STORYTELLING

Eastman Johnson, *The Storyteller of the Camp (Maple Sugar Camp)*, 1861-66
Oil on board. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Original Purchase Fund from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, ARCA, and Anne Cannon Forsyth, 1967.2.1

EXPLORE REYNOLDA
**WHAT YOU NEED**
- a little imagination
- a conversation partner
- Eastman Johnson’s *The Storyteller of the Camp (Maple Sugar Camp)*

Optional: toys and other small items for characters and props

**AGES**
2 to adult

**DISCOVERY ACTIVITY**
Take a minute (or two, or three) to look carefully at Eastman Johnson’s painting. Together, consider these questions:

» What is going on in this image?
» Where or when might this take place? Why do you think so?
» Who are the characters? What is each one doing? What do you think each one is thinking and/or saying?
» This painting is titled “The Storyteller of the Camp.” Who is the storyteller? Why do you think so?

**STORYTELLING ACTIVITY**
First, choose a character in the painting that you think is telling a story. Become that character and tell the story as he or she might.

Next, take turns telling your own stories.

» One way to do this is to tell a story about something that happened earlier today, or this week. Think about what happens in the **beginning**, the **middle**, and the **end** of the story.

» If you want to make up your own imagined story and want a little help with ideas, look around for some small items that could be characters or props for a story. (For example, maybe you find a toy horse and a doll’s chair and make up a story about the horse who wanted nothing more than to be able to sit in a chair.) Interesting stories have **conflicts** or characters with certain **problems to solve**. What leads up to the most exciting part of the story and how does it resolve after that?

» Play a storytelling game in which one person starts by saying a few words (“Once upon a time in the middle of New York City...”) and then stops and the next person says a few words (“there was a lonely boy who...”) and all players take turns like this to build a story together.