

Nathalie Vachon

study guide • discussion questions • activities



Imagination on the Loose!

Storytelling In the Classroom

PROLOGUE

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About Nathalie



Nathalie is a writer and storyteller who effortlessly creates stories to spark the imagination. For over 15 years, Nathalie has delighted audiences in Canada, the United States and Asia with her whimsical and imaginative tales.

Nathalie holds a M.Ed., Creative Arts in Learning from Lesley College in Cambridge Massachusetts and has also studied at Wilfrid Laurier University, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Honolulu Academy of Art and in Osaka, Japan. A favorite at festivals, in classrooms and libraries, Nathalie's love of writing, storytelling and the arts is infectious; inspiring countless others to say "hey, I could do that too!"

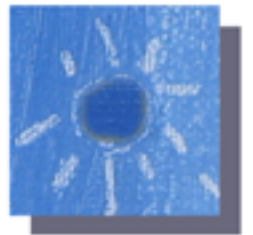
Look for her original Japanese Folktale *Mischief and the Moon* in the United Cultures of Canada Association's upcoming collection *World on a Maple Leaf: A Treasury of Canadian Multicultural Folktales*.

For more information see www.nathalievachon.com

Stories are like fairy gold, the more you give away the more you have...

About the Show

Come follow Nathalie as she spins original tales that will engage, inspire and tickle the funny bone...



The wise ant, Bamboo has a wild hairdo, Mirabelle's dress holds magical powers, the shadow gods are creating mischief in the village, the mountain has lost its spirit, Edgar forgot his shoes and Madeleine is having a most unlucky morning...

This mesmerizing storytelling performance takes the audience on an interactive ride through modern day fairytales (with a twist), adventures all in rhyme, folktales from around the world, creation stories and so much more. With audience participation, songs and wordplay, students will fall in love with storytelling and see that stories are in fact everywhere



Themes and Starting Points

TEACHER TALK

3 ways to prepare students for the show:

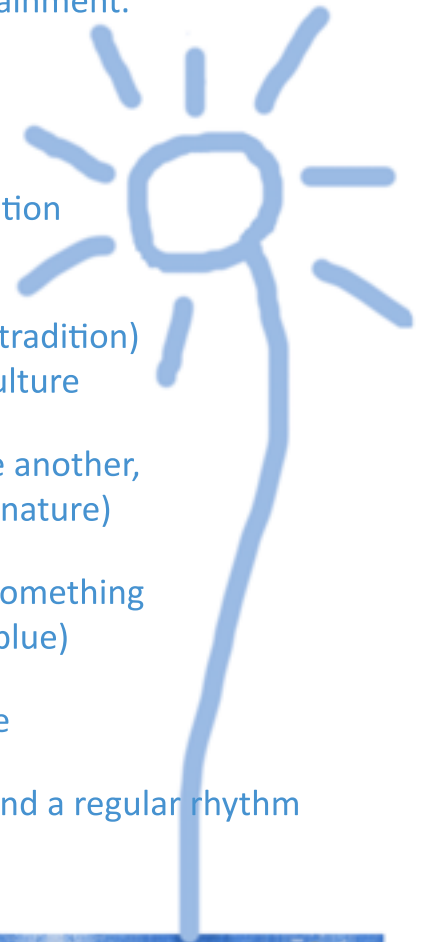
- Talk about themes
- Discuss why we tell stories
- Talk about types of stories

Storytelling:

Storytelling is one of the oldest art forms – it is as old as speech. It began as a way to avoid boredom (early storytellers kept themselves company by chanting as they worked). It was also used to share experiences, to make sense of the world, to pass on important lessons and information (for survival) as well as a way of recording history or passing on stories of their ancestors. And of course storytelling was used as a form of entertainment.

Types of Stories (in Imagination on the Loose!)

