

YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T EAT THAT!: SILLY STORIES ABOUT FOOD

The following library program is aimed at preschool and early elementary school kids in a classroom or library setting. Some of the activities may have to be adapted if presenting to a larger crowd. All of the stories and activities center around food, eating, and silly things people or animals shouldn't eat!

RITUAL

I start off my storytelling session by singing this song (to a tune I made up):

Tell Me a Story, Please!

Put your hands in the air and touch them to the ground,

Put your fingers on your nose, and wave your head around.

Put your hands on your shoulders, and your elbows on your knees,

Put your chin in your hands, and say, "Tell me a story, please."

The kids will all respond with, "tell me a story, please!" Then they are ready to listen and participate.

OPENING ACTIVITY

LET'S GO TO THE MARKET

With young children: Keep a steady rhythm beating thighs. Place pictures of food on a felt board, or pull real or plastic food items out of a shopping bag as song is sung.

With older children: Have children keep a steady rhythm, alternately patting knees and clapping (Knees and clap, knees and clap, etc.). As rhythm is maintained, pass a basket or bag around the circle and have children pull food items out as you sing. After each verse, the bag is passed to the next person, keeping the rhythm going all the time.

Let's go to the market, let's go to the store-
We can buy a loaf of bread, and maybe a few things more

Let's go to the market, let's go to the store-
We can buy some broccoli, and maybe a few things more

Let's go to the market, let's go to the store-

We can buy some cereal, and maybe a few things more

Let's go to the market, let's go to the store-
We can buy some bananas, and maybe a few things more

Let's go to the market, let's go to the store-
We can buy some orange juice, and maybe a few things more

[Optional: have participants add their own food, silly or not, until you're ready to begin the story]

(courtesy of Nancy Stewart's website: <http://www.nancymusic.com>)

STORY

THE WIDE-MOUTHED FROG

This is the story of the wide-mouth Frog. The wide-mouth frog loved to sing, hop, and eat bugs. He would sing,

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And then, *chomp* [stick out tongue to catch a bug], he would eat a bug. But one day, he started wondering what all the other animals eat. So he went to his mother and asked, "Mama, what do all the other animals eat?" And his mother, who was very busy, told him to go ask the neighbors. So he hopped away, singing as he went:

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And pretty soon, he heard a low growl from beyond the trees. So he hopped over to see who it was. And it was Mama Bear! He asked, "Mama Bear, what do you and your cubs eat?" And Mama Bear said [low voice with a rumble], "We eat berries and honey and such." Wide-mouth frog responded, "Cool! Well, I'm a wiiiide-mouth frog [open mouth really wide], and I eat bugs! Thanks!" And he hopped away, singing as he went:

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

Pretty soon, he heard someone nibbling over by the bush. So he hopped over to see who it was. And it was Rabbit! He asked, "Rabbit, what do you eat?" And Mama Bear said [high, squeaky voice], "I eat carrots and lettuce and such." Wide-mouth frog responded, "Cool! Well, I'm a wiiiide-mouth frog [open mouth really wide], and I eat bugs! Thanks!" And he hopped away, singing as he went:

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And pretty soon, he heard a rustling noise. So he hopped over to see who it was. And it was Fox! He asked, "Fox, what do you eat?" And Fox said [cocky voice], "I eat yummy mice and rats." Wide-mouth frog responded, "Cool! Well, I'm a wiiiide-mouth frog [open mouth really wide], and I eat bugs! Thanks!" And he hopped away, singing as he went:

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And pretty soon, he got to a pond. In the pond were two blinking eyes [show blinking of eyes] and one long snout [show snout with hands]. It was Mr. Alligator! The wide-mouth frog asked, "Mr. Alligator, what do you eat?" And the alligator smiled a sly smile, blinked his eyes slowly, and answered, "Why, I eat wide-mouth frogs." [Make your eyes grow wide with terror and purse your lips together tightly. Deliver lines with a tiny squeak] The wide-mouth frog responded, "Oh. Um, thanks." And just as the alligator's mouth started to open and the wide-mouth frog could see a glint of sharp, white teeth, wide-mouth frog took off hopping as quickly as he could. Once he was a little bit away, he started singing softly,

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And when he got a little farther away, he sang a little louder.

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

And finally, when he was almost home, he sang really loudly.

"A-hopping I will go, a-hopping I will go, a-hopping here, a-hopping there, a-hopping everywhere."

From then on, the wide-mouth frog continued to hop everywhere, except for near that pond where that alligator was still waiting to eat him!

CRAFT

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly puppet

MATERIALS

Plain brown paper lunch bag; pattern pieces for fly and other animals (see appendix); googly eyes; crayons, colored pencils or markers; plastic sandwich bag; scissors; fabric and other scraps; string or yarn for hair; masking tape.

