

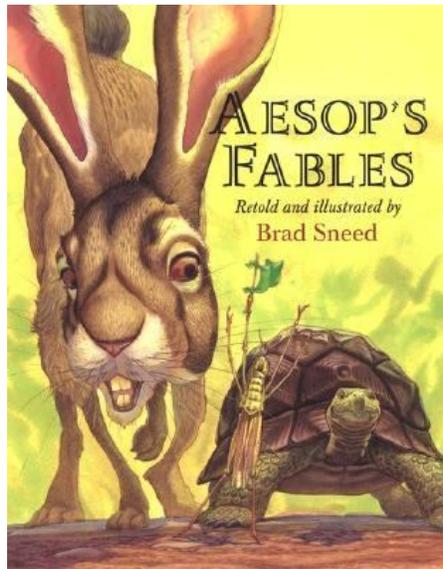
**Books to Treasure 2009
Lesson Plans & Resources**

Aesop's Fables

Retold and Illustrated by Brad Sneed

2003

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Additional Tales to Supplement *Aesop's Fables* by Brad Sneed:

- [The Tortoise & the Hare](#) – Play by Kareth Bodman

The Tortoise & the Eagle

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

Literature/Literary Genres

Focus: Demonstrate knowledge of, and appreciation for fables and their lessons or morals.

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Supplies:

Two puppets: Tortoise & Eagle (*If you do not have eagle puppet any large bird will work.*)

Backdrop: Blue sky with birds flying in the far distance.

Opening Scene:

(Tortoise sits on the ground complaining.)

Tortoise: Those birds are so lucky; they get to have all the fun. All I ever get to do is crawl around in the dirt. It's not fair. They float up with the clouds - and I scrape over the rocks. They have wind in their wings and I have dirt in my nose. Achoo!

Eagle: *(flies in and does a couple of swoops across the stage)*

Tortoise: Hey you, Eagle guy can you teach me to fly?

Eagle: Sure, flying is easy. But what will I get out to teaching you to fly?

Tortoise: I'm rich, I have lots of gold. I'll pay you handsomely for flying lessons.

Eagle: *(swoops down and grabs tortoise by the shell and picks him up off the ground)* Here we go, up, up, up. *(Carries tortoise up high then lets him go)*

Tortoise: *(starts to fall)* Oh boy I'm flying! Just listen to the wind whistling in my ears.

Eagle: *(flies across stage again)* We birds call that falling.

Tortoise: *(looks down and screams)* I forgot the landing lessons! Ohhhhhhhh!
(Loud thump as tortoise hits the ground)

Special Effect: *(a hand full of powder can be tossed up like dirt flying into the air)*

Tortoise: I guess I should be more careful of what I wish for. Ouch!

The Fighting Roosters and the Eagle

Lesson Plan by: Lana Voss

Literature

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Supplies:

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The Fighting Roosters and the Eagle Opening Scene:

(Cast : Narrator, Winning Rooster, Eagle, New King)

Narrator: Two roosters battled in the barnyard. The hens watched from a safe distance as the roosters kicked and slashed, gouged and pecked in a flurry of feathers and dust until one, bruised and battered, cried "UNCLE" and slunk off to a quiet corner to recover.

The Winner: *(Flapped to the top of a high wall to declare this triumph and claim the prize, KING OF THE FARMYARD! He crowed at the top of his lungs, so all would hear)*

"Behold your new king, the undisputed champ of the yard!"

(He strutted the entire length of the wall, bobbing his head and puffing his plumes.)

"I am the greatest fighter ever to grace this here chicken run! I am fast, strong, smart, and good-looking! Anybody wants to say different, step up now and prepare for a whuppin'! What?! Nobody wants a piece of me?"

Eagle: *(An eagle soaring high above noticed the spectacle below and sailed down to pluck the cocky bird off the wall.)*

"I'll take a piece. Nothing I like better than a juicy piece of chicken!"

New King: *(The new king stepped out of the corner and quietly watched the eagle fly away with lunch clutched in his talons)*

Narrator: The moral of this story is pride goes before a fall.

The Fox, the Rooster, & the Dog

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

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Supplies:

Two puppets: Fox & Rooster

Backdrop: Lightly sketched barn yard with moon rising in distant back ground. Make sure moon is large enough to show behind the dog silhouette.

