Books in Motion

Connecting Preschoolers with Books through Art, Games, Movement, Music, Playacting, and Props

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This book is designed for children’s librarians, early literacy teachers, day care providers, and anyone looking for ways to get kids up and moving during a preschool storytime. You probably already use rhymes and songs in between the featured books of your programs; in the pages that follow, I show you new and exciting ways to get kids moving during the books in your storytime.

Storytime is a fun and magical experience for children. With Books in Motion you can add even more excitement to your programs. Kids learn in many different ways. Some kids learn best by sitting quietly and listening, some through movement, some through music, and some through artistic expression. Elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as adult training sessions, often include multiple intelligence philosophies in their classes. The concept that everyone learns best by one, or a combination, of eight different intelligences can be included in storytimes as well. Librarians have always been able to connect with linguistic and spatial learners in picture book storytimes. Most of the other six intelligences (logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic) are touched upon with
yimes, songs, and crafts in between storytime books or at the end of the program. By including art, games, movement, music, playacting, and props during your storytime books, you have an even better chance of reaching all the kids in your program. As an added bonus, your storytimes will be new and exciting for kids, caregivers, and you. You already know how to do storytimes; now use Books in Motion to get ideas to enhance your current programming. I have reviewed picture books published in the year 2000 and later. There are many wonderful books published before 2000, but I wanted to include books that have a higher chance of being in your collection. I have chosen the best 500 books with a strong movement tie-in for the preschool (three- to five-year-old) crowd. This is based on my own expertise in doing storytimes for the past eleven years. I then split the books into six sections: art, games, movement, music, playacting, and props. For each book, I provide simple instructions for including movement while you are reading the book. Some of the instructions are only two sentences long, while others require a bit more detail. All of them are straightforward and easy to include in your current storytimes.

In the first chapter, “Art,” you will find books that present the option for a simple art or craft activity. Oftentimes, librarians wait until the end of storytime to do a craft. Why not try something during the books? Chapter 1 has simple coloring sheets that correspond with the books (e.g., winter wonderlands made from cotton balls) and ideas on ways to create art just like the character in the story you are reading. Where an activity calls for a simple line to be handed out to the children, you will find the corresponding activity in the “Art Outlines” appendix at the end of Books in Motion. Feel free to copy and enlarge any of the images as needed. All of the activities require no adult supervision and use easy-to-find supplies such as crayons, construction paper, cotton balls, and glue sticks. Remember that three- to five-year-old children can be very creative in their interpretation of a craft, and everyone’s finished product may look very different. Add to the fun by asking kids to share their beautiful artwork with the group after the activity is done.

In Chapter 2, “Games,” you will find games that can be played during a story. For example, when a character is searching for her favorite teddy bear, kids can search for a teddy bear in your storytime space. Of course, this activity could wait until after the story is done, but why not stop reading for a moment so everyone can search along with the character? There are also simple follow-the-leader and guessing games. The plan is to make the book even more memorable by including the children in the story.

Get ready to jump, stomp, clap, chomp, waddle, parade, wiggle, and stretch in Chapter 3, “Movement.” Some books are perfect for one simple motion throughout. If a book is about food, you can rub your stomach every time a food is mentioned. In a frog book, you can jump like a frog every time the frog is on the page. Sometimes a book is ideal for a bunch of different motions. For example, when a book includes many forms of transportation, you can pretend to be a plane, train, car, or truck while reading about them on the pages of the book.

In Chapter 4, “Music,” there are books that are perfect for being read with music, songs, or musical instruments. Many books have rhythm language and you can shake a maraca along with the words. Some books are about dance and you can play music so everyone can dance in between pages. Other books are so full of sounds that it makes sense to add your own sounds to the text. Don’t worry if you don’t have bells, shakers, rhythm sticks, and drums. I may suggest a particular instrument in the directions, but you can use whatever child-friendly instruments you have in your library and let the books come to life.

In “Playacting,” Chapter 5, the characters in the books are involved in a lot of activities. Kids can pretend to wash their faces, swim with fish, and fly like airplanes along with the book’s protagonist. I have included instructions on how to do the different motions. For example, when the character jumps out of bed, you can jump in place. When the character cleans out a bowl, you can cup one hand into a bowl shape and pretend to wash it out with the other hand. Some books have motions that can be done on every page; sometimes there is more than one motion per page. I have included as much instruction as possible for as many motions as possible. You can do everything or pick and choose the amount of movement that is right for your storytime crowd or your personal silliness level.

Finally, bring out your puppets, flannel-board pieces, and scarves for the last chapter, “Props.” Most of the books chosen have enough props for everyone in the program to play a part. Scarves can blow in the wind, be washcloths, or turn anyone into a superhero with a cape. Yellow felt stars can turn a flannel board into a starry sky. If you have a die-cut machine, you can create a
Crayons and glue sticks! Children love creating art based on what they know and learn. Use the books and ideas in this chapter to help the kids in your programs use their creative energy while you read the book to them. Follow along with the artist in the book or draw a picture of the main character using common supplies such as crayons, cotton balls, and construction paper. Photocopy and enlarge the images provided in the “Art Outlines” appendix when an activity calls for a simple outline. Remember that many children enjoy sharing their work with others (which must be why refrigerator magnets were invented) and leave time at the end of your program for those who wish to present their creations.

- Encourage the adults in the room to assist their children with the art activity. Consider handing out supplies to the adults so they can make their own creations.
- Consider modeling the recommended activity before reading the book. For example, if you are asking the kids to trace their hands on pieces of paper, demonstrate how to do this by holding your hand up to a piece of
take a short break from reading and have everyone search your space for Piglet's mother. Once Mama has been found, continue with the rest of the story.

