

Parenting Tip of the Month

October



Lower Elementary Teachers

Top 10 Benefits Of Storytelling For Kids:



Here are the top 10 benefits of storytelling for kids that you simply can't afford to miss out as a parent:

1. Instills Virtues In Your Child:

Children all over the world love listening to stories. They want to know more about their favorite characters and often try to emulate them. By telling your child stories that come with a meaningful message, you can definitely inculcate qualities like wisdom, courage, honesty, etc. from an early age into your little one.

2. Makes Them Aware Of Their Own Culture And Roots:

Telling your children stories from your childhood and about various activities and celebrations from your past will make them more familiar about the different customs and traditions prevalent in your family. Sharing stories about various family members will help them learn about their lineage better.

3. Enhances Verbal Proficiency:

Reading out stories to your children helps in making them acquainted with the language as well as in learning new words and phrases. This is also a great way to teach your child new words and pronunciation on a regular basis.

4. Improves Listening Skills:

Most children usually have a lesser attention span and find it difficult to concentrate on something thing for long. Also, they end up talking more, rather than listening. Storytelling for kids ensures that they are not only more attentive, but are also keen to listen and understand.

5. Encourages Creativity And Imagination Power:

Listening to a story helps a child imagine the characters, places, plot etc. instead of seeing it on a visual medium. This also enhances creativity, making them more imaginative and open to ideas and free thinking.

6. A Great Tool For Sharpening Memory:

By using certain smart ideas, you can use storytelling to help increase your child's memory. Once you have read out the story, you can ask him to repeat the same after a few days. Alternatively, you can ask him to describe the story up till the present. This is a fun way to increase his memory and encourage concentration.

7. Broadens Horizon:

Young children may not always be exposed to the different cultures and countries of the world. Through the medium of storytelling, you can make him familiar about the various places and cultures across the world. Try and include stories from different countries and cultures to give your child a broader understanding of the world.

8. Makes Academic Learning Easier:

Storytelling for children is a stepping stone for academic learning. Many children have the habit of learning by rote, without understanding the subject. Storytelling, as a regular activity, can help children to enjoy and better understand what they are reading. This helps them in learning their subjects better. Sometimes, teaching school subjects as an interesting story (example, a boring history lesson can be turned into an interesting historical story) can help them understand better and fuel curiosity.

9. Better Communication:

Sometimes, children are hesitant to ask a question, even though their mind is filled with curiosity. Storytelling helps children in learning the art of asking the right question. It also tells them how to strike a perfect conversation and makes them more confident. Regular reading and listening can make them better orators too.

10. Helps To Face Difficult Situations With Ease:

Difficult situations can often end up leaving children feeling confused. Stories about various characters facing difficult situations can help them understand this concept better. Try and tell stories that teach children that pain and suffering are a part of life as much as happiness and fun times are. The right stories can help your child become well-equipped to face life and various situations.

Material of the Month

October



Lower Elementary Teachers

The Five Great Lessons of the Elementary Curriculum

The Great Lessons are an important and unique part of the Montessori curriculum. These lessons are bold, exciting, and are designed to awaken a child's imagination and curiosity. The child should be struck with the wonder of creation, thrilled with new ideas, and awed by the inventiveness and innovation that is part of the human spirit.

The Five Great Lessons are traditionally presented in lower elementary (grades 1-3), and are presented every year so that children see them more than one time. Unlike the 3-6 environment, where the child is introduced first to "small" ideas that gradually widen into larger concepts, the elementary child is introduced right away to large concepts - the largest of all being the beginning of the universe. Then they can be shown how all the smaller ideas fit into the larger framework.

Traditionally, there are Five Great Lessons that are used to paint a broad picture before moving to more specific study. They consist of:

- First Great Lesson - Coming of the Universe and the Earth
- Second Great Lesson - Coming of Life
- Third Great Lesson - Coming of Human Beings
- Fourth Great Lesson - Communication in Signs
- Fifth Great Lesson - The Story of Numbers

