



Long Activity
Ages 6–12
15–45 minutes

Storytelling Basket

Description

Draw words at random from a basket and incorporate them into oral storytelling

Number of Participants

For any number of participants

Space Considerations

An indoor or outdoor space where all participants are able to hear the storyteller

Competencies

- Creative and imaginative thinking
- Emotional expression
- Oral communication skills
- Organization and planning

Materials

- Basket (preferred) or any small container
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Preparation

- Cut paper into smaller pieces for distribution

Implementation

The following activity has been adapted from the book *Storyteller Skye: Teachings From My Ojibway Grandfather*:

1. Distribute several strips of paper to participants
2. On each piece of paper, participants can write a word or phrase. The words can be anything that might inspire a story, such as “bear,” “sun,” and

“canoe.” Similarly, phrases can be things like “walking in the woods” or “finding a bird’s nest” – anything that might stimulate a story

3. Collect the strips of paper, fold them in half and place them in the storytelling basket
4. Participants who wish to volunteer to tell a story would begin by drawing a strip from the basket and then reading the word or phrase aloud. If desired, staff can volunteer to be the first storyteller to serve as an example
5. Participants would use the word or phrase to inspire any story that comes to them. If desired, participants can select multiple strips from the basket and attempt to come up with a story that incorporates all of the words they draw
6. If the storyteller needs assistance, staff or other participants can guide them with questions. For example:
 - a. What does your character see or hear around them?
 - b. Who else is there?
 - c. What does the place look like?
 - d. Where is your character going next?

Accessibility Considerations

- Some participants may prefer to listen. Don’t make storytelling mandatory. Allow participants to volunteer to tell a story.
- Staff or another participant can read the words or phrases pulled from the basket if needed. Similarly, participants can dictate to staff or other participants words they want to write on their slips of paper.
- Be prepared to ask prompting questions to assist storytellers who may get stuck.
- Allow participants to work in pairs or small teams to tell a story together. They can take turns and support each other as they tell the story.
- Allow participants to jot down written notes to assist them before they begin dictating their stories.
- Encourage participants to tell stories of any length that they are comfortable with.
- Offer microphones as needed so all participants can hear the stories.

Book Suggestions

Mii maanda ezhi-gkendmaanh / This Is How I Know by Brittany Luby and Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley

Sky Wolf's Call: The Gift of Indigenous Knowledge by Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger

Storyteller Skye: Teachings from My Ojibway Grandfather by Lindsay Christina King and Carolyn Frank

When I Listen to Silence by Jean Pendziwol and Carmen Mok