

Storytime Statement

by Aron Ryan

For my storytime, I planned a preschool and family storytime with the theme of celebrating Pride Month. The storytime is called Rainbow Family Storytime: Celebrating Pride Month! I've led these kinds of storytimes before at my library, and I thought it would be fun to reimagine and revamp the storytime with a preschool audience and literacy development in mind. I included books and songs that included LGBTQ+ themes, characters, and authors/illustrators. I focused on soundplay, song, and repetition to more fully engage the primary audience (preschoolers). I incorporated movement with the book/song *The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish* by adding the lyrics to the screen so kids can sing and dance, if they wish. I also incorporated movement/engagement by inviting kids to wave rainbow flags (rainbow treat bags) when hearing particular words ("worm" or "cat", depending on the book selected). The flags also make a fun crinkly sound when waved, which sensory seeking preschoolers may particularly enjoy. Adding the maracas to the second round (puppy version) of *The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish* also adds extra movement and music. I sprinkled in dialogic reading (plus visual literacy) by inviting kids to share their insights on the illustrations in *Bathe the Cat* and *Pride Puppy*. Math literacy can be integrated into *Pride Puppy* by counting the number of people/animals on the parade float, counting the number of pride flags on a page, etc. Print literacy can be integrated in *Pride Puppy* by learning the alphabet through an alphabet book, as well as collecting alphabet magnet letters from the magnet board while we progress through the book.

For the post-storytime activities, I included puzzles (including alphabet puzzles) as a combination of print literacy (learning the alphabet) and play (making a puzzle). Puzzles can also be a fun way to develop math literacy (shape puzzles). The art activities (coloring sheets, design your own bookmarks, and make your own rainbow rock) can help kids develop fine motor skills and express their creativity. Kids can develop their agency by helping direct the storytime (deciding together if we'll read a second book, then voting on the second book, as well as helping solve the missing puppies mystery!) Kids and families can contribute to the library space by displaying their art/rainbow rocks in the library display case (if they wish) and picking up their creative projects after Pride Month. In addition to play activities (puzzles) and art activities, the activity of reading to Trucker can be offered as an optional activity after the storytime component of the program. Reading to a therapy dog can help even the most reluctant readers develop print literacy, visual literacy, and through the bond between the child and the dog, social-emotional growth. Lastly, the theme of the storytime program (Pride Month) helps preschoolers develop cultural literacy by learning about aspects of LGBTQ+ culture (such as drag) in a fun, kid-friendly way. LGBTQ+ families may appreciate the inclusion of a culturally competent LGBTQ+ storytime as a way to feel welcome at the library.