PROCEDURE

1. Ahead of time
 - a. hold the paper bag on your hand like a puppet and decide where the mouth will be.
 - b. Draw an oval wide enough for the animal pieces to fit through and cut out the hole.
 - c. Open the bag and tape a plastic bag to the inside of the mouth, so that animals will fall into it.
 - d. Lay out scraps of materials, string and yarn, googly eyes on the table
 - e. Photocopy the animals onto white paper
2. At the program
 - a. Let children draw and color in the faces and mouths of their puppets. They can glue on eyes, fabric for the lady's dress, string and yarn for the hair, etc. They can also color the animals that the lady will swallow.
 - b. Sing the song with them

There was an Old Lady song

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady who swallowed a spider,
That wriggled and wiggled and jiggled inside her;
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - Perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady who swallowed a bird;
How absurd to swallow a bird.
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - Perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady who swallowed a cat;
Fancy that to swallow a cat!
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - Perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady that swallowed a dog;
What a hog, to swallow a dog;
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - Perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady who swallowed a cow,

I don't know how she swallowed a cow;
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog,
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly - Perhaps she'll die!
There was an old lady who swallowed a horse...
She's dead, of course!

STORY

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS (GRIMM FAIRY TALE)

Once upon a time a Mother Goat lived in a pretty little house with her seven little goats.

Mother often had to leave home to do the shopping, and on that fateful day, she had given her children the usual warnings, before setting off to market.

"You mustn't open the door to anyone. Don't forget, there's a wicked wolf lurking about here. It's black, with horrible paws and a nasty deep voice. If it knocks, keep the door tightly shut!"

Mother Goat's words were wise indeed, for as she was telling one of her neighbors about her fears, the wolf disguised as a peasant was hiding close by, listening to every word.

"Good! Very good!" said the wolf to himself. "If the goat goes to market, I'll drop by her house and gobble the kids!"

Then, trying not to look too conspicuous, the wolf hurried along to the goat's house. There, he threw off his disguise. He then growled in a deep voice:

"Open the door! Open the door! It's Mother! I've just come back from the market! Open the door!"

When the little goats heard the deep voice, they remembered their mother's warning. From behind the barred door, they said to the wolf:

"We know who you are! You're the wolf! Our mother has a sweet gentle voice, not a deep nasty one like yours! Go away! We'll never open the door to you!"

And though the wolf banged furiously on the door, the little goats, though trembling with terror, refused to let him into the house, and so the door remained shut.

Then the wolf had a brainwave. He dashed off to the baker's and got a big cake dripping with honey. He hoped this would sweeten his voice. And in fact, after eating it, his voice didn't sound quite so deep.

Over and over again, he practiced imitating Mother Goat's voice. You see, he'd heard it in the woods. When he felt certain he could easily be mistaken for Mother Goat herself, he rushed back to the house and the seven little goats.

"Open the door! Open the door! It's Mother! I've just come back from the market! Open the door!" he called.

This time, the little goats had doubts: the voice did rather sound like mother's, and they were about to unlock the door, when one of the little goats suspiciously cried:

"Mother, let us see your foot!" Without thinking, the wolf raised a black hairy paw. And the little goats knew that the wolf had come back.

"You're not our mother! She doesn't have horrid black paws!" cried the little goats. "Go away, you wicked wolf!"

And once more, in spite of all his hard work, the wolf found the door locked against him. The wolf ran down to the mill, and found a sack of flour. He thrust his paws into it until they were pure white.

"I'll trick them this time," he said. "Mmm! My mouth's watering already! I'm hungry! My tummy's empty and my trousers are falling off! I'll swallow these tender little goats whole!"

Again he knocked on the door.

"Open the door! Open the door! It's Mother! I've just come back from market! Open the door!"

The voice seemed exactly like mother's, but the wary little goats quickly called out: "Mother, let us see your foot!"

The wily wolf lifted a snow white paw, and the little goats, now reassured, threw open the door. What a shock they received! An enormous set of jaws with sharp fangs growled fiercely. Cruel claws reached out for their prey. The little goats scattered in terror.

One dived under the table, while other crawled below the bed. Another little goat hid in the cupboard and one tried to hide in the oven, though the stove was still hot. One little goat crouched inside a barrel and the littlest little goat hid in the grandfather clock. There he huddled, holding his breath, as the wolf hunted down his brothers.

One by one, the little goats were pulled from their hiding places. All except for the one in the clock.

The wicked wolf's appetite did not pass until he had found them and swallowed each in a single gulp. The only one to escape was the littlest goat, for the wolf never imagined that there was room for a little goat inside the very narrow grandfather clock.

In the meantime, Mother Goat had really come back from the market. When, from a distance, she noticed that the door was ajar, she rushed home, her heart in her mouth. She had a sinking feeling: what she feared had really happened.