- **Fairy Tales:** a story involving some element of magic (ie. the intervention of a fairy, talking animals, characters with supernatural powers)
- **Folktales:** a story about everyday life passed by word of mouth (oral tradition) to transmit values /wisdom or express hopes, fears and wishes of a culture
- **Myths:** stories about gods or godlike beings, their relationship to one another, to humans and to nature (often poetic explanations of the world and nature)
- **Creation Stories:** a story that explains how the world began or how something in the world came to be (ie. how the duck got it's bill, why the sky is blue)
- **Fables:** a story (often about animals) with a moral or lesson about life
- **Stories in Verse:** a story in the form of a poem; with rhyming lines and a regular rhythm



The Art of Storytelling!

TEACHER TALK

You can explore either aspect of storytelling:

- the story (find a story or create your own)
- the telling (the way the story is told/performed)

The Story

Elements of Story:

Characters: The people, animals or imaginary creatures in a story

Setting: Describes the time and place (the when and where) in which a story happens. (descriptions of landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons or weather give us a strong sense of the setting)

Time: When? (ie. a long time ago, at bedtime, when the Earth was young)

Place: Where? (ie. at school, in the forest, in a snow storm)

Plot: The series of events or actions in a story. It tells what happens or states the problem the characters have to resolve. The problem or conflict is the most important thing that happens in a story. In most stories the problem or conflict is solved at the end of the story, this is called the Climax.

Details, Details!!



To help students understand a story or to make sure they have all the information to write a story be certain to ask the **six questions**:

- **Who:** Who was involved in the story? (characters, main character, villain)
- **What:** What happened? (what did the characters do, see, experience?)
- **When:** When did the story take place? (long ago, last week, over three days)
- **Where:** Where did the story take place? (in Canada, Japan, in the middle of the ocean, on a creaky bridge, in a house on a hilltop)
- **Why:** Why did it happen? (ie. the king was in a bad mood, there was no more food)
- **How:** How did it happen? (ie. everyone rallied together to find a solution)

Voice tone, pitch (high/low), volume (loud/quiet), pace (fast/slow)

BODY LANGUAGE gestures, facial expressions, eye contact

music/songs repeat a little tune, use an instrument, make up a song...

sound effects nature, animal, everyday sounds
pitter patter, meow, creak!

poetry rhymes, rhythm, repetition

question & answer or **call & response**

props/costumes transform the teller with a hat, stick, scarf!

different languages a word, a phrase, a question in another language

The Telling

Making Your Story Come Alive:

Anyone can be a storyteller and everyone has stories to tell. You don't need an elaborate stage or props or instruments...

All you need is:

- a story
- a desire to tell it

And here are some great tools to help bring your stories to life!

Minds On... Storytelling

pre-performance discussion

TEACHER TALK

Here is a list of other possible activities and questions to get student's minds on... stories & storytelling

Primary

- Discuss student's experiences around storytelling (Who has told them stories? When? What kind? Do they tell stories? To whom?) Emphasize that we all have stories to share...
- Let them know that Nathalie, the storyteller they are about to see, has written the stories and will tell them as a traditional teller does, without a book.
- How do stories begin? Brainstorm beginnings (once upon a time, long long ago, let me tell you a story...)
- Talk about words that rhyme. Do you know any stories with rhymes? (Listen for *Emma May's Magical Day* - in verse)
- Fairy tales have magic in them. What are some examples of magic in stories? (frog turning into a Prince, a magic wand) Listen for the presence of magic in the performance.
- Characters in stories can be people, animals or objects with human characteristics... discuss stories with animals.
- Stories can be true or imaginary. And in the world of the imagination, anything can happen, Talk about favorite imaginary stories (characters, places, events)
- Please review theatre etiquette with students.

