
THREE BY THE SEA

Author: Edward Marshall

Illustrator: James Marshall

Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers

THEME:

Telling a story or listening to one can unlock the imagination. One learns that a story with the same characters can be told in many different ways.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

While laying on the beach, Lolly, Spider, and Sam agreed it was the perfect time for each of them to tell their very own stories. LeVar learns that telling a story or listening to one can unlock the imagination as he watches Chicago City Limits, an improvisational performance group. Kids tell their own stories in the books they make. While walking on the beach, LeVar explores the history and adventure of sea chanteys and talks with winners of a sand sculpture contest.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Discuss with the students why Sam and Spider didn't like Lolly's story. What makes a good story?

Explain the oral tradition of storytelling to the students. Discuss how stories exist in different versions across cultures and even within the same culture because the storyteller may interpret it differently. Ask students to name some different versions of the same story. (They will likely be able to identify several folktales that exist in different versions.)

Making up a story requires imagination. Ask students how they use *their* imaginations.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Bring in some postcards or travel brochures that show a beach or shoreline. Discuss different types of things that are shown in the picture. Give students 4 x 6-inch index cards that are lined on one side. Have them illustrate the blank side with a seashore picture. On the lined side, have them write a postcard "home" telling about their trip to the beach. Bind the postcards with a plastic spiral and title the collection, "Our Seashore Vacations."

Obtain a collection of seashells. (Students might bring some shells. Keep borrowed shells together so they can be delivered to the correct owner at the end of the activity.) Have students classify shells according to type, color, size, pattern, etc. They will think of other attributes by which to sort them. Encourage them to explain the reasoning behind their classification schemes. Students might also arrange the shells in size order in the different groups.

From the shell collection, select a few that are very nearly the same size to use as an alternative unit of measurement. Pose questions, such as "How long is a desk in shells?" and "How tall are you in shells?" Have students estimate the number of shells needed before they actually conduct the measurements.

Have students make a sand castle or sand creature. The following mixture works well for classroom use:

6 cups sand
1 cup wheat paste
water

Mix the wheat paste and sand and add water until the sand has a clay-like consistency. It should be sticky and pack firmly into shapes. More sand and water may be added as needed, but the wetter the sand, the longer it will take to dry. Use materials such as paper cups, tin cans, margarine or yogurt containers, school lunch milk cartons, film canisters, and items such as sticks, toothpicks, flags, drinking straws, and crafts sticks to form and decorate the castles and creatures. Display the sand creations where others in the school can see them.

Divide the class into small groups to do a variety of improvisational activities. Possible activities include: 1) give each group an object, such as a feather, an unusual hat, an old shoe, an umbrella, etc., and have them do a skit involving the object; 2) give each group three characters and a setting and have them create a story to act out; or 3) give each group a list of words (e.g., cloud, egg, pumpkin, scissors, princess, river, and owl) to build a story around. There are many possibilities for improvisations—students will think of their own ideas, as well.

Invite a local storyteller to the classroom to tell some stories and talk with students about the art of storytelling.

Have students visualize a place they have been and know well. Invite them to write a description of that place for someone who has never been there.

As a class, brainstorm a list of types of stories. For example, students might mention mysteries, funny stories, scary stories, biographies, stories that could really happen, make believe stories, folktales, etc. Make several large book cutouts to place on the wall and put one of the story types named by the students on each cutout. As you read stories to the class or as they read books together, decide which type of story it is and write the title on the appropriate cutout. Check the cutouts from time to time to see which types of stories you read most frequently, which stories fit more than one type, and which types you still need to read. For the cutouts that have few titles listed, have students find books for you to read.

RELATED THEMES:

seashore plants and animals
making books

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #88 — Seashore Surprises
Program #17 — Simon's Book
Program #127 — Hip Cat

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR:

Edward was James Marshall's middle name. He published several books under the name of "Edward," including *Space Case*, a **Reading Rainbow** feature book. A native of San Antonio, James Marshall studied music before he turned to art. Best known for such characters as George and Martha, Viola Swamp, and the Stupids, his cartoon style of art is immediately recognizable by children. Several of James Marshall's books have been featured on **Reading Rainbow**, including *Space Case*, *Miss Nelson Is Back*, *Fox on the Job*, *The Piggy in the Puddle*, and *Nosey Mrs. Rat*.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

FROG AND TOAD TOGETHER
by Arnold Lobel (HarperCollins)

COME AWAY FROM THE WATER, SHIRLEY
by John Burningham (Crowell)

REGARDS TO THE MAN IN THE MOON
by Ezra Jack Keats (Four Winds)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

WHERE DOES THE TRAIL LEAD?
by Burton Albert, illus. by Brian Pinkney (Simon & Schuster)

A BEACH DAY
by Douglas Florian (Greenwillow)

MY STORIES BY HILDY CALPURNIA ROSE
by Dale Gottlieb (Knopf)

GRAMMA'S WALK
by Anna Grossnickle Hines (Greenwillow)

TELL MY A STORY, MAMA
by Angela Johnson, illus. by David Soman (Orchard)

FOUR ON THE SHORE
by Edward Marshall, illus. by James Marshall (Dial)

THE CASTLE BUILDER
by Dennis Nolan (Macmillan)

ON THE EDGE OF THE SEA
by Betty Paraskevas, illus. by Michael Paraskevas (Dial)

SUN SAND SEA SAIL
by Nicki Weiss (Greenwillow)

CHERRIES AND CHERRY PITS
by Vera B. Williams (Greenwillow)

THE SEASHORE BOOK
by Charlotte Zolotow, illus. by Wendell Minor (HarperCollins)



