

VALUES

TITLE: The secret heart of trees

AGE GROUP: 9-11

DURATION: 45+ min with debriefing

LEARNING OUTCOME: Enable learners to develop appropriate values, habits and attitudes when handling money. Provide opportunities for learners to understand the nature, sources and uses of money.

respect for life, attention to details, curiosity, increased self-understanding

KEY CONCEPTS: It is a Metamorphosis Folk-Tale Therapy Session (the method developed by Ildiko Boldizsar, PhD)

MATERIALS NEEDED: Nice box full of small gem-like things (treasures, little toys etc.), pillows, carpet, matraces (on which children can sit on the ground), coloring pencils, markers, chinks, coloring picture of a beautiful tree.

DESCRIPTION:

Preparation

Enough space to jump and move around.

General info

The Folk Tale Therapy Session has a strict structure, based on the initiation ceremony structures. Main parts of the structures are:

- Entering the folk tale's liminal (transitional, what if) space.
- Attuning discussion
- Body-Mind Focusing
- Storytelling should be always by heart, keeping eye contact. That means the story has to be learned. It shall not be learned word-by-word, but the essential sentences yes.
- Personalizing and discussion
- Leaving the liminal space (closure)
- There is no debriefing after a folk tale session.

Notice: All folk songs, rhymes, which are local, and even known by the children, can be used.

The next schedule is designed for the Secret Heart of Trees folk tale.

Preparing the Space:

Put two chairs at the center of the play space. These will represent the Gate to the Tale.

Put the Treasure Box in the middle of the playing space, open.

You can put around pictures of trees, maybe also rabbits and foxes. You can also have a stuffed fox and rabbit with you. The idea is to create a very nice, imaginative space for the tale.

Entering the Folk Tale Session: (5 min)

With singing a child song together, go together to the GATE. Stand by Gate as a Gate-keeper and tell the children that they enter by whispering what they really long for in life as for now (it can be anything - a toy, sweets, travel. They do not share with each other, only you). You just listen to what they want, and let them enter. You tell them to choose one or more treasures from the treasure box which somehow can represent what they want.

Attuning: (10 min)

“I see, all of you have chosen some treasures. Will you share with us, what you choose and why?” (Discussion. Not all children need to share, but it might take a while to listen to them. This exercise is getting the children to prepare for the tale, which contains treasures)

Body-Mind Focusing (4 min)

“OK, let’s get into pairs! Turn your back towards each other, and rub your backs to each other. You can take rounds: first one of you standing, like a tree, the other one moving, like a little hare (rabbit) to scrub their back to the tree, and then change”

(This exercise gets them into their bodies and prepares them for the listening of the story. Also it is already related to the story itself)

Storytelling: (5 min)

“I also have a story, where a little rabbit also made friends with the tree. Do you want to hear it? (They will say yes)

Storytelling, without the end part.

Discussion: (10 min)

“How would you finish this story? What shall happen next? What do you think of the characters? “

Later you can share them the real ending of the story, but it is not needed.

Personal level involvement: (5-10 min)

Spread the coloring picture of the tree to everyone, and also the coloring tools.

Ask them to color the tree as they like, and draw inside or around, or write those things that are most precious to them.

OR: you can ask them, have they ever experienced being cheated, and how they reacted.

Leaving the space:

All of you can leave the space with rabbit jumping through the gate - outside they change back into children.

The folk tale:

The Secret Heart of the Tree.

(Told by Allan Davies, published [here](#))

It was a hot, hot, hot day and Hare was really suffering. Sweat ran off the ends of his ears, and he was panting. "I need some shade," he said to himself. "If I don't cool down, I'm going to melt."

So he hopped (slowly) over to the Baobab tree. It cast a big pool of lovely, cool shade all around its trunk. It looked really good to Hare, but he was a polite creature, so rather than just hopping into the shade, he said to the Baobab tree: Baobab, can I rest in your shade, please? It's very hot out here."

The Baobab rustled its leaves in surprise and said to Hare, "Of course you can. Stay as long as you like." Hare hopped into the shade beneath the tree and sat down. It was sooo lovely and cool. A little breeze sprang up from nowhere and ruffled his fur...He lay down, stretched out his legs, and felt much, much better.

"Thank you, Baobab. This is a beautiful cool patch of shade you have here. I feel much better already."

The Baobab rustled its leaves, and a ripe, succulent fruit fell out of its branches and landed right next to Hare. Hare ate the fruit slowly, enjoying the juices and sweet taste. "Thank you, Baobab. How did you know I was thirsty as well?" said Hare.

He just lay there for a while, enjoying the peace and quiet, but then he started to itch. Right in the middle of his back, right in the part you just can't reach yourself, no matter how hard you try... and you know what that's like. It can easily drive you crazy. "Baobab, I've got this dreadful itch," he said. "Could I possibly scratch myself against your bark?" The leaves rustled and the Baobab replied, "Scratch away, Friend."

