

## **ADVICE TO ARTS CENTRES, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS ON DO-IT-YOURSELF STORYTELLING EVENTS**

Stories can be used to draw people, both children and adults, into a deeper understanding of art, literature and history. Storytelling can be organised as an event to draw people into your venue, as an integral part of your work, or as an interactive activity encouraging input from your customers.

If you cannot afford to use professional storytellers then utilise the talents of colleagues and willing volunteers from all ethnic backgrounds. Remember all traditions have their stories and these stories can feature in all sections of learning, History and Geography (what happened to whom, in what time, why and where) Science and Maths (discoveries and problem solving) Art (as a creative impetus) and of course Literature.

Try to get a mix of male and female tellers so that storytelling is seen as equally relevant to both genders.

Find storytellers who can not only narrate loudly but can put sufficient of their personality into a telling, that the images they paint help produce an element of wonder and eagerness in the minds of their listeners, whatever their age. Such engagement of mind in shared time is what the inherent magic of storytelling is all about - enlightening, entertaining and the passing on of knowledge out of experience. Advice on telling without the text is included elsewhere in this pack.

A storytelling event or a series of events can focus on a particular theme. If there is no theme, a degree of continuity in the flow from one story to the next can be created if something is said between each story to form a link. This helps listeners of all ages focus on the tale they are about to be told.

You can find a section on folk tales in the majority of public libraries. We recommend that tellers learn their stories image by image, rather than word for word. Make sure whoever does the telling knows their story enough to answer listeners' questions which usually follow if an audience has been attentive.

Most of what we convey to each other by word of mouth we carry in the reportage of story form – from something we've seen, through last night's television, to what family and folk stories you might like to learn to tell for the future. Draw on and nurture the natural gift we all have.

Having identified people willing and able to learn and tell stories, you will need to identify a suitable location and time for the storytelling. This will ensure the audience can relax and listen, without distractions.

Newspapers are always eager to picture the interests of the young and elderly. You can raise the profile of your venue by utilising local press coverage, highlighting a positive approach to education and empowerment of the imagination.

However you decide to celebrate National Storytelling Week please let us know what you are doing. Our website aims to list everything happening - even events not open to the general public. By including your activities you may find links with other venues interested in utilising storytelling. Sharing experiences with others in your profession leads to a flourishing of ideas and an increase in good practice.