

## Story by Story: Creating a School Storytelling Troupe & Making the Common Core Exciting

**Karen Chace**

Parkhurst Brothers Publishers (Oct 1, 2014)

Softcover \$20.00 (102pp)

978-1-62491-030-2

*Chace understands the needs of children and all those concerned with providing them with meaningful learning and interpersonal experiences.*

There's no doubt about it, stories are powerful. Teachers, librarians, storytellers, church education leaders, and others looking for a way to make learning an exciting adventure while enhancing children's self-esteem will find a treasure trove of information, resources, and inspiration in Karen Chace's *Story by Story*.

Chace, a Massachusetts-based teaching artist, has received national recognition for her work in helping students develop language, critical thinking, cooperative tasking, and performance skills. Her book offers meticulous step-by-step plans for developing a children's storytelling troupe, addressing plans and the inevitable pitfalls while demonstrating that it is possible to work with parents, school administrators, faculty, staff, and children in a way that's harmonious, respectful, compassionate, and joyful.

Chace offers clear and well-organized instructions together with templates and reproducible charts, awards, and other documents designed to take the burden off teachers and others involved. She skillfully demonstrates how the storytelling experience can be tied together with school curriculum including art, computer, English, and social studies classes and goes a step beyond with a question-and-answer chapter to ease the concerns of even the most reluctant or anxious educator.

The book is replete with testimonials from those who have implemented her methods, but the most moving are those from the children who have participated in storytelling troupes based on her work:

*Fifth-grader Katie tells us, "I used to think that I really couldn't do much, but now I know that I can do whatever I set my mind to." Third-grader Jeffrey "carries himself taller and prouder; his body language screams 'I did it!'" Samantha "has been given her voice. ..." And Allison "no longer considers herself an outsider; she believes in herself!"*

The front cover design is bright, lively, and attractive. The back cover copy, filled with enthusiastic testimonials, is sure to draw in potential readers. The author's bio is adequate and the photo, though small, is colorful and attractive. The table of contents is well-organized and itemized for easy use, and the ample bibliography will facilitate independent research. Especially helpful are the time-saving items included in the book's appendixes: a sample proposal for the creation of a storytelling troupe; assessments to be used by teachers; sample announcements and registration/acceptance forms; a student contract; guidance to help teachers lead students to get the most out of their experience; student exercises including tongue twisters to loosen up the voice; "10 Steps to Sidestep Stage Fright"; award templates; and more.

It's obvious that Chace understands the needs of children and all those concerned with providing them with meaningful learning and interpersonal experiences. Her sensitivity and compassion toward "those who march to the

beat of a different drum,” including children who are shy, learning disabled, or autistic, make *Story by Story* an exceptional addition to the literature.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November 17, 2014)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*