Junior

- Discuss student's experiences around storytelling (Where? When? What kind? Do they tell stories? To Whom?) Emphasize that stories are everywhere and are a big part of our lives (songs, movies, books, plays, cartoons and everyday conversations are all stories that we tell)
- Ask students how/why they think storytelling began. Discuss oral tradition (how it is used to pass on information and wisdom)
- Talk about where story ideas come from (everyday experiences, dreams, imagination) Ask students what they would write about?
- Discuss elements of story (setting, characters, plot)
- Review the 6 questions to help them remember the details of a story (who, what, when, where, why and how)
- How do stories begin? Ask students if they know any story beginnings off by heart (ie. a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away)
- Discuss types of stories; identify fairy tales, creation stories, folktales, fables, stories in verse etc.
- What is a moral? Discuss lessons from well-known stories.
- Creation stories explain how things came to be... Discuss the difference between a scientific explanation and a creation story (which explanation would you prefer?)
- What can make a story more interesting when telling it? (watch out for elements such as voice, sound effects, rhymes, repetition, songs, body language in the performance) notice how they can be used to bring a story to life!
- Please review theatre etiquette with students.





Post-Performance Discussion

TEACHER TALK

Post-show discussion and activities allow students to:

- ask questions/clarify meaning
- reflect/respond to feelings
- form creative ideas
- create their own stories & art

Primary

- Choose one story from the performance and re-tell it as a group. Prompt students by asking “what happened first... and then...”
- Ask students which character from the performance would they most like to be friends with and why?
- Ask students which setting/place they would like to go to from any of the stories. Describe the place and why they would like to go there.
- Discuss elements of fairy tales (ie. magic, happy endings, a problem to be solved) List any magical elements from the show (animals that talk, snail on rollerblades, frog that turns into a princess) What was your favourite happy ending? What problems do you remember? How were they solved?
- Discuss lessons/morals that stand out from the stories.
- Talk about how Nathalie used voice, body language, rhymes, sounds, songs, call/response... to tell the stories.
- Talk about words that rhyme (Emma May/Day, shoes for walking/lips for talking, ants/pants, pickle/tickle, socks/box)
- Stories can take us to other worlds and times; into the imagination. Ask students what imaginary places they would create? (ie. a classroom made of jello, a land with no rules?)

Junior

- Divide the class into pairs/small groups. Have each group choose one story from the performance and retell it (have each group present the retelling to the class - get creative/dramatic if you like!)
- Identify characters, setting (time and place) and plot from one story.
- Discuss elements of fairy tales (ie. magic, happy endings, a problem to be solved) List any examples from the stories.
- Brainstorm creative beginnings (once upon an ancient time, long ago and far away, let me tell you tale to make you tremble) Discuss how beginnings set the tone/mood for the story.
- Discuss creation stories, native beliefs, spirit animals... Brainstorm possible creation story ideas (how rain began, why whales sing, how the eagle got its wings)
- Talk about the use of music, voice, body language, sound effects, call/response, poetry to make a story come alive. What does a rhyming story feel like? (like a boat ride, like waves on the ocean... like a song)
- Discuss perspective in a story. How would any of the stories change if they were told from a different point of view... what story would a different character tell?
- Talk about where story ideas come from (everyday experiences, dreams, imagination) Ask students what they would write about if they could write about anything?
- Discuss how listening to a story differs from reading a book, watching tv or a movie.



Fun Activities for the Classroom!

Primary!

Visual Arts

- Ask students to draw a part of the story that stands out for them (character, setting, specific moment or incident). Have them share why they chose this part of the story.
- Make up characters that rhyme (fat bat, frog on a log, scary canary, ants with pants) Have students choose one and draw a picture with the name at the bottom. Collect them all and bind the pages together to form a book.
- Draw the characters from the Emma May Story. (see attached worksheet) Invent a new character/friend for Emma. What does this character look like?
- Create a small picture book. As a group have students follow the step by step instructions (see worksheet included) for making a paper book out of one sheet of paper. Then have students illustrate their book... This could be used as a follow up to earlier discussions (ie. a book of illustrations of imaginary places, magical objects, nature, animals, favorite places or favorite characters...)