The wicked wolf had gobbled up all her children. She dropped into a chair, sobbing bitterly, but as she cried, the door of the grandfather clock swung open and out ran the littlest goat.

"Mommy! Mommy!" wept the little goat. "It was terrible! The wolf came, and I think he's eaten all my brothers!"

"My poor child!" sobbed Mother Goat. "You're the only one left! That evil brute has gobbled them all!"

Not long after, Mother Goat and her son left the house to take a stroll in the garden.

Suddenly, she heard a low wheezing sound: someone was snoring heavily. It was the greedy wolf. His feast of little goats had been too much for him and he was fast asleep, dead to the world.

In a flash, Mother Goat had a brainwave. She said to her son: "Run and fetch me a needle and thread and a pair of scissors!"

With these, she swiftly slit open the wolf's stomach. As she had hoped, the ravenous brute had swallowed every little goat whole. There they were all still alive, alive inside his tummy. One by one, out they popped from the wolf's tummy.

"Hurry! Hurry! Not a sound! We must get away before he wakens up! Wait! Fetch me a heap of stones!"

And so they filled the wolf's stomach with stones and stitched it up again. The wolf woke later with a raging thirst.

"What a heavy tummy I have!" he said. "I've eaten too much! All these little goats!"

But when he went down the river to drink, his tummy full of stones tipped him over and he fell into the water. The weight took him straight to the bottom, and the goat and her kids shrieked with joy as he sank.

The wicked wolf was dead and the little goats trotted home happily with Mother.

THE BOA CONSTRICTOR

Materials: a large blanket.

Have everyone sit together in a big circle, feet in the middle. Place the blanket in the center of the circle—it will be the boa. Each person should hold onto an edge of the blanket. Recite the poem, moving the blanket up to cover the part of the body mentioned in each line. When you get the last line, everyone will throw the blanket over their heads. (Storycraft book)

Boa Constrictor by Shel Silverstein

Oh, I'm being eaten
By a boa constrictor,
A boa constrictor,
A boa constrictor,
I'm being eaten by a boa constrictor,
And I don't like it--one bit.
Well, what do you know?
It's nibblin' my toe.
Oh, gee,
It's up to my knee.
Oh my,
It's up to my thigh.
Oh, fiddle,
It's up to my middle.
Oh, heck,
It's up to my neck.
Oh, dread,
It's upmmmmmmmmmmffffffffff . . .

STORY

ONE FINE DAY

One fine day as I was
Skipping home from school,
Skipping home from school,
Skipping home from school.

One fine day as I was skipping home from school,
There was my mother, [snap, snap]
And there was father, [snap,snap]
And there was sister, [snap,snap]

And there was brother, [snap,snap]
And there was Herman, [snap,snap]
The family pet, [snap,snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands 3 inches apart)

One fine day as I was ...
There was my mother, [snap,snap]
And there was father, [snap,snap]
And there was sister, [snap,snap]
But where's my brother?
It makes me soooooo mad! (Stomp feet)
And there was Herman, [snap, snap]
The family pet, [snap, snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands 1 foot apart)

One fine day as I was ...
There was my mother, [snap,snap]
And there was father, [snap,snap]
But where's my sister?
It makes me soooooo mad!
And there was Herman, [snap, snap]
The family pet, [snap, snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands 2 feet apart)

One fine day as I was ...
There was my mother, [snap,snap]
But where's my father?
It makes me soooooo mad!
And there was Herman, [snap, snap]
The family pet, [snap, snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands 4 feet apart)

One fine day as I was ...
Where's my mother?
It makes me soooooo mad!
And there was Herman, [snap, snap]
The family pet, [snap, snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands as far apart as possible)

One fine day as I was
Skipping home from school,
Skipping home from school,
Skipping home from school.

There was Herman, the family pet.
And Herman went "BRAAACK" (Burp Sound)
And, there was my mother, [snap, snap]
And there was father, [snap, snap]
And there was sister, [snap, snap]
And there was brother, [snap, snap]
And there was Herman, [snap, snap]
The family pet, [snap, snap]
And he was this big. (hold hands 3 inches apart)

CLOSING

Invite all the kids to participate in a silly food feast of their own and tell their own stories about food! Treats may include a bubbling witch's brew (a fruit punch made with juices and ginger ale, colored with green food coloring, and dry ice to make it bubble and steam with an adult pouring out the drinks), ants on a log (raisins on a peanut-butter covered celery), spider cookies, and more. Check out the books *Science Experiments You Can Eat* by Vicki Cobb and *Snacktivities* by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter.

APPENDIX

Use the old woman and animals below for kids to cut out and use for "There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly." Put the woman's head on the top of the brown paper bag. Put the woman's body on the bottom of the brown paper bag.



