Chapter 14

CRAFTS, MUSIC, STORYTELLING, PLAYACTING

Goals and Abilities  ▶ Crafts  ▶ Program Ideas  ▶ Music
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GOALS AND ABILITIES

Activities, such as crafts, music, storytelling and playacting, provide many opportunities to encourage Beavers to:

- Experience and express love and joy
- Express themselves
- Develop a sense of belonging, and have good feelings about themselves.

When choosing program ideas, look for things which reflect these program goals and keep in mind the developmental stages of the five to seven-year-old age group. Within this age range, senses are developing rapidly and unevenly. Hearing, for example, is not yet fully developed. Between five and seven, the ability to coordinate wrist and finger actions develops; older Beavers have a more precise grip than younger ones.

You will notice quite a range of ability between your younger and older Beavers. That’s why many leaders organize craft activities by tail groupings. In this way, they can challenge each age group slightly differently, to hold their interest and ensure everyone some degree of success.

Remember, everyone learns differently when learning a new game or skill (think of learning to tie your shoes). Some people learn by listening, some by watching and doing, or by reading illustrations. Try to incorporate different styles of presenting an idea or skill with variety and ways to appeal to your whole colony.

Leaders often notice that, although Beaver-aged children change activities less often than younger children, they still have a lot of energy to burn. Younger Beavers, especially, are good at starting crafts but may lose interest before completing them. With Beavers, it’s very important to remember that trying and experiencing a craft is more important than the outcome.

Busy Beavers (White Tails) tend to settle down and use less energy than their younger friends. They’re more able to concentrate for longer periods of time but, when they’re tired, even these children tend to behave like younger Beavers.

Imagination begins to blossom throughout the age range, and one of the primary jobs of Beaver leaders is to nurture this wonderful element. Puppetry, skits, drama and stories are marvelous ways to tap and stimulate these growing minds.

CRAFTS

It’s important to use crafts to encourage self-expression rather than imitation. As much as possible, let older Beavers plan and develop a product from an idea. Brown Tails may prefer to construct their own version of a model you have shown them.

- Collect items all year. Have a leader store the supplies.
- Visit local craft stores for ideas and some supplies. (They often give discounts to groups.)
- Read over Scouts Canada’s resource books, and check out the Leader Magazine.
- Visit libraries and search the internet for craft ideas.
Be familiar with the crafts before you introduce them. Try them to see if they work.

Decide whether to do a craft in lodges or tail groupings.

Have an activity ready for Beavers who finish the craft ahead of others. Perhaps Keeo can lead the activity.

Make use of resource people.

Put protective sheeting on floors or table tops, and have sufficient cleaning supplies available.

Use marking pencils to identify art work, and

Beaver Boxes or bags for taking it home.

Ask Beavers to bring a smock or old shirt to wear while painting or playing with art materials.

Exchange your more successful ideas with other leadership teams in your council.

Keep the cost per item in mind.

HOMEMADE SUPPLIES

There are a variety of ways to keep costs of craft supplies to a minimum. Here are some ideas to help you stretch your craft dollars.

Homemade Play Clay

- 1.4 kg baking soda
- 0.5 kg cornstarch
- 1 litre water

Mix ingredients together in a saucepan and heat to the boiling point, stirring constantly. Remove from heat as soon as the mixture reaches a dough-like consistency. When cool enough to handle, knead slightly. Store in a plastic bag or airtight container. Clay will remain pliable for a couple of months. You can colour the entire batch by simply adding food colouring or tempera paint to the batter before mixing.

Paint Recipe

- 250 mL liquid starch
- 1.5 litre water
- 125 mL soap chips

Dissolve the soap chips in water until smooth. Mix well with starch. Pour into containers, and add colour.

Play Dough Recipe

- 125 mL salt
- 500 mL water
- food colouring
- 30 mL salad oil
- 500 mL sifted all purpose flour
- 30 mL cream of tartar

Boil the salt in water until the salt dissolves. Add the food colouring. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Knead the dough, or process it in a food processor until it has an even consistency. Store in an airtight container or plastic bag. The dough will last for two months or longer if stored in a refrigerator.
**Wallpaper Paste**

If you want to store this paste in liquid form, add a few drops of antiseptic, then refrigerate. It will extend the shelf life to two or three weeks.

