

Program 4

Diana Young

Description of the Program

Since the beginning of time, man has told stories. Just how easy is it to tell a story. The storyteller in this program is Diana Young from Texas who has been telling stories for over 30 years. She has traveled throughout the United States stopping often to share a story or two with her long time mentor, Augusta Baker. From Ms. Baker she learned to tell stories with her voice and her feeling. She shares a story about a Japanese stonecutter who wanted power.

Ms. Young is also a puppeteer and uses puppets to tell parts of the story. Sometimes the puppets help keep children's attention if they have a hard time just listening. Storytelling is more than telling stories. It is an art; just like music or dance. It combines rhythm with a flow of words. Ms. Young creates her own type of music using words as her notes.

The Storyteller's Story

Once there was a Japanese stonecutter who worked all day chipping off part of a stone mountain. He thought he had no power and more than anything else he wanted power. When the Emperor came by, the stonecutter wished to be the Emperor because he had so much power. The stonecutter became the Emperor and he felt powerful until he saw the sun which had power over everything. He wished to be the sun and when he became the sun he was happy with his power until the clouds came and covered the sun. He then wished to be the cloud and again was happy with his power as the cloud. When the wind came and pushed the clouds, the stonecutter wished again and became the wind. As the wind he could move anything and had the power he wanted until he tried and couldn't move the stone mountain. Again the stonecutter wished and became the stone mountain, He thought nobody could move him until he heard a stonecutter chipping away at the mountain. The stonecutter realized that he had had power as the stonecutter. This tale is told in lots of countries and is a little different in each one.

Questions and Answers

1. *Do you have a favorite story to tell?*

Ms. Young's favorite story is a puppet story from **Master of Masters** called "The Little Cockerel" She loves to tell stories from all over the world. The first stories she learned to tell were from South America.

2. *Is storytelling hard?*

Storytelling is not hard because she loves to tell stories. She said "I feel the story when I tell it. I first learn the story by learning the sequence of the story. Then I feel the motion of the story then I share my feeling about the story with the listener. Storytelling isn't really hard. When you get home you will probably share what you did today with your mother, so you're telling a story. That's all storytelling is ... sharing stories.

3. *Do you think everyone should try storytelling?*

Everyone who enjoys it should try storytelling. Everyone should read books and enjoy stories. Children are great storytellers. Some of the best storytellers Ms. Young knows are fifth and sixth graders who do tandem storytelling ... where they share stories together.

4. *Do you research your stories?*

Yes. Ms. Young read through hundreds of stories just to decide which stories to tell on this program. She reads stories, buys tapes of stories and listens to them. There are at least 25 different versions of the stonecutter story and she had to come up with her own version to tell.

5. *How do you learn to tell a story?*

The best way to learn to tell stories is to read and read. You tell stories from books, stories that you hear, and stories that you make up.

6. *Have you ever taught students to be storytellers?*

Ms. Young has taught children to tell stories. Children can be some of the best storytellers because they feel the rhythm and the spirit of the story. Each story has its own spirit.

7. *What is your favorite thing about storytelling?*

Ms. Young's favorite thing about storytelling is sharing. Sharing something that she has with someone else so they can share it with someone else. Sharing is the most important part of storytelling.

8. *What have you learned about stories from being a storyteller?*

Stories have taught Ms. Young lots of things ... history, quiet strength, who she is and who others are around her. If you listen to a story you can hear yourself in it, your neighbors, things around you, and things in your life that come into it or go out of it.

Suggested Activities

1. Ms. Young used lots of sounds and facial expressions when she told her stories. Did these enhance her stories? Tell the students a story with no change of expression and no extra sounds, then tell the story with as much expression and sounds as possible. Which did the children like best and why? Let them try telling stories with a lot of expression and sounds.

2. Since Ms. Young was also a puppeteer, let the students create a puppet show using the story of the stonecutter. The puppets can be as simple or as elaborate as time permits.