

Story Sticks

A collection of ideas and routines for their use plus construction details
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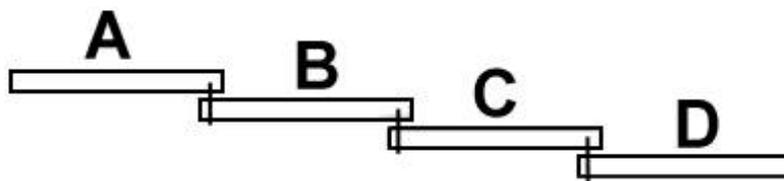
Story Sticks

History and construction details

Story sticks were first described to the magical community as far as I am aware by Christian Magician and minister Revd. Peter Liddelow. They may be made from four strips of cardboard, plastic card, metal or in our example pieces of wood. These are joined in three places by a screw or fixing so as to give a hinge joint.

The four pieces thus joined may be quickly formed into a wide range of shapes with which to illustrate a host of stories or ideas.

The dimensions are not critical but each piece should be cut to the same dimensions. Our story sticks have been made from four pieces of wood each measuring 46cm x 4cm x 2cm.



Drill a hole in one end of pieces B, C and D and countersink the holes. Screw B to A, screw C to B and finally screw D to C. It will help with the movement of the pieces of wood if a small washer is put on each screw between the pieces of wood before screwing the pieces together.

Notes on using the story sticks

Due to the large number of shapes that can be created using the story sticks, we have decided to number the diagrams and then refer to those numbers in the story descriptions. By doing it this way it should make it easier to understand and also help users of the story sticks to devise their own stories and even develop new shapes.

As you will find as you begin to use the story sticks you will be limited only by your own imagination.

Because the story sticks are so simple they will make your audiences use their own imaginations to fill in the gaps and this will also help to make the stories remembered. The more that you use the story sticks the easier you will find it to flip them into the different shapes in the scripts.

You can also inject humour into your scripts which will also help to make sure that the story is remembered

List of shapes with story sticks (Add your own as you think of them)



Fig. 1

This is the pattern for Wobbly legs Fred. If the figure is held at the apex of the two angled pieces and is gently swung from side to side then the lower two sections will wobble from side to side. This figure could also represent a church spire or a rocket.



Fig. 2

Formed into a square this can represent various openings such as a window, a well or a skylight. It could also represent a steering wheel or the boulder that was rolled over the entrance to Jesus' tomb.



Fig. 3

In this shape it could be a house with a flat roof, a table, an altar, the proscenium arch in a theatre or a bridge or tunnel entrance.

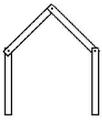


Fig. 4

This can represent a house with a pitched roof, a tent or it could also represent somebody with bandy legs such as a cowboy.

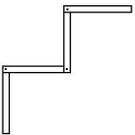


Fig. 5

Stairs or staircase. By flapping the two outside pieces it can also be a bird in flight.

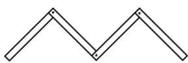


Fig. 6

Mountains or hills. By rocking up and down with your hands it can also represent storm tossed waves.

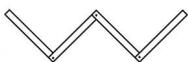


Fig. 7

Placing the inverted V on your head this becomes a Viking helmet or a crown. Holding it at the extremities and moving it backwards and forwards it becomes a saw. It could also be a snake, sharp fangs or teeth.

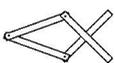


Fig. 8

This symbol can be used as a fish or the whale in the story of Jonah. If it is held by the two right hand sections, one in each hand it can be operated like scissors or shears for shearing sheep or cutting Samson's hair.

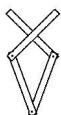


Fig. 9

Water jar or vase for story of turning water into wine. Gideon's men held their torches in a jar. Jar of ointment, widow's jar of oil.

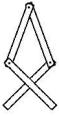


Fig. 10

Oil lamp or lantern, baby's cot. Lunar lander or spearhead.