**Collector’s Items**

Parents can be very helpful by collecting and recycling home waste useful for art materials. Many colonies send home lists that include the following items:

- Bags (plastic and paper), beads, bits of lace, bottle caps, bread wrappers, buttons, calendars, candles, cardboard rolls, clothes pins, cloth scraps, coat hangers, coloured bottles, confetti, corks, corrugated paper, cotton batten, crepe paper, egg cartons, embroidery thread, feathers, glitter, greeting cards, jewellery, knitting needles, linoleum, macaroni, magazines, marbles, nails, netting, nylon thread, paper doilies, (unused) paper plates, pieces of fur, pipe cleaners, pine cones, plastics, plywood scraps, (clean) popsicle sticks, ribbon, rope, rubber bands, screen (wire or plastic), screws, sequins, shells, sponges, spools, stamps, steel wool, styrofoam, tile, tin foil, tinsel, tissue paper, toothpicks, wallpaper samples, wire, wood scraps, wrapping paper, yarn.

The more items your parents collect and recycle for the colony, the less your colony has to spend on craft supplies.

**PROGRAM IDEAS**

**Who Am I Collage**

Draw the outline of a large head on bristol board or poster paper, and provide a variety of pictures, magazines, coloured paper, seeds and other materials. Beavers fill the heads with pictures or materials which show the important things in their lives (e.g. cars, animals, records, people). When the work is done, lodge members share the meaning of their collages. It’s a good “getting to know you” craft for fall.

**Sand Casting**

For this craft you’ll need clean sand; casting powder or plaster of Paris; small stones, shells, beads, marbles, pieces of coloured plastic; water; 15 cm piece of cord; poster paints; and brushes. If you don’t have access to a sandy area, pour two bags of sand into a flat box.

Moisten the sand so it’s damp for a depth of several inches. With both hands, make a mould for the object desired by scooping away sand and pressing in designs until you have the proper shape. Press the decorations into place.

Mix the casting powder to a thick consistency, and pour into the mould. Knot 15 cm of cord at each end, and press at least 2.5 cm of it into plaster to form a hanging loop. Allow it to harden about 15 minutes or longer if the weather is damp. Remove plaster from the mould, and brush off excess sand. Paint it with poster colours.

Follow a similar process for making sandcast candles. Here you anchor a wick into the mould, and pour in melted paraffin wax instead of casting powder.

**Plaster Additives**

When the plaster is in its liquid form, you can add other items to get different effects, such as:

- Powdered tempera paint, for colour.
- White perlite, to give plaster a shine.
- Vermiculite, to enable Beavers to carve the material with a spoon.
Potato Printing
Beavers can create wonderful designs with the tried and true potato print method. All you need is half a potato, a dull knife, paper and paint.

Let your Beavers develop their own designs, and carve them into the flat surface of the potato. Younger Beavers can make a simple print while White Tails might use two or three different shapes and colours to form more complex designs (e.g. the first can be an apple shape printed in red, the second a brown stem and the third green leaves).

Spatter Painting
You need scissors, paper, pencils, paints, screen and unused toothbrushes for this activity. Let your Beavers cut out letters or shapes (stencils), and group them on a background paper. Place screen above the paper, dip your brush in paint and rub the toothbrush across the screen. The paint will spatter on the paper. Carefully lift the stencils to reveal the shapes outlined on the former background paper, which has now become a work of art.

Sandpaper Crayon Art
For this craft you’ll need: old broken crayons, pencil sharpeners, coarse sandpaper, oven and oven mitts.

You may decide to cut the sandpaper into four smaller pieces or you may choose to give each Beaver a full piece, depending on how many crayons you can round up and how much you want to spend on sandpaper. Want to really get creative? Cut the sandpaper into different shapes. Give Beavers a piece of sandpaper and have them turn their sandpaper over and print their name on the back. Once they have their name on it, they can turn it over and draw or colour a picture or design for Mom and Dad. Remember to tell them to press really hard so lots of crayon is left on the sandpaper.

When they have finished drawing and colouring, leaders place the works of art on a cookie sheet and into an oven set at 200 degrees. Leave it in the oven long enough to melt all of the wax, then remove it and place it on a counter to cool and harden.