_Yee, Brenda Shannon. _Hide and Seek._

**Summary:** A mouse plays hide-and-seek with an unsuspecting homeowner.

**Action:** Hide a stuffed mouse or picture of a mouse in your storytime space before the program begins. When you read the words “Ready or not! Here I come!” stop reading so everyone can search your storytime space for a mouse. When the mouse has been found, finish reading the book.

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**movement**

Jumping and clapping! Who says you have to sit still during storytime? The books in this chapter are perfect for bouncing, stomping, and parading around the room. You can run in place every time a feisty puppy decides to run; bounce up and down with a bumpy wheelbarrow; or “Shhh” the room while animals try to sleep. You don’t need special props or supplies. Follow the instructions provided for each title for an active and silly storytime. You may even find that everyone (adults included) gets a fun workout.

**tips**

- Ask the adults in the room to participate with their children.
- Do the movements along with the kids as much as possible. For example, when reading _Tall_, squish down toward the floor and stand up tall whenever you are asking the kids to do the same. They will understand the movements better if they are able to copy you. This is especially important for more difficult sequences such as the movements suggested for Catalina Magdalena Hoopensteiner Wallendiner Hogan Logan Bogan Was Her Name.
• Use a bell or other noisemaker to signal when it is time to stop moving and settle down for more of the book. This will be helpful when reading a book such as How to Be. Kids will also tend to follow you. If you are moving along with them, many of them will stop when you stop. Another idea is to have kids move for a count of five. While they move, you count out loud “One, Two, Three, Four, Five.” When you say “Five,” everyone should stop moving. Be sure to practice before reading the book.
• Practice doing the suggested movements. The kids dance a lot during Rattlesnake Dance. Practice dancing to those words before you start reading the book. Practice wiggling fingers and toes before you read Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes.
• Use masking tape to make a circle for kids to stand on to help them form a circle as a group.
• It is okay for the kids to be up and moving during an entire book. During Prancing Dancing Lily, you want the kids to quietly dance throughout the whole book.
• For many of these stories, let the kids stand during the entire book. Some of the stories have so many movements that it will be easier to have them stand than make them sit down in between each movement. If the kids are standing, be sure to stand up, too, so that the kids can see the book.

Summary: The letter Z passes other artistic letters on his way home from work.
Action: Since there isn’t a story for this book, you can have the kids pretend to act out or do a movement for almost every letter:
  • A—Alien: Walk like an alien.
  • B—Bridge: Balance carefully as you walk across the bridge.
  • C—Cake and D—Doughnut: Eat a piece of cake and a doughnut.
  • E—Earthquake: Shake like an earthquake.
  • F—Factory: Build something at the factory.
  • G—Gargoyle: Stand perfectly still like a stone gargoyle.
  • H—Hurdles: Jump over the hurdle.
  • I—Ink: Write your name in the sky.
  • J—Jetty: Pretend to walk a long distance out on the jetty.

Alborough, Jez. Tall.
Summary: A little monkey finds ways to make himself feel tall next to larger animals.
Action: Have the kids stand up when you start reading this book. Whenever you say “small,” have them squish down and make themselves small. Whenever you say “tall,” they should stand up straight and make themselves as tall as possible. They can even act out “fall” by falling on the ground.

Alborough, Jez. Duck in the Truck.
2008. La Jolla, CA: Kane Miller Book.
Summary: Frog, Sheep, and Goat help Duck when his truck gets stuck in the muck.
Action: When Frog and Sheep try to push the truck out of the muck, have the kids pretend to push, too. When Goat helps by pulling on the truck, the kids can pretend to pull on a rope like they are playing tug-of-war.
more storytime resources

This resource is full of activities that involve audience participation in between books. There are jokes, tongue twisters, songs, and stories. Any of these ideas can be used to make a more interactive storytime.

This resource has directions for easy, child-friendly crafts. After each craft, there are poems, stories, rhymes, and books suitable for the theme.

The title says it all. This resource includes many ideas for interaction between the audience and the picture book. Some of the activities include movement; some involve asking questions of the children. This resource is great if you wish to find ideas for books written prior to 2000.

This resource is great for someone just starting to do storytime or someone who needs some new program themes. It includes videos, books,
fingerplays, crafts, activities, and songs for 146 different storytime topics. From this information, librarians or teachers can create their own storytimes with interaction in between the stories read.

This resource includes a variety of ideas on how the storyteller can use puppets and other props to enhance storytelling. There are also patterns for creating the props.

This resource provides "complete, ready to use, storytimes" (p. xi). There are fantastic rhymes, activities, and crafts to use in storytimes. Many books are also listed for each theme.

This resource provides a variety of stories that invite audience participation and movement. This is a great book for someone who wants to include more of the oral tradition in their programming.

Art, drama, music, math, and science extension activities are provided for picture books for preschoolers through third graders. These activities can be used after reading the books.

This resource shows five activities or ideas to "stretch" each book after you finish reading it.

This is a great resource for ideas of songs to use in between the books in your programs. The first chapter contains eight story programs with books and accompanying songs. The next five chapters include lists of songs matched with picture books, musical ideas, and other songs. The final chapter includes a wonderful list of books based on songs, music, or dance.

Much like Storytimes ... Plus! this resource provides fully developed storytimes. The storytimes include a lot of movement through rhymes, songs, and books.