

## The Play's the Thing

We **write for ourselves** because most published resources are too long for our needs.

**Think skits**, vignettes, not plays.

Consider how much story can be told in a 1 minute commercial!

Keep scripts to no longer than 2 pages: for appropriate length, and ease (no page turns).

These notes were made based on our experience with **preschool storytimes**. We have adapted and used some for early elementary classes when they visit.

Clarifying a question which arose:

In a half hour storytime we typically include 2-4 books, a stand up/move/dance, and something from fingerplays/flannel boards/songs/regular storytime 'stuff' - but we always end with a short puppet play.

Lapsit (for 2 year olds and caregiver) also are treated to an 'opening' by the Three Frogs - an original 1 page skit. So they always get 2 puppet performances at each storytime.

### **TOP TEN** list of where we find ideas **in no particular order!**

10. **Props.** Think not only how it could be used but how **ELSE** it could be used.

Example: Found grapes for Pumpkin Pie for Baby Bear; now, since we have a fox and Crow, rewrite Aesop's fable.

9. **Seasonal.** What are the children experiencing right now? Snow? Rain? Summer?

Example: dog playing in leaves, bear too cold (see: *It's So Cold Out* skit, written in the midst of a cold spell), sheep wandering off looking for greener grass, anybody – stuck inside on a rainy day. All have become skits in Neenah.

8. **Books:**

Straight up. A few. Hard to find ones that don't require more hands/props/scene changes than we usually do. *Mother Mother I Want Another* by Maria Robbins works; as do some *Elephant and Piggie* books by Mo Willems but watch out for prop needs!

adapt adapt adapt - *Too Much Noise*, the traditional tale, works with any cast of characters. In our latest version the 'wise woman' is a wise librarian who sits in front of the stage.

7. When **Reading** anything(!) be alert for skit **nuggets**.

Example: Reading about the importance of nursery rhymes for preschoolers turned into *Fun Times with Rhymes*, a camel and llama reciting favorite rhymes.

Minimal props + maximum audience participation

6. **Note from my boss!** Often it names a puppet we haven't used in awhile. "Write for swan!"
5. **Music**– Sing, Sing, and sing some more – even if you think you can't carry a tune!

4. **Songs** –

**Commonly known songs:** everyone sings along

Example: 5 Little Ducks went out to play – felt ducks on sticks

**Tape/cd** –Some resources advise against using them, but we use them occasionally with good response. Example: Little White Duck; (different performers);

Springtime on the Farm (Animal Songs by Geof Johnson)

3. **Personality of Puppet**

When the puppet goes on your hand, what personality comes through? Silly? Shy? Bouncy? Noisy? Young or more mature?

Most of our puppets DO change their personalities with different plays. Bear may be stern and growly or soft and cuddly but a few stay 'in character' and reappear in a different skit. Our dragon, Shelia, is quiet, shy and likes to sing!

2. **Look of the puppet**

What does the puppet look like? Does it suggest a skit?

Example: Shaggy dog, can't see, runs into others, needs hair clips.

Crazy Cat – hyper! Needs something very active, pair with someone shy.

1. and the Number 1 source of ideas is **knowing our Audience!**

**From what do preschoolers benefit?**

**Rhythm**

**Rhyme**

**And repetition!**

**Again!**

**Rhythm**

**Rhyme**

**and repetition!**

**And again!**

**Rhythm**

**Rhyme**

**and repetition!**