

HOW TO: TELL A STORY

Kelly Haramis, *Chicago Tribune*

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Telling a story to your child or a group of children can be daunting to some. But not to Linda Gorham, a professional storyteller. Gorham, who released her CD "Common Sense and Uncommon Fun" in 2003, says the best way to tell a story is with energy and enthusiasm.

Gorham, a member of the Fox Valley Storytelling Guild, over e-mail, offers these creative tips:

- **Set the tone.** "Find a story you love and one that is appropriate for your target audience."
- **Plot it out.** "Think about, write out or draw images for what happens first, second, and so on."
- **Character development.** "Think about the characters; ask yourself how do they look, talk, move, walk, etc."
- **Use all your senses.** "Make sure you can `see' the setting in your mind's eye; ask yourself what senses are invoked, what can you hear, taste or smell."
- **Use analytical skills.** Ask yourself, "Is there something that happens to ensure a turning point? Are the characters alive with personality? Does it have a purpose, conflict and a resolution?"
- **Shout it out.** "Say it out loud by describing each event in order; exaggerate word pronunciations, create physical actions and look for areas for audience participation."
- **Avoid memorization.** "Visualize the scenes as you tell [the story], keep it honest and personal; you may want to memorize key phrases, the opening and the closing, but not the entire story."
- **Practice makes perfect.** "Practice alone and with an audience. Watch your pacing, allow time for laughter, evaluate your audiences' reactions and adjust your story as needed."

Gorham will be using these skills when she performs at 2 p.m. Oct. 22 at the Berwyn Library in Berwyn, and later that evening at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle.