

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)* on this card or on your computer screen. To zoom in and learn more about the artwork, visit www.reynoldahouse.org or click [this link](#).
- *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.