Special effects: A dog in silhouette made from black paper, and mounted on a slim stick. (Or a stick dog puppet)

The Fox, the Rooster, and the Dog Opening Scene:

(Rooster sleeping at side of stage.)

Narrator: One night a hungry and cunning fox was prowling around a farm. In the moonlight he saw a fat rooster snoozing away.

Fox: *(sneaks up to rooster, looks closely then backs away and speaks to audience)*
I love fried chicken, don't you? *(Then begins yelling)* WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

Rooster: *(startles and wakes)* What?

Fox: Good news, good news!

Rooster: *(stammering)* What, why, who, what news?

Fox: Haven't you heard? The King issued a proclamation! There's to be a truce among the animals. No creature may harm another. We are all family and must live together in harmony. Come on over here and give me a hug my fine feather friend.

Rooster: Glory be, that is good news! And what perfect timing. *(Silhouette of dog moves into the moonlight.)*

Rooster: Look, the farmer's dog is coming over the hill. We three can party together!

Fox: *(nervous)* Uh o, got to go. *(Starts to exit)*

Belling the Cat

Reader's Theater: by Lana Voss

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Supplies:

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***Belling the Cat* Opening Scene:**

Narrator: Everyone knows that cats and mice are enemies, but what you may not know is long ago the mice gathered to discuss how to outsmart their crafty foe, the cat.

Young Mouse: *(Stands to address the crowd.)* I think we can all agree that Mr. Cat is a sneak! He creeps close on padded paws, then silently strikes. How many of our kind-rest their souls-have had their lights snuffed without the slightest inkling that danger was a whisker away? I propose, therefore, that we acquire a small bell and attach it to the wretched beast. Then whenever we hear tinkling, we know to lay low.

Crowd of Mice: *(Applause, whistles and hoots of approval break out.)*

Old Mouse: *(Respected mouse stands & raises arm.)* Very well, who among us will bell the cat...any volunteers?

Young Mouse: *(All heads turn to the young mouse; he lowers his eyes and sits on his hands.)*

Narrator: *(Moral)* It is easy to propose impossible remedies.

For another reader's theatre version of *Belling the Cat*, visit

http://www.saskschools.ca/~gregory/plays/bell_cat.html

The Fox and the Crow

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

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Supplies:

Two Puppets: Crow & Fox

Backdrop: Tree limbs, with slit cut through the backdrop so the crow sits higher up than the fox.

Props: Large piece of cheese. (*Cardboard or foam*)

Crow and Fox Opening Scene:

Narrator: A crow flapped to a tree limb, where she prepared to munch on a hunk of cheese she had found, when she was interrupted by a voice from below.

Crow: (*puppeteer will make the noises for crow but crow must not open mouth until the end of story*) Flap, flap, flap.

Fox: (*enters, sits down and looks up at crow*) Hey, good-lookin', what's a beautiful chick like you doing in a dangerous forest like this?"

Crow: (*looks around to find out who is talking*)

Narrator: The startled crow looked down to see a fox sitting under her branch. She wanted to say, "I'm a crow, not a chicken!" But she had a beak full of cheese, so she merely blushed (*dip head*), and cocked her head the way crows do. The fox's eyes gleamed. He had a plan to get that cheese.

Fox: No, I really mean it, you are a raving beauty!

Narrator: The crow wanted to say, "I'm a crow, not a raven, you silly". But as I said before, she was holding cheese in her mouth. So she giggled and turned away.

Crow: (*giggles and turns away from fox*)

Fox: Honestly! The sparkle in your eyes, the ruffle of your feathers. . . I mean. . . WOW! That pretty much says is all WOW! If only . . .

Crow: *(turns back to the fox and tilts head from side to side once waiting for the rest of the statement).*

Fox: If only you had a voice as glorious as your looks, then you would without a doubt be Queen of the Birds.

Narrator: The crow, forgetting for a moment that she was in fact a crow, opened her beak expecting to sing like a nightingale. But what came out was . . .

Crow: *CAW (cheese drops to ground)*

Fox: Ah ha! My dear Miss Crow, you have a voice, all right, but not much of a brain! *(Picks up the cheese and exits).*

Narrator: And the moral of the story: **FLATTERERS ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED**

The Crow and the Pitcher

Lesson Plan by: Lana Voss

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The Crow and the Pitcher Opening Scene:

(Cast: Narrator, Crow and pebbles)

Crow: Golly, I'm parched.

