

Creative Storytelling with Household Props

Tips, suggestions and examples for engaging children and families in sessions, with things found around the house.

Story bag, basket or box

- Find a bag or box and fill it with clues or props to do with the story you're reading. The objects/clues you pull out will need to be prepped before the reading session begins. You could pull out different objects as you read along, or show them certain story clues/objects to prompt the child about key moments or characters in the book. This is a fun and engaging way to emphasise what is being read and allow for children's imaginations to take them and you places
- Having a story bag is another way to test children's understanding of the story, by asking them questions once you've finished reading. If you were reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, for example, you could pull out an apple (something he eats) and an onion (which he doesn't eat) and ask the child/children, "Which one of these do you remember the very hungry caterpillar eating up?" Asking questions using props can seem less academic and a lot more fun!

Sock puppets/finger puppets

- Using household items like washing up gloves, gardening gloves, mittens, socks and winter gloves to make puppets can be a really lovely way to engage little ones when reading. You can craft the puppets into characters from the story you're reading, have characters stuck onto fingers of the glove, create characters yourself to talk to the children whilst you read the story together, or have the puppets be reading the story separate from yourself.



Making masks

- Masks can be created to show characters from stories in the same way as sock puppets. You can use the mask in front of your face to read as a character from the book, to provide humour in the session, or to illustrate the setting or parts of the story
- Mask can be made from cardboard, paper, or paper plates stuck to icy-pole (ice lolly) sticks

Characters on household items

- Faces or characters can be painted on wooden spoons and pegs
- For younger children, you can use faces drawn onto wooden spoons (for example) to talk about emotions expressed in the story, or ask the children questions about how the story makes them feel



Story stones

- Story stones are a fantastic way to get children's imagination and creativity fired up. Usually, they're used in person, but they can also be used in online reading sessions too. They can be as intricately or simply designed as you like! Whilst not necessarily a 'household' item, if you are willing to go the extra mile and create these, they are a really nice addition to the session
- You can use any flat stone you wish, and have images from the story on the stone. This can be achieved by paint or marker pen to draw on the stone, or you can create other images using stickers or magazine cut-outs.
- The stones can be also put into the story bag, and used in a similar way with the other objects you pull out: using a stone to ask questions about the story; showing a stone to the camera to pre-empt a plot point; asking a question to do with the story and showing the stone as an answer



Soft toys and figurines

- If you have any soft toys or figurines in your house, these are great little props to add to the story, especially with smaller children. They can be used to read out parts of the story and to keep little children engaged with the screen (as we know how easy it is for little ones to be distracted during zoom calls).

We hope these ideas have fired up your imagination – if you use any of the above, or come up with any other ideas and props, we'd love to hear about it, and maybe have a picture, too!