Drama/ Movement/ Music

- **Magical Lands:** Have students sit in a circle. Divide class into three by having children count out (1, 2, 3 etc.) If #1's are called they stand and wait for instructions about the land that they are about to enter (a land where the floor is made of tacks, is bouncy, sticky, where everything moves in slow motion, it's windy, freezing cold etc.) On a signal (bell, clap) students enter and act out/move about as if they are now in this new setting.
- Experiment with call and response. Clap out a rhythm and have students clap it back. Then try with voice (ta, ta, ooh, la la) a phrase (once upon a time, time) or sound effects (squish, ooh, crash, boo)
- Have students move around the space with out bumping into anyone. Ask them to become big, small, wide, narrow etc. On a signal (bell, magic wand) have the children change into a character from the performance (ant, frog, butterfly, monster, rooster crowing, sun stretching, birds singing etc.) Divide the class in two; one group performs, the other watches.
- Create soundscapes as a group. Try a rainscape: experiment with making rain sounds (clapping, rubbing hands together, tapping, use voice/make wind sounds, thunder etc.) Begin the soundscape in silence, build sounds slowly, work up to a climax and end in silence (try a zoo, jungle, ocean).
- Introduce a talking stick.
- Play broken telephone using a line from a story (ie. once upon a time there lived a three-legged ogre who loved to sing and make puppets) See how much of the story gets passed along!



Language Arts

- As a group, make a list of random nouns (caterpillar, apple tree, turtle) write them on the board. Next to it make a list of descriptive adjectives (sticky, angry, shy, hairy) pair up interesting words to build silly or unique characters. Together you can brainstorm ideas for stories (the angry turtle, the sticky apple tree)
- Create a class word bowl. Have small pieces of paper available for students to write words on. Once a collection of words (grumpy, willow tree, zig-zag) is gathered, students can use the word bowl for writing. For example have each student pick 3-5 words and use some or all of the words to create a sentence, short poem or story.
- Have students fold a piece of paper in four (to make four boxes). Ask students to choose one story from the performance and write four things that happened in the story (one in each box). Cut along the fold marks and put the events in order.
- Have students fill in the elements of fairytales (see attached worksheet)
- Have students bring in their favorite stories to share (encourage stories from many backgrounds/ cultures)

Fun Activities for the Classroom!

Junior!

Drama/ Movement

- Divide class into groups of four/five. Have each group select a scene from any story and create a tableau. Present them to the class and have students guess the scene.
- Play broken telephone using a line from a story (ie. In a creaky old castle there lived a short, fat, hairy and scary emperor). Discuss how stories change with the telling. See how folktales are passed down and change over time.
- Hot Seat - Students take on the role of a character from a story. They are interviewed by the other students (as reporters) about their action, back story.
- Introduce a talking stick. Emphasize that the only person to speak is the one holding the stick. Students sit in a circle, one person (holding the talking stick) begins with the first line of a story. Students pass/add a line to build a group story.
- Magical Lands: Have students sit in a circle. Divide class into three by having children count out (1, 2, 3 etc) If #1's are called they stand and wait for instructions about the land that they are about to enter (a land where the floor is made of tacks, bouncy, sticky, people move in slow motion, it's windy, freezing cold etc.) On a signal (bell, clap) students enter and act out/move about as if they are now in this new setting. Groups can make up their own/see if others can guess.
- Choose a creation story as a group to be performed/told/acted out. Get as creative as you like by adding costumes, music, movement, instruments etc.
- Hold a storytelling festival... where each student in the class creates or learns a story to tell in. Invite younger grades as your audience.

Visual Arts

- Paint a favorite setting/scene from a story. Use colour, brush strokes, line, movement etc. to capture mood, emotion and feelings.
- Draw a character from any of the stories. Encourage students to draw in a way that indicates how they think the character feels.
- Create a Storyboard. Fold an 11x17 piece of paper three times to make 8 boxes (or more if needed). Draw the most important events of the story in order. Remind students to keep it simple and add only necessary details. Students can make a simple sketch for a preliminary storyboard then do a more-developed storyboard with more details if desired.
- Ask students what settings/places they find peaceful/make them happy. Ask students to paint or draw it. Then, use this setting as a backdrop for a story (what characters would live here, what would they do etc.) Students can fill out the *Six Questions* worksheet to help with details.

