

Talking Tales Procedures

Before

1. Contact the storytellers the week after the previous meeting to remind them what theme the next meeting will be. Oftentimes you would have already spoken to them and they have let you know their availability or what stories they will be telling.
2. Write down the stories they will be telling. There will likely be one or two who won't know exactly what they're telling just yet. That's okay.
 - a. The magic number is **three**. Three storytellers gives them the flexibility to tell whatever story they would like, and give room for the questions afterward.
3. Over the next week or two, look up their stories. Read over them. Find Wikipedia articles on the stories.
 - a. Remember to vet any information on Wikipedia and make sure that what the article says about the folktale is true.
 - b. Be aware that sometimes these stories may be only found in collections still under copyright, or adapted by an author in a book not available online. Make sure you look these up and find them (probably ILL) so you aren't caught not having the story read!
4. Formulate three-four questions about the story. Keep them simple: about the author, the history of the story, its origins, or the region which it comes from. Sometimes you can dissect cultural ideas or ask about storytelling in general.
 - a. It's also fun to make questions specifically directed to the storyteller, to "humanize" them with the audience, or just to liven things up. For example, during summer I may ask the storytellers "What's one summer plan you have?" or the like. I like to have one question like this that I ask all of the storytellers in one session.
 - b. If you have a new storyteller, it's best to have one of their questions be about them and introducing them.
5. Write down the questions and email them to the storytellers one week before (the Thursday before, usually). This will give them time to think about their questions and how they will answer.
 - a. While you're doing research, note the websites you use. Favorite or save them. You can send these to the storytellers to assist them in learning about their stories.
 - b. Don't feel afraid to ask the storytellers if they have anything they would like to talk about in their questions section.
 - c. I usually like to email them the questions in the same order they'll tell.
6. Answer any concerns the storytellers may have about their stories, questions, if they won't be able to make it, etc.

Day of (*Room set up is on the third page*)

1. Make a sign, or write on the arrow sign, letting patrons know about Talking Tales occurring in TA. Put it out around 4-4:30.
2. At 5:20, make an announcement over the intercom.
3. Actually start the program at 5:35.
 - a. Welcome everyone.

- b. Give a small, one sentence spiel on what Talking Tales is. There are frequently new people.
 - c. Give a shout out to the Friends! Let our patrons know our programs aren't possible without them!
 - d. Introduce the topic.
- 4. Before each story, introduce the teller and the story.
- 5. After all the stories are told, ask the storytellers back up and have the Q&A section.
 - a. It's best to ask them in the same order they told.
- 6. When you're done, ask the audience to give the tellers another round of applause, then introduce the next month's theme.

After

1. Thank the tellers!
2. Ask them if they have any questions.
3. As I said earlier, some will let you know their unavailability now, or what story they'll be telling next time. Make a quick note of that.
4. Oftentimes it's best to use this time to address any concerns we may have, and let them know the theme in the months following the next.

Other Thoughts

- Each month will have some sort of theme. Things to glean themes from include:
 - o Holidays
 - o Cultural moments in the month
 - o Months that commemorate a culture (Ex: February is Black History Month)
- Get Themes set far in advance. It's recommended to get a whole calendar year set in one go.
- It's suggested to have "Scary Stories" or "Ghost Stories" every October. Everyone loves ghost stories!
- If you meet a new storyteller and would like them to join, here's some things to consider:
 - o Let them know this is volunteer. There will not be any payment for performances (Unless things change)
 - o Ask them what their history in storytelling is.
 - o Ask them if they have any recordings of their stories.
 - o Make sure they understand the format! There may be a communication breakdown where they think it's only a talk, or only about the stories. They need to understand it's a hybrid of the two.
 - o Invite them to attend a Talking Tale event. Speak with them afterwards, and gauge their ability to speak.
 - o Collect their contact information.
- If you're short on storytellers, don't feel afraid to pull from other departments.
 - o A great contact is the Toastmasters, a speaking organization. The City of Tyler has their own chapter, the Blueprint Toastmasters. Storytelling is part of their curriculum and this may offer them a great place to fulfill that need.
- There is a plan to meet at least once a year for a sort of "State of the Program" with the East Texas Storytellers. Use this time to address concerns and make improvements.

Setup

-A semi-circle with 12-15 chairs.

-Have three chairs for the discussion portion at the front of the “stage”. Very front, where the chairs where the storytellers sit is almost even with the chairs on the end.

-Have a chair opposite of the storytellers for you to sit in. Think of it as a sort of “talk show” format seating.

-Remember to bring up the stage lights.

-Be prepared to have any cords ready if the teller needs some additional AV help.

-If may be necessary to ask the Administrative Assistant to turn off the A/C during the performance.

-Remember to reset the room and manually turn off the stage lights once the program has concluded.