Twizzlers
Each Beaver needs stiff cardboard, scissors, crayons and nylon string.

Cut out a circle of stiff cardboard (the centre of a paper plate is fine), and decorate it. Make two holes close to the centre, and thread a loop of string through them. To make the twizzer spin, twirl it around to twist the string, then use an in-and-out motion as if playing an accordion.

Note: Large coat buttons make super twizzlers.
**Badminton Racquet**

Ask each Beaver to bring a coat hanger and one nylon panty hose.

- Grasp the coat hanger by the hook and the long bottom edge, and pull it out to make a diamond shape.
- Pull the nylon stocking over the coat hanger frame.
- Knot the stocking at the hook end.
- Bend the hook to form a loop.
- Use the racquet to bat around wadded newspaper balls.

**Simple Kazoo**

Here’s something for musical Beavers. This simple craft adds new dimensions to your favourite songs. You need toilet or wax paper tubes, squares of waxed paper, rubber bands and a pencil. With a rubber band, secure a square of waxed paper over one end of your tube. Use a sharp pencil to poke a small hole into the tube, about 2 cm from the covered end. Hold the open end up to your mouth and hum your favourite tune.

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**Crafts For Family And Friends**

The following two ideas are great ways to show Beavers how they can help others in creative ways.

**Cheque Mates**

Beavers produce blank cheques which show pictures indicating a helpful task rather than a sum of money.

**Beaver Bouquet**

For this craft, Beavers need construction paper for flowers, cardboard for flower backings, small juice containers and sand for ballast.

The Beavers cut out a flower shape from cardboard and glue construction paper stem, leaves and petals to it. On each petal, they write a helpful idea. Plant the flower into the sand in the container.

Help your Beavers to think of ideas other than regular chores if they plan to present the bouquet to Dad or Mom.

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**Crafts For Fine Feathered Friends**

Enjoying nature is one of Beavering’s main program elements; nature-related crafts can promote awareness of the outdoors. These particular crafts provide a focus for birdwatchers in the spring and winter.

In the spring, talk about birds’ nesting habits. Suggest that Beavers keep an eye on birds they see flying with bits of grass or twigs in their beaks. To help birds in their area, each Beaver may want to build a nesting depot. Here’s how.

Cut a nest shape from cardboard, and colour the surface with wax crayons to make it waterproof. Punch holes in the cardboard nest and poke cotton thread, several lengths of yarn, ribbon and string into the holes. Keep all of the materials very loose so birds can easily remove them. Hang the nest in a tree, then watch for ‘customers.’ While you’re doing this, search for nests in neighbouring trees. Did your local robin use your materials to build a nest?
Feather Fodder

*Before starting this craft check for peanut allergies in your colony.* When the bitter winds of winter blow, Beavers can provide birds with a food mixture they love. Make it from:

- 0.5 kg kidney suet, ground fine
- 125 mL sunflower seeds (unsalted) or wild bird seed
- 45 mL peanut butter

Stuff the mixture into pine cones, or ball it up and place it in mesh onion bags. Let Beavers attach string and hang it from backyard or nearby trees. Ask parents to help their Beavers to identify and keep a list of the types of birds that visit their feeders. Compile a collective colony list. Remember that much feeding occurs just before dusk or very early in the morning. Caution: always mix suet or some fat with peanut butter because veterinarians suspect that pure peanut butter can choke birds.

Trail Snacks

*Before cooking activities, always find out if any Beavers have allergies to nuts or if they have other dietary restrictions.*

Given proper supervision and working in small groups (lodges or tail groups), Beavers love to make tasty treats. Before your next winter outing, let them create their own trail snacks. Here are several ideas.

**Beaver Tails**

175 mL honey  
125 mL peanut butter  
2 eggs  
750 mL granola

Mix honey and peanut butter in a sauce pan; beat in eggs, one at a time. Stir over medium heat until the mixture boils and leaves the side of the pan. Add nuts and granola, mix well, press into a greased pan and refrigerate. Cut into squares.

**Cereal Nibbles**

625 mL Rice Krispies  
125 mL peanuts  
125 mL butter  
30 mL peanut butter  
125 mL raisins  
pinch of cinnamon

Mix cereal and nuts together, and pour it into a baking dish. Heat butter, peanut butter raisins and cinnamon. Add these to the cereal mixture. Bake at 175°C, (350°F) for 10 minutes. When cool, cut into squares.