Music/ Drama

- Try soundscapes to create a setting. Experiment ie. with how to make rain sounds (clapping, rubbing hands together, tapping, with voice make wind sounds, thunder etc.) Begin the soundscape in silence, building sounds slowly, working up to a climax and ending in silence (try a jungle, ocean, factory, city, countryside)
- Play with pitch, tempo, volume... to deliver a line of a story. Take a simple line (ie. Long, long ago in a far away land) and experiment with all the ways this line can be delivered. Get creative: use music, rap, melody, body language, facial expressions, emotion, percussion!

Language Arts

- Create a class word bowl. Have small pieces of paper available for students to write interesting or evocative nouns, verbs or adjectives. Once a collection of words (grumpy, willow tree, zig-zag) is gathered, students can use the word bowl to inspire poetry, stories etc. For example. have each student pick 3-5 words and use some or all of them to create a story.
- Create a story bucket. Collect small objects that you would find in any time period or culture (stone, ring, shell, origami bird, a coin, string, a doll's shoe, mirror...) Once a good collection is formed, have students close their eyes and pick 3 things from the bucket. Write a story inspired by these objects.
- Pick a story and tell it from another character's point of view.
- Ask students to collect, bring in stories from their culture/background (or from a culture/country they would like to visit). Have them write their own story that takes place in that country.
- Brainstorm rhyming words... Ask students to compose a small poem or story in verse.
- Continuing on from the post-performance discussion on creation stories, have students develop an idea and write their own creation story.
- Build a fable backwards... brainstorm important morals/lessons. Have students choose one that is important to them... build characters/setting/plot to work toward their final lesson (use the *Six Questions* worksheet to help with details)
- Create a small book from one sheet of paper (see *Making A Paper Book* activity sheet). Have students create a small story, a collection of poems etc. for their book.

The Adventures of Emma May

Draw and name all the characters from the Emma May story



Draw the new character:

Invent another character that could be Emma May's friend!

Write the character's name:

Write a description:

Elements of Story!

Choose a story and fill in the following elements for the story/fairy tale:

Story Title: _____

Setting (time and place)



Characters

(circle the main character)



Magic



Problem to Solve



Ending



Six Questions

Story Title: _____

Who?

What?

How?

When?

Why?

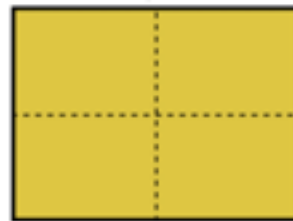
Where?



Making a Paper Book

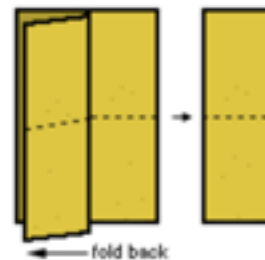
step one

Fold the paper over longways so that the corners meet.
Crease well and then unfold.
Fold the paper over in the other direction.
Place the corners together and crease well. Do not unfold



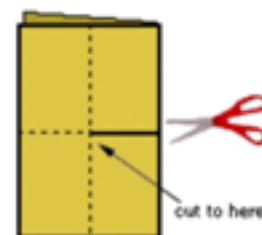
step two

Fold back one side as shown in figure 2.
Place the corners together and crease well.
Repeat with the other side.



step three

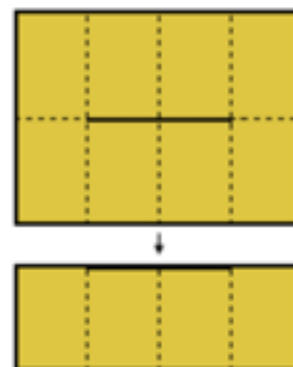
Unfold the last two folds.
Holding the folded side in your hand, cut along
the center line until you reach the first vertical fold



step four

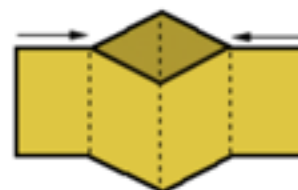
Open the paper so that eight
sections are showing.
Fold the page over longways.

pagination 5-4-3-2
 6-7-8-1



step five

Holding on to each side,
gently push the ends together to
form the pages of the book.



step six

Fold the front and back covers around
so that the corners meet. Crease well.
You should have six pages inside for writing
and artwork!