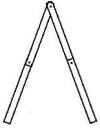


Fig. 11

This can represent a high mountain, a tent, a wigwam or a pair of dividers for navigation. It could also represent a giant's long legs. House of straw, sheaf of corn. Direction going up.

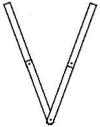


Fig. 12

The letter V, a spade for digging a trench, a deep valley. Moved from side to side can be the windscreen wipers on a motor car. Indoor television aerial or water diviners twitching twig. Antlers. Direction going down.

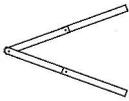


Fig. 13

With a hand on each arm opening and closing the arms makes the jaws of a crocodile. Big bad wolf's mouth. Direction going left or going right. Greater than or less than mathematical symbol.



Fig. 14

With a hand on each outer section it becomes bicycle handlebars, a road drill or the handles of a plough.



Fig. 15

A witch's hat or flying saucer. By placing a hand on each outer section and moving the hands up and down alternately the center pointer can be made to move like a pressure gauge or speedometer. If you place the center section at the back of your neck and hold it at the front it becomes a yoke.



Fig. 16

This can represent a bed. If a hand is placed on each end section and moved up and down this could be a policeman controlling traffic or somebody doing semaphore.

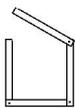


Fig. 17

Box with opening and closing lid or a trap. Pot with a lid.



Fig. 18

Triangle or pyramid, warning sign for the road.

Story Sticks



Fig. 19

Walking stick or railway signal. The top section can be moved up and down to signal stop and go.



Fig. 20

Bath, basin, tank or water cistern. Samson's pillars



Fig. 21

Dish, plate or bowl, ship

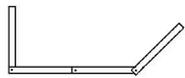


Fig. 22

Noah's ark, carpenter's plane or Santa's sleigh.

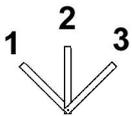


Fig. 23

This shape is good for counting up to three, for example three little pigs or three wise men. It can also be used to indicate a flower opening or plant growing by moving 1 and 3 apart.

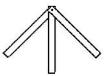


Fig. 24

A tree or umbrella, mushroom or toadstool, parachute. It could also represent a person in prison.

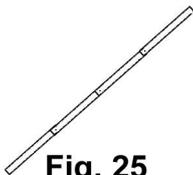


Fig. 25

With all the sticks held in a straight line it can be a spear or javelin, Aaron's rod, a scouts trusty staff or a measuring rod.

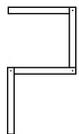


Fig. 26

Question mark or idea. Scythe for cutting corn, pipe wrench or spanner. It could even represent David's sling if you move it as though you were throwing a stone from the cup section.

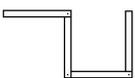


Fig. 27

This can represent a saucepan or the constellation of The Plough. It could also represent a cup if you raise it to your mouth as though to take a drink.

Various letters can also be formed using the story sticks. These can be used to represent characters, so for example when telling the story of Noah you form the sticks into the N shape when saying his name.

The Three Little Pigs script

Once upon a time there were three little pigs (Fig. 23)

They lived with their mother in a little pig sty (Fig. 2)

One day mother pig decided that as they were now getting bigger the pig sty was far too small for everyone so they would have to go out into the big wide world and build houses of their own.

Before they left home, the mother pig told them to make sure that their houses were built strong enough so they would be safe from the big bad wolf (Fig. 13) who had big sharp teeth (Fig. 7)

The first little pig said “I can’t be bothered to build and saw I’ll build my house out of straw” and so the lazy little pig built his house out of straw. (Fig. 11)

The second little pig liked playing football and so he said “I haven’t the time to build with bricks and so I’ll build my house with sticks (Fig. 3)

The third little pig decided to work hard and he built his house strong and firm with bricks (Fig. 4)

One day the big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) came into the town where the three little pigs had built their houses.