**G.O.R.P. (Good Old Raisins & Peanuts)**

G.O.R.P is a common trail snack, which, although it originated with peanuts and raisins has progressed into many more ingredients now. For children with nut allergies, make a nut-free G.O.R.P as follows:

- Handful of cereal (Cheerios, Honeynut Cheerios, Frosted Flakes, etc.)
- Handful of sunflower seeds (salted are best)
- Handful of raisins or other dried fruit such as cranberries, pieces of apricots, apples, etc.
- Handful of pretzels
- Handful of candy covered chocolate

Mix these ingredients in small plastic bags, and munch on the G.O.R.P as you travel. (The above ingredients are only some suggestions.) Make your G.O.R.P as individual as each Beaver.
Singing is a wonderful activity which encourages fun, fellowship and a creative release for excess energy whether in a bus, at a campfire, on a picnic or hike, or in your meeting room.

You don’t need lots of talent to become a song leader. It helps if you like to kid around, because your Beavers will join in the fun more quickly. But all you really need is a big smile and the ability to carry a tune.

Follow these tips when preparing to sing.

- Set the scene by telling interesting facts about the song. Explain any unusual words.
- Know the words and music well enough that you don’t have to glance at a paper. Maintain eye contact with your Beavers.
- If it’s a new song, teach one verse at a time and ask your Beavers to repeat after you.
- If you’re teaching a round, learn the whole song together before you break into parts.
- Keep the tempo lively. Don’t let the song drag. Kids love action.
- Let the Beavers make kazoos, shakers, drums and other rhythm instruments to add to the festivities.

The Magic Music Game is a fun way to introduce singing to your program. Beavers love it.

**Magic Music Game**
Gather your colony in a large circle. Send one Beaver out of the room and hide a small object such as a button or tennis ball. When the child returns to look for the hidden object, the colony guides the Beaver by singing or humming a tune. As the child moves away from the object, everyone hums the music quieter.

In a variation of this game, decide upon a secret action for the returning Beaver to do (e.g. touch another Beaver, or tie someone’s shoelace). Meanwhile, the volume of the singing indicates whether the Beaver is “hot” or “cold.”
Mystery Rhythm
Your entire colony or lodge can play this guessing game. A leader claps out the rhythm of a favourite song and the Beavers try to guess what it is. If your colony is particularly musical or rhythmically inclined, let each Beaver clap out a favourite song while the others try to guess.

SONGS TO SING

To start you off, we've included a number of songs below. The first group are standard campfire songs you may have sung as a child; the second are songs created by Beaver colonies across Canada. Also check out these song books, available from your Scout Shop:

- The Campfire Book
- The Song Book
- Beaver Song Book
- Campfire Sing Along Cassette or CD

Song type definitions:
- **Round**: characterized by having a part of the group singing one part and the other part singing another, then switching.
- **Action**: characterized by performing actions in concert with the song.
- **Repeat**: has the group repeating the song leader's words back in chorus.
- **Quiet**: typically, a song that can be sung quietly and will help settle down the group.
- **Spiritual**: a song that incorporates a spiritual theme or message.

To illustrate different types of songs, Song Type identifies if it’s a round, action, repeat, quiet or spiritual song.

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**On Top Of Spaghetti**  
*(On Top of Old Smoky)*

On top of spaghetti,  
All covered with cheese,  
I lost my poor meatball,  
When somebody sneezed.

The mush was as tasty,  
As tasty could be,  
And then the next summer,  
It grew into a tree.

It rolled off the table,  
And onto the floor,  
And then my poor meatball,  
Rolled out of the door.

The tree was all covered,  
All covered with moss,  
And on it grew meatballs,  
And tomato sauce.

It rolled in the garden,  
And under a bush,  
And then my poor meatball,  
Was nothing but mush.

So, if you eat spaghetti,  
All covered with cheese,  
Hold onto your meatball,  
Lest somebody sneeze.
Ging Gang Gooli
(Song Type: round)

Ging gang gooli, gooli, gooli, gooli watcha,
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo:
Ging gang gooli, gooli, gooli, gooli watcha,
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo.