Teacher Resources

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

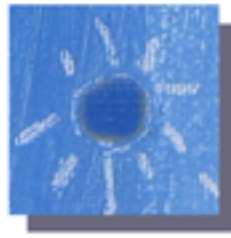
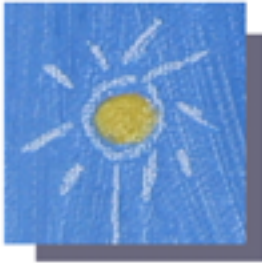
- Read/review fairy tales and fables
- Identify listening comprehension strategies (use before, during and after listening to understand/clarify meaning)
- Identify ways the voice and body can be used to convey thoughts/feelings
- identify non-verbal cues (gestures, eye contact, facial expressions)
- Interpret/communicate the meaning of stories, poems, plays etc. from a range of sources and cultures
- Identify a range of vocal effects (tone, pace, pitch, volume, sound affects) and use them appropriately
- Demonstrate understanding of a characters point of view
- Read appropriate texts with expression and confidence
- Demonstrate understanding of oral texts by retelling a story/restating info.
- Poetry, myths, short stories etc. from diverse cultures

Art, Music, Drama

- Use drama/movement to explore issues and themes from stories
- Illustrate a book
- Produce two and three dimensional works of art to communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences)
- Create/perform dramatic presentations
- Explore musical elements (pitch, timbre dynamics, form, duration etc.)
- Improvise soundscapes to create mood and setting (ie. stormscape, oceanscape)
- Explore call and response

Guidance/Life Skills

- Respect for nature, all creatures large and small
- Learn not to judge by appearances
- Identify the variety of characteristics, skills, competencies, qualities and talents of self and others
- Demonstrate social responsibility
- Show appreciation for self and others



References - Books

And None of it Was Nonsense: The Power of Storytelling in School.

Betty Rosen. Published by Scholastic

Best Loved Folktales of the World.

Selected by Joanna Cole. Doubleday

Children Tell Stories: A Teaching Guide.

Martha Hamilton, Mitch Weiss.

Published by Richard C. Owen

Creative Storytelling: Choosing, Inventing & Sharing Tales for Children

Jack Maguire. Published by McGraw-Hill

Out of the Everywhere. Retold by Jan Andrews. Published by Groundwood (Traditional stories from around the world placed in a Canadian Landscape)

Tell Me Another: Storytelling and Reading Aloud at Home, at School & in the Community.

Bob Barton. Published by Pembroke

Telling Stories Your Way: Storytelling and Reading Aloud in the Classroom.

Bob Barton. Published by Pembroke

Ten Small Tales. Celia Lottridge
Published by Groundwood Books
(A treasury of stories from around the world for small children)

The Aspiring Writer's Journal. Susie Morgenstern. Published by Abrams Books for Young Readers (Great writing prompts and possible story ideas)

Twenty Tellable Tales: Audience Participation Folktales for the Beginning Storyteller. Margaret Read Macdonald. Published by HW Wilson

350 Fabulous Writing Prompts: Thought Provoking Springboards for Creative, Expository & Journal Writing. Jacqueline Sweeney. Published by Scholastic (gr. 4-8)

References - Websites

www.worlddandi.com/newhome/wwft/demo.html

16-year collection of worldwide folktales

www.longlongtimeago.com/
Stories for children; definitions and examples of every type of story

www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html
A library of folktales and mythology

www.americanfolklore.net/
Retellings of folktales, myths, legends, fairy tales, superstitions, ghost stories from all over the Americas

www.nald.ca/mothergooseprogram/resource.htm
Rhymes and stories for the very young; good for kindergarten