Narrator: A crow was flying over a dry, barren land.

Crow: I'm doomed if I don't find water soon!

Narrator: Then, as fate would have it, she spied a pitcher, of all things, sitting among a pile of rocks and pebbles.

Crow: Please, please, please, let there be water.

Narrator: The crow perched on the pitcher and peeked in. Sure enough, it contained water.

Crow: Hallelujah!

Narrator: (*Act out the crow's actions.*) She thrust her head in, anxious for a taste, but confound it, the pitcher's neck was so long and narrow, she couldn't reach the liquid. Desperate for a drink, she tried to tip the pitcher. She leaned against it and pushed. It didn't budge. She kicked it. It didn't move. She picked up a pebble and pecked at the pitcher. Its clay walls were thick. It didn't crack. The clever crow didn't give up. She hopped to the pitcher top and dropped in pebbles.

Pebbles: Bloop! Bloop! Plink! Plunk! Plop!

Narrator: After many pebbles, at last she dipped her dusty beak and took a long drink.

Narrator: The moral of this story is, necessity is the mother of invention.

Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

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Supplies:

Two Puppets: Two Mouse Puppets

Backdrops: First, a weedy field. Second, a dining room table top with lots of food.

Props: A handful full of wheat straw.

Sound Effect: Someone will need to bark like a large dog.

The Town Mouse and the County Mouse Scene 1:

(Weedy field)

Country Mouse: *(enters with Town Mouse)* Come over here Cuz, sit yourself down and dig into this wheat. It sure is tasty. *(picks up piece of wheat and starts to gnaw on it)* Mmmmmm.

Town Mouse: *(picks up wheat and looks at it, then sneezes)* Ahcoo! Excuse me but this is ant food. Let's blow this hayseed stand and get a real meal. *(grabs County Mouse's arm)* Come on lets go to my house in Town and I'll give you a taste of the sweet life! *(both exit)*

The Town Mouse and the County Mouse Scene 2:

(change backdrop to table top)

Country Mouse: *(both mice enter)* Boy that was a long walk, dodging all those cars is dangerous.

Town Mouse: Behold! *(spreading arms indicating all the food)* Every kind of tasty treat you can imagine, yum.

Country Mouse: *(exclaims)* Mother of Plenty, look at all this beautiful food.

Sound effect: *(Large dog starts barking in background)*

Country Mouse: What's that?

Town Mouse: Oh that's only the dog of the house.

Country Mouse: Only! Good Bye, Cuz. *(starts to exit)*

Town Mouse: What, leaving so soon?

Country Mouse: Yes, Why munch on cake, only to become a dog's dessert?

The Caged Bird and the Bat

Lesson Plan by: Lana Voss

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The Caged Bird and the Bat Opening Scene:

(Cast: Narrator, Bird, Bat)

Narrator: A small cage hung outside a window. Confined within the bars was a beautiful little songbird. The bird had a beautiful singing voice.

Bird: Twitter-tweet, tootle doodle, twitter-tweet.

Narrator: The sweet notes drifted softly into the darkness, for it was still night. When the sun began to peek over the distant rooftops, a strange thing happened-the bird fell silent.

Bat: Excuse me, sir, I don't mean to be rude, but why do you sing when other birds sleep?

Bird: Ah, I have a very good reason! One bright day when I was singing from the branches, a bird catcher followed the sound of my voice and cast his net over me. Now I sing only under the cover of darkness.

Bat: (*The bat smirks as he says*) A good strategy, for a bird that flies free!

Narrator: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The Vain Jackdaw

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

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Supplies:

Shadow Puppets: Shadow puppets will be made from colored card stock paper and mounted on plastic straws. To make shadow puppets and shadow stage see "[Shadow Puppets in Color](#)" by Louise Cochrane, or choose a similar book from your library. Make 5 Silhouette birds: Peacock, Flamingo, Macaw, Kingfisher, and Jackdaw. A Jackdaw is a large black crow-like bird. Make one plain Jackdaw and one with full plumage. For the King, silhouette head with crown.

Props: Loose feathers.

