

## Relay Stories

(Grades 4-5)

A lesson plan to compliment the storytelling of Tim Tingle.

Prepare:

- *Crossing Bok Chitto* by Tim Tingle
- *James Marshall's Cinderella* by Barbara Karlin
- Or any other familiar folk or fairy tale that best fits your class.

Share:

In a relay story, the first person starts the story and then passes it on to the next person, who adds to the story and passes it on to the next person, continuing until the story is finished. Let's try this with a story that I read to you.

Read a familiar fairy tale such as *Cinderella*, or try something new such as Tim Tingle's *Crossing Bok Chitto*.

Explain:

Let them know that they are going to help you retell this story. Prepare the students by mapping out the major events of the book and map it out together as a class. Then erase or cover the map and retell the story as a class. Let volunteers who want to participate tell a portion of the story. If someone skips a part, don't worry; see if the story works out without it. Some classes have success with the teacher signaling each student to pass off the story or to use an object such as a "talking stick" or a "speaking rock" for the students to pass.

Teacher's Note: Telling stories is the first step towards writing stories. Being able to tell a vivid narrative is the first step toward writing a vivid narrative. By first developing the skill orally, for many students the skill will transfer with greater success to composing and revising a written narrative.

Discuss:

What did the students like about how the story was told?

Who gave a really good description of person, place, or feeling?

Which teller used one of their five senses to make a word picture listeners could see in their heads?

Re-Tell Again:

This time use new volunteers to retell the same story.

Discuss:

How was this telling different:

Sequencing?

Description of people or places?

Character's feelings?

Why did the stories turn out so differently?

Stories often spark conversation:

Here are some discussion questions you can discuss as a class with *Crossing Bok Chitto* by TimTingle:

1. Why did Martha Tom cross the river?
2. Why did her mother need blackberries?
3. Was Martha Tom an angel?
4. Who were the African-American churchgoers hiding from? Why?
5. What do you think Little Mo's house looked like? Martha Tom's?
6. How did the Choctaw wedding differ from weddings you have seen? What similarities can you name?
7. Describe Little Mo and his family five years after the story ends.
8. What language is "Bok Chitto"? What does the term mean?
9. What is the real miracle of *Crossing Bok Chitto*?
10. Did the story *Crossing Bok Chitto* take place before or after the American Civil War? How do you know?
11. Why did the men pursuing the slaves put down their weapons and allow them to escape?

Stories inspire us to write:

The scene depicting invisibility in *Crossing Bok Chitto* requires a *suspension of disbelief*. Discuss *suspension of disbelief* with the class and encourage them to help you make a list of examples from other stories they have heard in books, films, and orally that require *suspension of disbelief*.

Try writing a short scene that makes use of this *suspension of disbelief*. Do one together as a class and then have the students attempt one on their own.