**SCHOOL PROGRAMS DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS AND SAMPLES:**

**FOLKLORE CENTERED:**

**Introduction to Folk Songs and Tales** – An introduction to the folk process: passing down songs, tales, games, and traditions by word of mouth. This program explains and demonstrates why this process was so important in earlier times, when people had to be self-sufficient in many ways, providing their own food and shelter, as well as entertainment. Although there are now many options for entertainment, folk songs and tales are still lots of fun. And in fact, the folk process is continuing, not just in live person to person exchange, but through the creativity of the internet and social media. Jon shares simple folk songs and tales with lots of participation, demonstrates guitar, banjo, autoharp, mountain dulcimer and spoons. He also introduces riddles, dance and other forms of folklore. For all grades, especially k-2.

Curriculum connections: Music and writing

Sample songs and tales:

* Tall tale with balloon figure – Daniel Boone’s split dog
* Motion song – “On My Grandma’s Patchwork Quilt” with guitar – old timey recycling
* Song – “Oh, Groundhog!” with banjo – about hunting and eating groundhog
* Song – “I Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground” with banjo – students make up a verse
* American Indian animal tale – “Coyote’s Crying Song” with puppet
* Song - “Turkey In the Straw” with spoons – using what’s on hand to make music
* Spanish language motion song – “En la pulga de San Jose” with guitar (In the San Jose flea market)
* African story-song fairy tale – “Abiyoyo” with banjo
* Song – “Waterbound” with mountain dulcimer – songs created from life situations
* Work song – “Long John” acapella with body rhythm – songs used to accompany work
* Cumulative singalong – “When I First Came to this Land” with autoharp

**North Carolina Folk Tales and Songs** – Informative slide show, traditional folk tales & songs with banjo, guitar, mountain dulcimer, autoharp and spoons. A square dance can be added to the mix, particularly during a family evening program. Jon has collected songs and tales from traditional singers and storytellers in NC and other states. **(Some of these are presented in *Stay With Us: Visiting with Old Time Singers and Storytellers in the Southern Mountains*, written by his high school students.)** Several of these individuals are represented in slides and anecdotes as part of this program, in which Jon shows how North Carolina folklore reflects the cultures of people that have lived here – the sense of tradition, closeness to nature, and balance of self-sufficiency with community. Especially suited for Grades 4 and 8.

Curriculum connections:

* Social studies & language arts curriculum;
* Musical instruments;
* Research project comparing and contrasting different versions of traditional songs and tales.

Sample excerpts:

* Tall tale with balloon figure – “Daniel Boone’s Split Dog” – Jon crafts a balloon dog, then twists it to demonstrate how Daniel accidentally glued the back end on upside down!
* Hunting song – “Groundhog” with banjo – enthusiastically describes catching, cooking and eating groundhog. Amos Woods once told me, “Wild meat makes you wild!”
* Mountain song – “I Wish I Was a Mole In the Ground” with banjo learned by the lawyer/ song collector Bascom Lamar Lunsford. Students make up a new verse.
* Cherokee animal tale – “How the Possum Got Its Tail”
* Entertainment - Singing game – “Old Dan Tucker” with spoons
* Outer banks ghost legend – “John and Amy Harris” – impact of coastal location
* Using body rhythms – Hambone/ Hush Little Baby – interchange between cultures
* African American Piedmont blues – “Trouble in Mind” with guitar “I’m gonna lay my head on some lonesome railroad line,/ and let the 2:19 passify my worried mind.”
* Pretty Saro – Appalachian love song – from Cas Wallin – “If I were a merchant and could write a fine hand,/ I’d write my love a letter that she’d understand;/ I’d write it by the river where the waters o’erflow,/ and I’d dream of pretty Saro wherever I’d go.”
* English tales told on Beech Mountain – Ray Hicks – Mutsmag, from Grandfather Tales
* English ballads sung in Madison County – “Little Farmer Boy” – ballad singer Dellie Norton
* Gospel songs – “Life is Like a Mountain Railroad” and “Turn Your Radio On” with autoharp – incorporating modern changes into folklore – singer Earl Ramsey

**Folk Tale Genres** – Informative slide show, folk tales and songs - What is

The difference between a tall tale and a legend, an animal fable and trickster tale? What is a “cante fable”? What are the characteristics of a “fairy tale” and why do folklorists prefer to call them “wonder tales”? This program assembles a panoramic sampler of folk tales and legends that entertain and illuminate, while providing an overview of all the subgenres. Use of song bits help keep students engaged. Especially for grades 2, 3 & 4 – Common core standard 2.2 & 3.2

Curriculum connection:

* Classroom study of folk tale genres
* Kick-off to unit where students select, learn and tell a folktale as a media center or classroom activity.

Possible samples:

* What is a folk tale? Students answer, then Jon explains: Tale passed on by word of mouth, generally over generations & with changes along the way
* Tall tale – “The Cajun Possum”
* **Tall tale in song** - “The Thinnest Man”
* Legend - “La Llorona/ the Weeping Woman;” **Ballad of John Henry**
* Myth – “How Raven Stole the Sun”
* Animal trickster tale – Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom **with singalong part**
* Animal Tale – fable - “The Fox and the Crow”
* Fairy Tale/ wonder tale – Baba Yaga
* **Song with motions** – “On My Grandma’s Patchwork Quilt” – shows how motifs (story elements) are reused. “On my grandma’s patchwork quilt -/ squares of corduroy and silk”; / red and green and blue, and yellow too -/ on my grandma’s patchwork quilt.”

**Smart and Foolish** – This program combines two particularly rich folkloric themes. Songs and tales of tricksters, fools, wise men and women. Grades 3-12.

Curriculum connections –

* Classroom study of folk tale genres
* Promotion of media center’s folk tale collection
* Development of higher level thinking skills
* Writing

Sample pieces:

* **Silly song** – “A Horse Named Bill” – US - “In Frisco Bay there lives a whale/and she eats porkchops by the bale/ by the hatbox, by the pillbox,/ by the hogshead, by the schooner./ Her name is Lena, she is a peach, / but don't leave food within her reach,/ or babies, or nursemaids,/ or chocolate ice cream sodas.
* Jewish story cycle – The Foolish village of Chelm – Eastern Europe - “The Golden Shoes” – The leader of the “wise” men orders a pair of golden shoes so the villagers will recognize his wisdom. When the shoes get covered with mud, he has the cobbler cover them with leather to protect them. Since no one can see the gold, he has holes made in the leather. When they fill up with mud too, he decides to wear the gold shoes on his hands!
* Tale – “Steamer and the Mule Egg” – southern US - Steamer has always wanted a baby mule. When he sees a coconut for sale in John Mock’s general store, he takes it home and sits on it for two weeks.
* Easy puzzle tale for students to explain: “The Magic Sticks” – from India - A judge staying at an inn catches a thief by giving all the guests a “magic stick,” telling them the thief’s stick will grow 2” overnight. The next morning he grabs the one with a short stick. Students have to figure out how the judge knew. (Thinking his stick would grow, the thief cut his shorter.)
* Hard puzzle tale – “Elijah and the Poor Man’s Wish” (Jewish). As a reward for having lived a just and kind life, an old, poor, blind, childless man will be granted one wish by the prophet Elijah. The man is torn between three desires: to have sight, have money or to have a baby with his barren wife. After asking the students for suggestions that will combine the man’s wishes, Jon reveals the solution, suggested by his wife: “that I may live to see my child eating from a golden plate.”
* Bilingual tale of foolishness – “Juan Bobo Goes to Work”(Puerto Rican) – Each time Juan Bobo is paid, he misapplies his mother’s advice from a different form of payment. For example: so his money won’t fall through his holey pants, she tells him to carry his pay home in a burlap sack. When he is paid with milk, he pours it into the sack and it all leaks out.
* **Song of clever revenge** – “Mershen Tiddery Airee” (English) – Growing tired of her husband, an old woman gives him marrow bones to make him blind. At his request, she leads him to a cliff overlooking the ocean, so he can drown himself. Purportedly lacking courage he asks her to push him in, but when she charges down the hill, he steps aside.
* Tale of doubly foolish gullability– “The Farmer and the Donkey” (Lebanon) - A thief sneaks off with a donkey being led by a tired farmer by stelthily slipping the rope onto the head of his accomplice, who leads it out of sight. When the farmer discovers the change, the man explains that he is the donkey. Because he was so much trouble his mother one day shouted, “I wish you were a donkey!” But today he completed his reformation and turned back into a human. Moved by the man’s story the farmer gives him all his day’s earnings to start a new llife. When the farmer goes to the market the next day to buy another donkey, he sees his old one. Astonished and angry, …he scolds the donkey for already getting into more trouble!
* Tale – “Clever Rachel” – European - Rachel so impresses a king with her wisdom by answering three difficult riddles that he asks her to marry him. They grow to love each other, but the king feels so threatened when she expresses her (superior) judgement in court cases that he declares an end to their marriage. He tells Rachel she can take home her favorite possession, so she invites the king to a final supper, plies him with wine till he falls asleep, then takes him home in a cart.
* Tale of cleverness – “Gopal Bhar, The Star Counter” – India - When the king of India commands the Maharaja (prince) Krishnachandra to measure the earth’s width and count the stars in the sky, Gopar Bhar, the court jester, offers to take on the job. He has the king give him a million rupees and a year’s time to get the job done. Over the course of the year he spends all the money on parties and luxuries, then arrives at the king’s palace pulling 15 carts filled with the finest thread all jumbled together and five fat, woolly sheep. “The earth is as wide as the 15 carts full of thread, and there are as many stars as the hairs on the sheep. I spent a long time finding sheep with the exact number of hairs.”
* **Song** of ecological foolishness - “Garbage,” by Bill Steele – Describes how humans are filling up the sea, the air and their minds with garbage.
* Tale of wisdom – “The Lion’s whisker” – In this often told African tale, a stepmother is desperate to find a way of winning her new stepchild’s love and acceptance. She goes to the village healer asking for a spell to solve the problem, and he tells her that he needs three whiskers from a fierce lion in order to make the magic potion. Over several months she gains the lion’s confidence by bringing him meat each day, starting off from a great distance but coming gradually closer till she is right in front of him. While he is absorbed in eating, she quickly pulls three hairs from his mane. When she brings the hairs to the healer, he throws them in the fire. He explains that she has already learned how to accomplish her goal – by using the same patience that she showed with the lion to gain her stepson’s confidence.

**Fantastical Quests and Transformations – Fairy Tales** – Arguably the best known subgenre of folktales, fairy tales or “wonder tales” continue to captivate imaginations, so much so that loads of “fractured” fairy tales, prequels, sequels, and alternate versions have been written in recent years. This program explains basic ingredients often occurring in fairy/ wonder tales – magical events, transformations, stock secondary characters like witches and giants, underdog main characters, and lessons in social behavior – and applies them in sample tales. Some of the traditional tales are matched up with recent versions. Grades 3-8.

Curriculum connection:

* Classroom study of folktales
* Follow up projects:
  + Researching fairy tale “motifs” (elements) in different stories;
  + Comparing and contrasting fairy tale variants;
  + Creating a new fairy tale or alternate version of a traditional tale;
  + Learning to tell fairy tale

Sample tales:

* Fairy tale, “Estrellita/ Little Gold Star,” a Mexican version of Cinderella and excerpts from other variants. Novel, *Ella Enchanted*
* Book talks of several chapter books and series based on traditional fairy tales: *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*; *Rump: The True Story of Rumplestiltskin; A Tale Dark and Grimm* and sequels; “Whatever After” series
* Magical ballad, “The Two Sisters,” about a fiddle made from the bones and hair of a drowned girl. When the fiddle is played, it tells the story of how she was pushed overboard by her jealous sister.
* Fairy tale, “The Six Swans” – After her six brothers are turned into swans, Bevel vows to change them back. To break the spell she must live in the woods and knit them each a shirt out of stinging nettles, while remaining silent and never crying or laughing for six years.
* Barnie McCabe – a cante fable (story with embedded song verses) from St John’s Island, SC - variant of Hansel and Gretel
* Fairy tale, “White Bear Whittington,” an Appalachian variant of Beauty and the Beast where the “beast” is a white bear; novel, *Beauty Queen*, of the “Whatever After” series.