The Vain Jackdaw Opening Scene:

King: *(very loud and proud)* Listen up, everyone; this is Jupiter, Supreme Being, Head Honcho, and Ruler of All Things. I have an important announcement for my fine feathered citizens. Tomorrow, at my place, there will be a pageant where I, as judge, will select the most spectacular among you to be King of All Birds. *(Exits)*

Narrator: *(birds fly on to stage one by one as narrator speaks, they preen as narration continues)* Upon hearing this news, the birds flocked to the community pool to bathe and preen their feathers, for they all wanted to look their best at the competition. *(Jackdaw enters and observes from the side).* The plain Jackdaw was there with the rest, and realized that with his ugly plumage he didn't have a prayer of capturing old Jupiter's attention, so he waited for the other birds to finish preening and go home to get their beauty rest. *(One by one the other birds exit)* He then waded about collecting the most brilliant, fancy feathers the others had dropped, and fastened the plums to his own drab body. *(Switch to the other Jackdaw with all the feathers all over it and parade it back and forth)* Now he was the most beautiful of all the birds, he thought! *(Jackdaw exits)*

King: *(enters, one by one the birds walk before the king, the Jackdaw is last).*

Well, well after careful consideration I am going to appoint the Jackdaw the King of Birds.

Birds: *(squawking, all the birds jump on the jackdaw and pluck the false feather off of him then fly away exposing him as the ordinary jackdaw).*

King: *(only King and Jackdaw on stage, bird hangs head)* Oh my, I see you are an imposter. It wouldn't be right to nominate a cheater. My proclamation is; **THOSE WHO CHEAT LOSE IN THE END.**

The Wolf & the Crane

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
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Supplies:

Two puppets: Crane and Wolfe

Backdrop: Marsh/swamp.

The Wolf & the Crane Opening Scene:

(First part is in pantomime)

Action: Crane is on the stage fishing in the marsh *(might have the crane catch a fish and swallow it, for some extra action)*

Wolf: *(enters, looking quite ill and stumbling around. He seems to have a cold and is sniffing, sputtering, and gurgling. He wipes his nose with his paw several times and then let's go with a huge, froth-spraying cough all over the crane)*

Crane: *(with disgust)* Well, I never. . . Do you mind?! I am sorry you're sick, but you are infecting the entire forest with your germs! Didn't your mother teach you to cover your mouth?

Wolf: *(coughing while speaking)* You don't understand. *(Cough)*, I'm not ill. *(Cough)*, I have a bone stuck in my throat. I came over to ask if you if you would kindly remove it for me. *(Stumbles around with a coughing attack)*

Crane: *(still disgusted)* It stands to reason, I suppose, that an ill-mannered animal such as yourself would not chew his food properly. Perhaps that bone should remain lodged in your gullet as a painful reminder not to wolf down you supper.

Wolf: Oh, have pity, please help me *(cough)*, I can offer you a reward.

Crane: Well, in that case, let me have a look. Say Ahhhhhh.

Action: *(The wolf opens his mouth as wide as he can and says ahhhhhhhhh. Crane sticks her head in the wolfs mouth and looks around then says" here it is; Now I've got it."*

And pulls a bone from the wolf's throat.)

Wolf: *(Without a word of thanks, the wolf turns and starts to run off.)*

Crane: Hey, what about my reward?

Wolf: *(runs back to the crane)* You placed your head in a wolf's mouth and lived to tell about it. What more could you ask for? **THOSE WHO EXPECT THANKS FROM RASCALS ARE OFTER DISAPPOINTED.** *(Wolf exits)*

Crane: *(stands and thinks about it then says)* Oh! *(Exits opposite side of stage)*

The Gnat and the Bull

Lesson Plan by: Kareth Bodman
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Supplies:

Puppets: Two stick puppets, one Bull and one Gnat (*Bull puppets will need only the very large head and horns due to the difference in size that needs to be portrayed. Draw/paint the bulls head and horns on card stock then mount on a chop stick, straw or pencil. Gnat puppet needs to be very tiny. You can use small black pompom or small piece of black material with a black string tied around the center to indicate wings. Glue the gnat on a very thin stiff wire to be displayed as a rod puppet. For an alternative you can hang the gnat from thin wire and display as a marionette.*)

Background: Plain white or very light colored background.

