

STORY VINES

Some African tribes had traveling storytellers who wore “story vines” as they visited each village. This vine or string had objects attached to it which represented each tale the storyteller would tell. A member of the audience would point to one of the objects on the story vine. Then after being paid, the storyteller would tell the audience a story related to the object. If the audience wanted to hear another story, a different person could point to a different object on the vine and then another story would be told.

In this tradition, you will make a story vine which will represent all the stories the members of your group will tell. For example, if you are telling the folk tale “It Could Always Be Worse” and the other members of your group are telling “Why the Tortoise Has a Cracked Shell,” “The Stonecutter,” “The Fly,” and “Lazy Jack,” each member of your group will have five different ornaments on his or her story vine. It would look like the illustration below.

You must come up with an idea of what your ornament will look like. The ornament should relate to the story you tell. It may help to draw your ornament on a piece of scratch paper. All group members will share what their ornament will look like with one another. Remember that all the ornaments must be simple enough so that they can be made out of salt dough. When you are finished you will have a salt dough ornament to go with every story your group members tell. Once the ornaments have had a few days to dry, you will paint them. Then the ornaments will be ready for you to string them on twine or yarn. You must tie a knot in the twine on both sides of your ornament when you string your story vine. After the ornaments are all attached tie your story vine together at a good length.

Salt Dough Recipe

Follow these directions to make salt dough ornaments. For each group of five students you will need the following materials:

- 1 cup of salt
- 1 cup of flour
- 1/2 cup of water
- 5 sheets of waxed paper about 15” long
- 2 small straws or round wooden toothpicks (to make holes in the ornaments so they can be strung on the twine or yarn)
- 5 toothpicks (to make markings on the ornaments)
- Different colors of paint
- Paint brushes
- 5 lengths of twine or yarn, each about 48” long