So Hare had a really good scratch, rubbing his back up and down the Baobab's rough bark...It really hit the spot...ummmmmm...good. Leaves rustled and the Baobab said,

"You're the first person that's had the courtesy to say please and thank you, so I'd like to show you something in return. I will open up, so you can come inside me, but you must promise not to take anything."

"That would be wonderful," said Hare. "I promise to be careful, and not to take anything."

A small crack started in the top of the Baobab's trunk, then grew wider as it ran down the trunk, all the way to the ground. Then the two halves of the trunk slowly creaked open like two giant doors. Hare poked his nose inside...and then his jaw dropped so far that he nearly tripped over it... He hopped further in, over lush green grass. There was a little stream running through a meadow, and a soft, golden light that seemed to come from everywhere at once. He went further in and saw heaped piles of every kind of fruit, ripe and luscious...He was still hungry, and went towards them, but then he stopped, remembering his promise. Then he saw something sparkling in the grass. A carpet of jewels, gold and silver, spread as far as he could see. He picked up a big ruby to look at it, then carefully put it back down, exactly where he had picked it up. Shaking his head in amazement, Hare went on, deeper and deeper into the heart of the tree. Then he saw a pulsing green light. As he got closer, he saw that the light was coming from an emerald as big as his head, sitting on top of a rock. It was the most beautiful thing that Hare had ever seen, and he reached out towards it longingly...then stopped.

"I can see you are someone that keeps your promises," said the Baobab. "Please choose something to take with you, as my gift." What to take? Hare thought about the fruit, and how he was still hungry. But if he took a fruit, he'd eat it, and then it would be gone. He went back to the jewels, and after a lot of searching, found a very plain gold ring. He held the ring up.

"Could I possibly take this?" he asked. "It would make a lovely present for my wife."

"Take it, and my blessings with it," replied the Baobab.

And so Hare hurried back out, and the trunk of the tree closed up again. Hare scurried home to his wife—who was absolutely delighted with her present. She put the ring round her tail, and sashayed about looking over her shoulder. Hare made her promise not to tell anybody where she got the ring, and she agreed.

Later on that day, she was hopping out, round and about, when she heard a snicker in her ear. It was Mrs. Hyena. “Hee...hee...hee...nice ring there, nice ring...Where’d ya geddit?” At first Mrs., Hare wouldn’t tell, but Mrs. Hyena was big, and strong, and very mean, and she wouldn’t let Mrs. Hare go until she’d got the truth out of her. That night, when Hyena got home, his wife told him about Mrs. Hare’s new jewelry. “So? Whadd’ya saying here?” said Hyena. “I’m saying if that stooped Hare can get a ring, you can get the whole shooting match for me. Hee-hee-hee-hee. So get up off your behind tomorrow and go on down to the Baobab tree, hee-hee-hee...”

So, the next morning, Hyena loped down to the Baobab tree. “Hyah, bub, howya doin? Okay if I grab some shade, pal?” The tree rustled its leaves and said, “Yes, o course, be my guest.” Hyena sat down and picked his nose for a while. Then he said, “Hey, I’m starving here! Where’s the fruit?” The tree rustled its leaves, said nothing, but dropped a fruit. Hyena scarfed it up in no time, belched, then said, “Got me an itch. Okay to scratch? I mean, I wouldn’t want to offend anybody, or nothin’.” “Don’t let me stop you,” said the tree. So Hyena, who was always itching, had himself a good scratch on the tree’s trunk. Then he lay about for a bit, giggling quietly to himself.

“Hey, I done the shade, I done the fruit, I done the scratch... When do I get to see inside, hey-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho?” “Well,” said the tree, “if you want, I suppose there’s no harm. But you must...”

“Yeah, I know, keep the mitts off. I know the score,” said Hyena. The crack appeared in the top of the tree and spread to the ground, and once more the Baobab tree opened wide its secret heart. Hyena bounded inside, looking all over the place. “Hey, coooooool....old Hare was right...well, I’ll be...” He pulled some sacks out of his pocket, scooped up all the fruit, and put them in one sack. The jewels and gold went into another sack. Then Hyena saw the green glow and loped over. “Cooooool.” He didn’t think twice, but grabbed the emerald and turned to leave. But the light in the tree was dying, and the gap in the trunk closing.

... (you can stop here, and ask the pupils to come up with their ending.)

The end of the story:

Hyena ran as fast as he could towards the narrowing strip of daylight. But he wasn't fast enough. With an almighty crash the trunk slammed shut. And, as far as I know, he's still in there. Hyena was the last creature to see the secret heart of a tree. They won't let us in anymore because they don't trust anybody. And who can blame them? Maybe, one day, we might be lucky enough to win back that trust and see the wonders in the heart of the tree.



Links to Coloring Tree pages:

<https://hu.pinterest.com/pin/288019338645065476/>

<https://printablefreecoloring.com/drawings/nature/tree/54/>

<https://printablefreecoloring.com/drawings/nature/tree/54/>

<https://www.pinterest.cl/pin/381609768407136258/> (a baobab tree)