



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

2/9/10

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Valerie Tutson "The Right to...Liberty"

Grade levels: 3-8

During the Colonial Period and the time of the American Revolution, freedom was on the minds of all people, including those held in captivity or on the margins in free Black communities. There were many Black people who wanted to make sure that the revolutionary ideals of the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness would become reality for themselves, their community, and their children. Storyteller Valerie Tutson recounts significant moments from our national history through the tales of Ona Maria Judge, who ran away from President George Washington, James Forten, who as a teen risked his life fighting against the British, and Elizabeth Freeman, known as Mumbet, whose court case paved the way to abolishing slavery in Massachusetts.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To experience the art of storytelling.
2. To get familiarized with storytelling as a way to pass on history.
3. To learn about the experiences of African Americans during the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods of American history.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *The Colonial Period and The Revolutionary Period*

Begin with a discussion about the Colonial and Revolutionary periods in American history. Ask students to share their knowledge of the time period: When was it? Who were the first colonists? What were the colonies? Why did they want to separate from England? What was the experience of Africans and African Americans? Divide the class into small groups and assign each a topic (i.e., games, clothing, food, holidays, etc.). Have each group research their topic and present their findings to the class.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Deconstructing Stories*

Students review the stories told during the program and identify the main characters in the stories, as well as their personal challenges and accomplishments. Students think up other possible outcomes, determine how they might play out on stage, and present these possible outcomes to the rest of the class. Students research stories of other notable African Americans alive at that time and share their stories with the class.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

African American Studies, English Language Arts, History and Social Sciences, Multicultural Studies, Theatre

PRE-ACTIVITY:

The Colonial Period and the Revolutionary Period

LEARNING GOAL:

To learn about the life and experiences of African Americans during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Books about the Colonial and American Revolutionary periods

TIME:

Two 45-minute sessions

STEP 1: Discuss the Colonial and Revolutionary periods in American history. Using a bubble chart, ask students to share any words, customs, experiences, or other ideas that relate to the time period. Have them brainstorm their own understanding, knowledge, and ideas about Africans' and African Americans' experiences during that time.

STEP 2: Divide students into groups and assign each group a topic, such as living conditions, culture, holidays, history, the Declaration of Independence, etc. Have each group research its topic in relation to Africans and African Americans.

STEP 3: Give students time to use the resources, both in and out of class, to research their topics.

STEP 4: Have each group present its research creatively to the class (i.e. through drawing, maps, crafts, music, drama, etc.).

EXTENSIONS:

- 1) Discuss the idea of history. What is its connection to story and storytelling? Whose stories do we read/learn about as part of history? Whose stories are missing? Ask students to discuss the challenges of knowing the history of Africans and African Americans. Have students discuss what other stories are missing from our studies in history.
- 2) Discuss storytelling as a way to pass on history. Discuss the elements of a good story (i.e. characters, setting, problem, conclusion). Create a story map and model it with the class. Have students read a story from history and create their own story maps. Have them share their maps with the rest of the class.

POST-ACTIVITY: *Deconstructing Stories*

LEARNING GOALS:

To explore plot and characters in the stories

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Pens and paper

TIME:

45 minutes

STEP 1: Discuss the way storytelling was used to portray history. Have students identify what was effective about the art form. What tools did the storyteller employ? Discuss how it is the same and different from story writing.

STEP 2: Discuss the plots of the various stories presented. Have students identify main characters in the stories.

STEP 3: Assign students to be scribes for each character. Discuss the personalities and roles of each character. Have scribes write down all of the important information discussed about their characters.

STEP 4: Have students think up other possible outcomes of the stories. Have the scribes write down these outcomes.

STEP 5: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the alternative outcomes that were brainstormed. Ask the groups to work together to determine how the possible outcomes would change the story.

STEP 6: Ask the groups to present the possible outcomes to the rest of the class by presentation, acting it out, or storytelling.

EXTENSIONS:

- 1) Have the students write their own version of one of the stories Valerie Tutson told.
- 2) Have students create their own story. Brainstorm a character who may have been alive during the time period discussed and a possible problem and potential solutions. Have students work in pairs to make up a story out loud together. Pairs can present to small groups or the whole class. Stories can also be written.

Valerie Tutson

Grade Levels: 3-8

RESOURCES:

Bauer, Caroline Feller. Read for the Fun of It: Active Programming with Books for Children. H.H. Wilson Company, 1992.

Gregory, Cynde. Childmade: Awakening Children to Creative Writing. New York: Station Hill Press, 1990.

Trelease, Jim. The Read-Aloud Handbook. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

McGovern, Anne. If You Lived in Colonial Times. New York: Scholastic, Inc. 1992.

Figley, Marty Rhodes. Prisoner for Liberty. Minneapolis: Millbrook Press. 2008

Haskins, Jim. Black Stars of Colonial Times and the Revolution. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2002

Davis, Burke. Black Heroes of the American Revolution. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1976

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Valerie Tutson graduated from Brown University with a masters degree in Theatre Arts and a degree in a self-designed major, Storytelling As a Communication Art. Valerie has been telling stories in schools, churches, libraries, festivals and conferences since 1991. She draws her stories from around the world, with an emphasis on African traditions. Her repertoire includes stories and songs she learned in her travels to South Africa, her experiences in West Africa, and stories from African American history. In addition, she is gaining quite a reputation for her exciting re-telling of age-old Bible stories. In addition to delighting listeners with her storytelling, she also teaches workshops and classes to students of all ages. She has been hosting Cultural Tapestry, an award-winning show for COX3 celebrating the diverse cultures around us, for 12 years. Valerie has most recently served as the co-director of the National Black Storytelling Festivals in Providence, RI and Tampa, FL. As a founding member of the Rhode Island Black Storytellers (RIBS), Valerie directs the Funda Fest: A Celebration of Black Storytelling, which brings the finest in cultural arts edutainment to the Rhode Island community.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences/ Arts for Learning (YA), America's largest arts in education nonprofit, transforms the lives and education of our youth through the arts. The organization connects professional artists with schools, libraries, community organizations, and hospitals to provide artistically excellent assembly programs that further develop Creative Learning and Life Skills.

All YA artists are professional artists who have completed a rigorous interview and audition process and are evaluated annually on their work. Through in-school assembly performances, workshops, master classes and artist-in-residence programs, teachers and coordinators integrate the arts in their academic and enrichment programs while directly addressing national and state content standards.

Healing Arts for Kids expands YA's mission to make the arts a part of EVERY child's education. A group of professional artists provide assembly programs, small presentations, and residencies to acutely and chronically ill children, physically and emotionally challenged children, and other special education populations in K-12 schools, hospital schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters.