

## Story Stones

Story stones are smooth rocks that you can find at the beach or purchase at a craft store. You can use stickers, paints or magazine cut-outs to decorate your story stones. Depending on what is printed on the stone, you can use it in many ways. For example as characters in a dollhouse or as building blocks. Similar to the storytelling prompts jar, you can randomly pick up a story stone or multiple story stones to tell a story.



Once your stones are ready it's time to tell a story! I find it works best when me and my family are sitting around a table together, so it's often an activity we'll do as we eat lunch or dinner. Here are three ways your story stones can guide your family's storytelling experience:

1. Once upon a time: Begin by using your stones as prompts to tell an imaginary tale to your children. Place one stone on the table as a trigger for the beginning of your story, and add each subsequent stone as the story progresses. Start with shorter stories, using only five or six of the stones. Work towards longer stories, with more stones added. Once you've shared a story or two, invite your children to take turns using the stones tell stories of their own.

2. "Take a turn" stories: Once your children are confidently using the stones to create their own stories, try telling a "take a turn" story together. Place all of your stones face up on the table and decide who will go first. Invite that person to choose a stone and start the story. Each person then goes in turns to choose and add one stone from the collection to extend the story a little further, until all of the stones have been used. The best part — your family will never quite know where this type of story will take you!

3. Mystery stories: Turn all of the story stones face down on the table. Choose who'll go first and invite that person to choose one stone at random, and turn it over, using it as a prompt to start the story. Continue around the table, taking turns to flip over one stone at a time to extend the story. Alternatively, you can place all of the stones into a small cloth bag and take turns pulling out one at a time.

However you choose to share, the power of a story to create moments of connection and belonging for your children makes storytelling a fabulous way to spend time together.