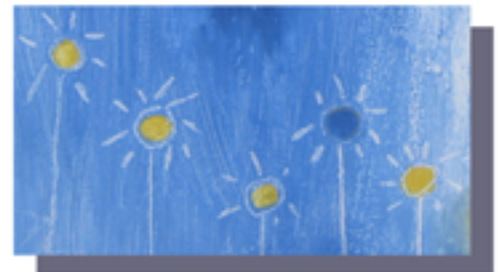
www.storyconnection.net/?content=collection
A collection of folktales, fairy tales, fables, holiday stories, story games and puzzles for educators

www.WebInstituteForTeachers.ORG/99/teams/tales/folktales.html
African stories in the classroom

www.storytellingtoronto.org
Information about storytelling activities in Toronto (including the annual Storytelling Festival)

www.proteacher.com/redirect.php?goto=5486
Why storytelling? (activities/lesson plans)

http://ccb.lis.illinois.edu/Projects/storytelling/lis506a_lbp/resources.html
Resource guide for librarians, teachers and storytellers



Imagination on the Loose: Stories

See www.nathalievachon.com/stories/ for audio clips and more information.

Abbey's Monster (An Interactive Ride into an Overactive Imagination)

How is Abbey supposed to sleep when the monster in her closet keeps howling, banging and scratching at her door? And to top it off, her parents can't seem to see the monster. Abbey has to be brave and face it herself. But as Abbey discovers, monsters aren't always what they first appear to be.

Edgar's Most Fortunate Day (Modern day Fairy Tale with a twist)

Edgar forgets his shoes, Madeleine is having a most unlucky morning and Bella is missing... follow the twists and turns of these three characters as they meet and hopefully end up all having a most fortunate day.

Emma May's Magical Day (Adventure Story in Verse)

In this story, we follow the adventures of a young girl, Emma who "goes out one day to find what she can find. She has shoes for walking, lips for talking and curiosity on her mind." And along the way, Emma discovers a sea of ants on a boat-building mission, a snail on rollerblades and a wise and mischievous butterfly named Olive.

Emma May's Rainy Day (Adventure Story in Verse)

The ants are back to test out their boats and take the white water ride of a lifetime. Rain turns the day grey for Emma but with a few reminders from Olive or the wise ant named Bamboo (with the wild hair-do) we see that any day can be sunny, even if there is rain.

Emma May Met her Match One Day (Adventure Story in Verse)

In the third story of the Emma May series Emma takes a wrong turn and through a disheartening situation she finds a ray of light. She discovers Thomas is up in a tree with binoculars to see the festivities that are about to begin. With a few teeth missing from his welcoming grin and his glasses not quite straight on his face he welcomes Emma with humour and warmth and together they embark on a gigANTic adventure.

Emma May's Christmas Day (Adventure Story in Verse)

This heartwarming Christmas story follows Emma May's many attempts at writing her Christmas list. She starts early, in May, to make sure her list reaches the North Pole when Santa is rested and alert, but come September realizes it is outdated and must start again. When the first snow comes December 12th, Emma realizes that her list is outdated once again and in a panic rewrites it. This time she may be too late.

How the Mountain Got Its Spirit (Creation Story – Native)

The mountain has lost its spirit and all the animals rally to help the mountain get it back... all except for one. Beaver is a gatherer of things and not too keen on giving anything away. Will Beaver change his tune in order to help the mountain? Stay tuned!

Ketut and the Thousand Herons (Balinese Folktale)

Inspired by a recent trip to Bali; the beauty of the rice fields and the majesty of the white herons make their way into this touching story about how music and a young boy named Ketut were able to release the hold that the dark night sky had on the world.

Mirabelle en Coccinelle (Modern day Fairytale with a spin)

Mirabelle has a dress with magical powers... with three twirls of the dress she can silence the meanest, bossiest parent, teacher or principal... she never uses her powers until one day when she sticks up for a friend.

Mischief and the Moon / Tsuki to Etazura (Japanese Myth/Folktale)

In the story, Nathalie draws on her experiences living in Japan to create a timeless, mystical folktale which follows Chowa-san, the Goddess of Harmony, as she helps restore balance in the lives of the Japanese people...

NOTE: Please feel free to request any stories to coincide with current classroom discussion, themes or curriculum. Written stories or outlines are available upon request.