
*Storytimes ... Plus!* offers 35 thematic, literature-based programs for children aged 3 to 6. As Lincycomb explains in the Preface, “a winning storytime needs the ability to respond to the particular dynamics of each audience” (xi). To this end, related games, puppet scripts, and snacks are included in addition to the basic storytime outline.

The themes selected have plenty of child appeal. Perennial favourites such as food, animals and holidays are featured. For each program plan, Lincycomb has written original rhymes and songs that offer clever variations on familiar tunes. The fingerplay actions are explained and all promote fine motor skills and emerging literacy.

The annotated “Storytime Picks” section lists titles that Lincycomb has successfully used in her own storytime programs. The booklists come with the promise that they will “appeal to toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary schoolchildren” (xi). In reviewing the book choices, many are by award-winning authors such as Eric Carle, Simms Taback and Jane Yolen. Most have been published within the past ten years and should be readily available in public library collections. A variety of picture book formats are represented, including song books and interactive “pop-ups” and “lift-the-flaps”. Out of the 280 titles, unfortunately only 6 are by Canadian authors: *Leon the Chameleon* by Melanie Watt, *Mixed Beasts* illustrated by Wallace Edwards, *Enormous Potato* by Aubrey Davis, *Stella, Queen of the Snow* by Marie-Louise Gay, *Thomas’ Snowsuit* by Robert Munsch and *Frog’s Riddle and other Draw-and-Tell Stories* by Richard Thompson.

A take-home activity is included for each theme. Small black-and-white photographs clearly illustrate the crafts, along with step-by-step instructions. Program planners will find the “Crafts and Materials Index” to be a time-saving feature. The majority of the projects require standard supplies such as construction paper, markers and glue. In some cases, magnetic strips, foam and plastic jars are called for, but less-expensive, alternative ideas are also suggested. Age-appropriate modifications are provided as well. Roughly drawn craft templates are reproduced in Part II’s “Resources”. The poor quality of these patterns is a weakness of the book.

The “Plus” section offers additional story-stretching activities ranging from oral storytelling to action games. Most are not appropriate for a 45-minute library storytime, but would appeal to homeschoolers, daycare or school groups. The snack suggestions are disappointing. Candy or cookie treats are highlighted in 26 of the plans and the issue of food allergies is not mentioned.

Other noteworthy features of this well-organized book include the full text to 6 stories and scripts, a bibliography, and an index.
Librarians new to children’s services will find this resource to be a practical extension of the planning and presentation skills explored in Beth Maddigan’s Big Book of Stories, Songs, and Sing-Alongs: Programs for Babies, Toddlers, and Families. For experienced programmers, Storytimes ... Plus! offers a plethora of fresh ideas to use in library-based programs and with class visits. Highly recommended for public and school library resource collections.

References


Linda Ludke, Selection Librarian, linda.ludke@lpl.london.on.ca, London Public Library, London, Ontario

This review copy was provided by way of The OLAStore. Neal-Schuman titles are distributed in Canada by the OLAStore. Members of the Partnership (http://www.thepartnership.ca/) will generally receive a discount of 5-10% on most publications. For further information about this title, please visit www.accessola.com/theolastore or contact orders@accessola.com.