

What should we remember when we retell a Native American story?

Dr. Bruchac notes that when sharing a story from a particular tradition, it's best to learn everything you can from those regarded as the bearers of that particular tradition. So for our storytime, we asked permission from Dr. Bruchac to share his stories. We also asked him to teach us about the tradition of sharing stories and the Abenaki tribe.

For those who are concerned about sharing stories that are not from their tradition, he adds, "I know teachers or librarians who have said, 'I don't want to tell Native American stories as I might get it wrong.' And I'm thinking, '*You* are the person who should be telling the story, 'cause you don't want to get it wrong.' And that shows me that you want to learn the right way to do it."

When sharing Native American stories that do not come from your own traditions, acknowledge where they came from, make sure you have permission to share them, and do what you can to understand the stories and their contexts.

When asked how to think of some of the elements of traditional stories alongside facts, Dr. Bruchac recommends the suspension of disbelief, "That is when you read anything, whether it's fiction or fantasy or science fiction, you're going to find things that may seem unreal and yet you accept them, you suspend your disbelief to gain the knowledge that you find in the story." He adds that things don't have to be absolutely factually correct when we're talking about traditional stories and in many cases, we're talking about metaphors and symbolism.

We believe this is a great opportunity to use the stories and practice creative thinking, in addition to discussing scientific phenomena. For example, in the story of Gluskonba and the seasons, the Sperm whale gets a flat snout by hitting the beach. You can ask your listeners how **THEY** think the whale got that specific feature and what we know from scientific research about how the sperm whale's snout was formed or what it does!