First Great Lesson - Coming of the Universe and the Earth

The First Great Lesson is the most memorable and is often done on the very first day of school. It involves the use of a balloon and gold stars to tell the story of the beginning of the universe. This lesson also includes some demonstrations using solids and liquids to show how the continents and oceans first came together.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Astronomy: solar system, stars, galaxies, comets, constellations
- Meteorology: wind, currents, weather, fronts, erosion, water cycle, clouds, glaciers
- Chemistry: states of matter, changes, mixtures, reactions, elements, atoms, periodic table, compounds, molecules, chemical formulas, equations, lab work, experimentation
- Physics: magnetism, electricity, gravity, energy, light, sound, heat, friction, motion, experimentation
- Geology: types of rocks, minerals, land forms, volcanoes, earthquakes, plate tectonics, ice ages, eras of the earth
- Geography: maps, globes, latitude/longitude, climates, land/water form names, continent and country research

Maria Montessori was devoutly religious, and brought many of her beliefs into the Great Lessons. These lessons came about back when religious beliefs were an accepted, natural part of everyday life (including schools).



Things are different today, and if you are teaching at a school, you'll probably want to stick to a factual account of the beginning of the universe (see the end of this post for some resources); if you're at home, you can feel free to tailor the lesson to your own family's religious beliefs. The story is inspirational to children no matter which version they hear.

The Second Great Lesson: Coming of Life

The Second Great Lesson involves the coming of life. This lesson revolves around the Timeline of Life, a long chart with pictures and information about microorganisms, plants, and animals that have lived (or now live) on the earth. The great diversity of life is emphasized, and special care is paid to the "jobs" that each living thing does to contribute to life on earth.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Biology: cells, organized groups, five kingdoms, specimens, dissection, observation, use of microscope
- Botany: study of plants, classification, functions, parts of plants (seed, fruit, leaf, stem, root, flower), types of plants
- Habitats: location, characteristics, food chains/webs, symbiosis, adaptation, ecosystems, conservation
- Ancient Life: eras of the earth, evolution, extinction, fossil records, excavation
- Animals: classification, needs, similarities/differences, human systems, nutrition, hygiene
- Monera, Protista, and Fungi Kingdoms: what they are, classification, observation

The Third Great Lesson: Coming of Human Beings

The next Great Lesson is the Coming of Human Beings. This lesson involves a timeline with a tool and a human hand to talk about the three gifts that make humans special: a mind to imagine, a hand to do work, and a heart that can love.

This lesson will lead children to study the beginning of civilizations and the needs of early humans.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- History: timelines, prehistory, ancient civilizations, world history, history of specific countries and continents
- Culture: art, artists, music, composers, dance, drama, architecture, design, philosophy, religion, grace and courtesy
- Social Studies: current events, government, economics, commerce, volunteering & charity
- Discovery & Invention: scientists, inventors, scientific method, inventions, simple machines

The Fourth Great Lesson: The Story of Writing

The Fourth Great Lesson is the Story of Writing, sometimes called Communication in Signs. In this lesson, the story of the development of the written alphabet is told, with an emphasis on the incredible ability that humans have of committing their thoughts to paper. Included in the story are pictographs, symbols, hieroglyphs, early alphabets, and the invention of the printing press.



This lesson leads to the study of:

- Reading: literature, poetry, non-fiction, myths and folk tales, authors, reading comprehension, reading analysis, literary terms
- Writing: elements of style, function, voice, composition, letter writing, research, study skills
- Language: origins of spoken language, foreign languages, history of languages, speech, drama
- Structure: alphabets, bookmaking, grammar, punctuation, sentence analysis, word study, figures of speech

The Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers

The last of the lessons is the Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers, also called the History of Mathematics. This lesson begins with the earliest civilizations, who often only had "one", "two", and "more than two" as their numeric system. It continues with a look at different numbering systems throughout the centuries, culminating in the decimal system that we use today.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Mathematics: operations, fractions, decimals, multiples, squares, cubes, percentages, ratio, probability, intro to algebra
- Numbers: origins of numbers and systems, bases, types of numbers, scientific notation, mathematicians
- Geometry: congruency, similarity, nomenclature of lines, angles, shapes, solids, measurement, theorems
- Application: story problems, measurement, estimation, graphs, patterning, rounding, money concepts

The Great Lessons as a Unifying Theme

Clearly, these five stories encompass an enormous amount of information about the origins of the world around us. When each story is shared, it should never be left alone - there should always be further study open to the children so that the story becomes the springboard but not the focus. The stories can be referred to throughout the year when new topics are introduced, as a way of providing unity and cohesion to such a wide variety of studies.