

# School-Age and Family Storytime Ideas

“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.”

–Albert Einstein

## 1. Fun with Story Telling

### Book:

Van Allsburg’s *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Houghton Mifflin 1984). Grades 1-5. This book is actually a series of outstanding drawings, each with a title and a caption, encouraging the reader to make up his or her own story.

**Follow up book:** *Chronicles of Harris Burdick: Fourteen Amazing Authors Tell the Tales* (Houghton Mifflin 2012). Grades 5-9.

### Read Alouds:

*Isabella: Star of the Story*, by Jennifer Fosberry. While visiting the library, a young girl pretends to be her favorite children’s book characters.

*Interrupting Chicken*, by David Ezra Stein. Chicken wants a bedtime story, but keeps interrupting each time the story gets exciting.

**Other books:** Any from the “Re-Invented Fairy Tales” list. Imagine the fun of taking a familiar fairy tale and creating a new twist: add a character, create a different ending, or give it a modern context. Re-inventing fairy tales can be enjoyable for the whole family. Read one aloud or create a display of your library’s many re-told fairy tales. Offer a writing contest for imagining a “local version” or a “high tech” version of an old tale. Submissions can be written, visual art, or recorded as sound or video files. Publish the winners on your website.

### More Activities:

Host a creative writing party or contest based on *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.

Families tell a “Pass the bag” cumulative story to spark imagination/creativity. Place several objects in a bag (not see through). Use things like a small stuffed animal, a set of keys, a toothbrush, a gold coin, a feather, etc. Participants pull an item from the bag and incorporate it into the story. This activity works best with small groups who are comfortable with each other to take the risk of participating.

## 2. Imagine a Place



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**Books:**

*How I Learned Geography*, by Uri Shulevitz. When his father brings home a map instead of food, a hungry boy is understandably angry. But once the map is there, the boy is entranced. Based on the author's childhood during WWII, this book shows the splendid power of imagination as the boy dreams of places on the map, helping him to survive the emotional challenges of the war.

*Imagine a Place / Imagina un Lugar*, by Sarah L. Thompson. "Imagine a place...where your mind opens wider...than any walls around you." This poetically shows how imagination can reveal the extraordinary in every day.

**Poem:** Travel Plans by Bobbie Katz: (taken from <http://www.familyreading.org/docs/poems-animals.pdf>)

If I could go anywhere,  
Here's what I'd do.  
I'd pop in the pouch of a kind  
Kangaroo.  
I'd travel around for as long  
As I pleased,  
And learn to say "thank you"  
In Kangarooese.

**Activities:**

- Use a discarded atlas or other old maps to create any number of paper art projects: <http://greenupgrader.com/17831/craft-recycled-5-ways-to-reuse-old-maps/>
- This mapping craft shows kids where they live in relation to the world: <http://www.thecraftycrow.net/2012/01/mapping-craft.html>

**Snacks:** "Snack around the world" by providing different foods from various continents. Display with the country's flag on a toothpick, and place food around a globe.

<http://www.babble.com/best-recipes/global-food-international-kid-friendly-recipes/around-the-world-in-18-dishes/>

### 3. Imagine Hybrid Animals - Drop-in activity for anytime during Family Reading Week



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**Book:**

*Cock a Doodle Moooo!: A Mixed-Up Menagerie*, by Keith DuQuette. Based on ancient mythology, this delightful book imagines a world where real animals are joined together in wondrous combinations. There is a "frutterfly" (frog + butterfly); a "squoodle" (squid + poodle) and many more. The book ends with an invitation to create your own amazing, funny creature.

**Activities:**

This book allows us to use our imagination in two different ways: verbally (combining the names of animals) and visually (drawing new hybrid animals). Invite families to work together to create their own mixed-up creatures. What kind of sound would it make? How would it move? What would it eat? Encourage the use of local animals to make your projects unique to your part of Idaho. Provide a place for the new mutant animal's title on some art paper and set up supplies. Post the new creatures on a growing bulletin board display all week. For younger children, Google "animal templates" and pre-print some options they can cut and paste together to create their new animal creatures.

**Snacks:**

Give small boxes of animal crackers or other fun incentives to families who come participate in the activity during the week.

**Display:**

Display a wide variety of books about animals, fiction and nonfiction, for checkout. Photocopy and laminate a few provocative pages from DuQuette's book and post the question, "Of all the animals we could combine, what kind of creatures would *you* design?"

## 4. Fun with Bubbles

**Book:** *Bubble Bubble*, by Mercer Mayer. A small boy makes all kinds of imaginary animals with his magic bubble maker. A fantastic book requiring the reader to imagine and infer often.

**Activities:**

Head outside or to a large area where participants can blow bubbles. Use large wands for making BIG bubbles. Capture images of children/families blowing bubbles. Depending on the age, they can take pictures of each other using iPads or other devices. Back inside, project the images on a screen and look to identify creative creatures, things, etc. in the shapes of the bubbles. (With a Smart Board you can even trace over the images to outline particulars.) Writing/art extension: use the phrase from the book: "that took care of that" as a writing or illustrating prompt and recall narrative events in the story or create your own new stories using your imagination.



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### Displays:

- Your library probably has many wonderful story books and science/nonfiction books about bubbles. Display them and encourage checkout.
- Decorate with clear plastic ornaments like these: <http://www.amazon.com/110mm-Plastic-Acrylic-Fillable-Ornaments/dp/B005SHO786>  
You can fill them with fun riddles and give them away at the end of the event.

### Bubble Recipe:

2/3 c. dishwashing soap (Joy works great)

1 gallon water

2-3 Tbsp. glycerin

### Bubble Art:

Using straws, tempera paint, foam and boxes

<http://artful-kids.com/blog/2012/02/02/3-ways-to-paint-with-bubbles/>

### Snacks:

Be a child's hero – give them chocolate milk in a clear cup/bottle and a straw and let them blow lots of bubbles while they drink!



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