The Gnat & the Bull Opening Scene:

Gnat: (*Puppeteer will need to provide the buzzing sound of the gnat.*)

Action: (*Empty stage – Gnat enters stage left and buzzes busily around the stage going from top right to bottom left. Then across to bottom right and back to top left and flittering all around.*)

Bull: (*Very slowly the bull's head appears at the bottom center of stage*)

Gnat: (*Continues to buzz annoyingly, flits around the bull and then lands on one of his horns. He sits still for one second and then readjusts his seat. This action takes place three or four more times, he even switches horns*)

Bull: (*No movement*)

Gnat: Excuse me Mr. Bull, would you like me to leave you alone?

Bull: (*barely moves head*) What? Who's that talking to me?

Gnat: It's me, Gnat. Would you like me to leave you alone?

Bull: Oh, Mr. Gnat, I didn't realize you were up there, so I suppose I won't miss you when you're gone.

Gnat: *(buzzes from one horn then to the other, then exits stage left)*

Bull: WE ARE NOT ALWAYS AS IMPORTANT AS WE THINK WE ARE. Moooooo.
(Slowly sinks back out of sight)

TORTOISE AND THE HARE or SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

Reader's Theatre by: Kareth Bodman
(For the Garage Door Players)

CAST:

NARRATOR

TORTOISE

HARE

BEAR

SQUIRREL (has finish line)

MOUSE

RACCOON

TREE

PROPS:

Huge cardboard animal heads on dowels/crepe paper fringe.

Tree: cardboard on dowel/crepe paper fringe.

Finish line: crepe paper.

Setup:

Ask for volunteers to help tell story. Hand volunteers their props and put them in position. Give them simple instructions about their character. Have the children listen carefully for word queues to perform the actions of the character.

Discussion: This story has many verbs in it. What are verbs? Action words?

The Tortoise & the Hare Scene 1:

Narrator: There once was a braggety rabbit who like to race. He like to see who could read the fastest, who could eat the fastest, who could hop the fastest, who could do anything the fastest. He just plain liked to race. And he liked to brag about being the fastest too. That is why he got the name Braggety Rabbit. One day Braggety Rabbit, saw a tortoise ambling down the road. The Tortoise was slowly going along minding his own business.

Rabbit: (bouncing right up to Tortoise) Hey Tortoise!! Whatch doin, whatcha doin? Do you wanna race Huh? Do you wanna?" (*jogging up and down*)

Tortoise: Ah yup, I'll race you, it might be fun to be in a race.

Rabbit: I'm the fastest runner in the forest you know. You won't beat me. No way, no way.

Tortoise: Ah yup, your fast and I may be slow but I can try anyway.

Narrator: Some other animals were near by and they heard about the race. Bear volunteered to be the starter for the race, and squirrel and mouse agreed to hold the finish line.

(Braggety Rabbit and Tortoise warmed up by stretching their muscles.)

The Tortoise & the Hare Scene 2:

- Bear:** When I blow this whistle it means go. *(Bear counts to 3 then blows the whistle)*
- Narrator:** Braggety Rabbit shot off the starting line, and Tortoise, though slow began to run the race too. The other animals cheered. *(yeah yeah go go go)* Braggety Rabbit was so fast he had time to run in circles around Tortoise, but Tortoise just kept plodding along. Braggety Rabbit saw a tree, and he said to himself...
- Rabbit:** I have plenty of time to win this race. I think I will just sit down under this tree and take a little nap. *(Sits down)*
- Narrator:** Braggety Rabbit began to snore, and soon he was fast asleep, and it wasn't long until the Tortoise ran right past him. And before you knew it the Tortoise arrived at the finish line while Braggety Rabbit continued his nap. The squirrel and mouse held the rope across the finish line. All the animals cheered as Tortoise reached the finish line. *(crowd cheers)* They all congratulated the Tortoise. Braggety Rabbit heard all the noise and woke up.
- Rabbit:** Hey, what's going on!
- Narrator:** The other animals told him the race was over and Tortoise won.
- Rabbit:** I don't believe it! I don't believe it! How could that slow poke Tortoise win a race?
- Narrator:** Then the Tortoise told Braggety Rabbit an old saying.
- Tortoise:** Ah yup, Slow and steady always wins the race.
- Narrator:** And so our hero, the Tortoise, walked away a winner because everyone knows. . . what?
- All:** SLOW AND STEADY ALWAYS WINS THE RACE!

THE END

A West African Version of this tale titled the *Rabbit and the Tortoise* is available in Jan Thornhill's [Crow & Fox and Other Animal Legends](#). Simon & Schuster, 1993.