c) figures drawn or printed on card and stuck to (large) ice block sticks
- d) hand puppets or random dolls and soft toys
- e) marionettes
- f) shadow puppets

3. Cartooning / banner scenes

- a) Children can individually draw a comic strip to show the scenes in the story
- b) Children can collaborate to draw the story, choosing a scene each, which can then be glued into a class book.
- c) With a long strip of paper divided into sections, the children can collaborate to draw/paint the scenes of the story. This could be used to help retell the story.
- d) The children could instead decide to paint one particular scene in the story together.

4. Reader's theatre

Instead of acting out the story as a play, it can be rewritten to suit a narrator/s and dialogues, so that different children read out different people's roles in the story.

5. Audience participation

The children can all participate in particular parts of a story – e.g. by calling out repeated words, e.g. "Wolf! Wolf!", or by making noises, gestures or facial expressions together when prompted by the teacher.

6. Illustrated stories

You might choose to use the illustrated stories available online to help tell some of the stories. However, very often a simple visual of a historical place or person lends sufficient impact to a story while preserving its dignity.

One variation is to laminate and cut out the pictures and get the children to rearrange the pictures in order to retell the story (in pairs or as a whole group).

We would naturally avoid reading the stories, or allowing the children to just read the stories, rather than narrating them.

7. Questions to the children

- a) During the 1st telling of the story, you might ask the children prediction questions such as:

“What do you think happened next?”

“How do you think he felt?”

“What do you think she said?”

Or clarification and concept-checking questions such as:

“Why did he do that?”

“What do people usually do in that situation?”

“Was He pleased with their actions?”

“How do we know this?”

- b) During subsequent tellings, you might ask questions like:

“Do you remember what happened next?”

“What did he do then?”

“Can you remember what she gave him?”

- c) The children might be able to make their own questions to ask each other about the story.

8. Story tag

- a) After telling the story one or twice, you can get the children to help tell the story in sections. You can tell the first part, then 'tag' one of the children, who then tells another bit and then 'tags' another child who continues, etc.
- b) Another option is to use a story stick / ball / book etc. to hand over the storytelling to the next person.
- c) The individual pictures from the illustrated stories can be given to each child, and they must tell the part they are holding the picture for.

9. Movie / AV presentation

- a) A variation on acting out the story is to turn it into a short video to present at a special event. Children can participate in different ways as well as acting (e.g. director, camera person, narrator, backdrop painter, etc.)
- b) Another option is to make a AV presentation using clip art and voice overs / typed dialogue (e.g. using Powerpoint or Movie maker)

10. Slide Show Scenes

- This technique can be used to illustrate stories about the Faith with some members of the group as narrators and others as actors/statues.
- One person or a team narrates the story.
- The other team must act as the slide show or visuals for the presentation.
- For each part of the narration, the slide show team must demonstrate the scene – either as a frozen scene or as a mime.