The first little pig ran into his straw house (Fig. 11) and shut the door.

The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) said let me in little pig or I shall blow your house in.

The first little pig wouldn’t open the door and said “No, not by the hairs on my chinny, chin chin, I will not let you in” and so The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) huffed and he puffed and he blew the straw house in.

The first little pig ran to his brother in the house of sticks (Fig. 3) and said “Help let me in, the big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) huffed and he puffed and he blew my straw house in”

The second little pig in the house of sticks (Fig. 3) let his brother in and then locked the door.

The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) came up to the house of sticks (Fig. 3) and said “Let me in little pigs or I shall blow your house in”.

The two little pigs wouldn't open the door and said "No, not by the hairs on my chinny, chin, chin, we will not let you in" and so The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) huffed and he puffed and he huffed and he puffed and he blew the stick house in.

The two little pigs ran to their brother in the house of bricks (Fig. 4) and he said "Come inside and close the door"

The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) came up to the house of bricks (Fig. 4) and said "Let me in little pigs or I shall blow your house in".

The three little pigs wouldn't open the door and said "No, not by the hairs on my chinny, chin, chin, we will not let you in" and so The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) huffed and he puffed and he huffed and he puffed and he huffed and he puffed but he could not blow the house of bricks in and so he decided to get a ladder (Fig. 25) and climb up onto the roof of the house of bricks (Fig. 4).

The three little pigs (Fig. 23) could hear him climbing up onto the roof and so they put a pot of water (Fig. 17) on the fire to boil.

The big bad wolf (Fig. 13) with the big sharp teeth (Fig. 7) squeezed himself into the chimney (Fig. 18) and started to climb down inside but when he came down he fell into the pot of water (Fig. 17) which was on the fire.

The three little pigs (Fig. 23) shut the lid (Fig. 2) and he was never seen again.

Parable of The Rich Fool

There once was a rich man (Fig. 11)

Who had lots of good land (Fig. 25 horizontal).

And when he planted his seed the crops grew tall (Fig. 23) move this figure upwards in a zig zag to indicate growing crops.

He thought to himself (Fig. 26) What shall I do ? I have no place to store all my crops.

Then he said to himself "This is what I shall do, I will tear down all my barns (Fig. 1 changed to Fig. 25 held horizontal) and build bigger ones (Fig. 4), and there I'll store all my grain and goods.

And then I'll say to myself "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy – eat, drink and be merry (Fig. 27)

But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself.” Either have the sticks as in (Fig. 25) horizontal or (Fig. 16) to represent a grave.

Parable of The Two House Builders

Jesus told the people a story about two men who went out to build themselves houses.

The first man went out looking for a place to build and he found some hard rocky ground (Fig. 6) and he said to himself this will be a good strong foundation to build my house on.

So he worked hard and built his house upon the rock but it wasn't a house with a pointed roof like ours (Fig. 4) it had a flat roof like this (Fig. 3) and a staircase going up the side (Fig. 5).

He put a door and a window in the side (Fig. 2) and he looked out of the window of his finished house and he said “This is nice”

Then the rains came down and the floods came up and the winds beat upon the house but because it was built on the firm foundation of the rock, the house stood firm.

The other man found some soft flat sandy ground down by the river and he said “I shall build my house here. It will be easier to build here as the ground is soft and easy to dig”.

So he built his house on the soft sandy ground but it wasn't a house with a pointed roof like ours (Fig. 4) it had a flat roof like this (Fig. 3) and a staircase going up the side (Fig. 5).

He put a door and a window in the side (Fig. 2) and he looked out of the window of his finished house and he said “This is nice”

Then the rains came down and the floods came up and the winds beat upon the house but because it was built on sand with no firm foundation. The house on the sand fell flat (Fig. 25) held horizontal.

So build your lives on the firm foundation (Fig. 6) the rock that is Jesus Christ, so that you can stand firm against the storms of life.