Heyla, heyla, sheyla,
Heyla, heyla, sheyla ho
Heyla, heyla, sheyla,
Heyla, sheyla, heyla ho.

Shalli-walli, Shalli-walli,
Shalli-walli, Shalli-walli.
OOMPA, OOMPA, OOMPA, OOMPA...

(Split the group into two. One sings oompa,
while the others sing the song.
Switch and repeat.)

Kum Bah Yah
(Song Type: quiet, spiritual)

Kum Bah Yah, My Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Kum Bah Yah, My Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Kum Bah Yah, My Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Oh Lord, Kum Bah Yah.

Someone’s crying Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Someone’s crying Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Someone’s crying Lord, Kum Bah Yah,
Oh Lord, Kum Bah Yah.

Someone’s praying Lord...
Someone’s singing, Lord...
Someone’s laughing, Lord...

Little Eager Beaver
(John Brown’s Body)
(Song Type: action)

Little Eager Beaver has a lodge patch
on his vest (3X)
And he knows how to share, share, share.

Little Eager Beaver has a tail upon his hat...
Little Eager Beaver has a kerchief on his neck...
(Actions: Little Eager Beaver – point to self;
lodge patch – point to patch;
vest – hook thumb in arm hole)

I’ve Been Working On The Railroad

I’ve been working on the railroad,
All the live long day;
I’ve been working on the railroad,
Just to pass the time away.
Don’t you hear the whistle blowing,
Rise up so early in the morn?
Don’t you hear the captain shouting
“Dinah, blow your horn?”

Dinah, won’t you blow,
Dinah, won’t you blow,
Dinah, won’t you blow your horn?
Dinah, won’t you blow,
Dinah, won’t you blow,
Dinah, won’t you blow your horn?

Someone’s in the kitchen with Dinah,
Someone’s in the kitchen, I know;
Someone’s in the kitchen with Dinah,
Playing on the old banjo.
Fee, fie, fiddlie-I-O,
Fee, fie, fiddlie-I-O,
Fee, fie, fiddlie-I-O,
Playing on the old banjo.
**Picking Up Litter**  
*(I've Been Working on the Railroad)*

I've been picking up the litter,  
All the live long day;  
I've been picking up the litter,  
Just to have a place to play;  
Can't you see the litter basket  
Sitting on the sidewalk there?  
Every little bit will help us,  
If you just show you care.  

Won't you pick it up?  
Won't you pick it up?  
Won't you pick it up today?  
Help us clean it up,  
Help us clean it up,  
Help us clean it up today.

**Mighty Beavers**  
*(Marching Chant)*  
*(Song Type: repeat)*

Everywhere we go,  
People always ask us.  
Who we are,  
So we tell them,  
We're the (Group name) Beavers,  
Mighty, Mighty Beavers

*Repeat*

**Keeo Song**  
*(Camptown Races)*

I have a friend that you all know,  
Keeo, Keeo!  
I have a friend that you all know,  
Keeo, Keeo Beaver!  

*Chorus*  
Keeo, Keeo Beaver,  
Keeo, Keeo Beaver,  
I have a friend that you all know,  
Keeo, Keeo Beaver.

Keeo has a very good friend,  
Rusty, Rusty!  
Keeo has a very good friend,  
Rusty, Rusty Jones!

*Chorus*  
Keeo is a new colour,  
Silver, silver;  
Keeo is a new colour,  
Silver, silver Beaver.

*Chorus*  
Keeo has a new voice now,  
Talking, talking;  
Keeo has a new voice now,  
Talking, talking Beaver.

**God Is Love**  
*(Friendly Giant Theme)*  
*(Song Type: spiritual, quiet)*

When you see a rainbow,  
You know that God is love,  
When you see a rainbow,  
You know that God is love,  
When you see a... *(use Beavers’ own words to make up new verses)*

Yes, God is love; yes God is love,  
When you see a rainbow,  
You know that God is love.
**Slapping Tails**  
*(Jingle Bells)*

*Chorus*
Slapping tails, slapping tails,  
Beavers all are we,  
Oh what fun we have each day  
In our Beaver colony.

Working in our lodge,  
Sharing with our friends,  
Having fun and making crafts,  
’Til the meeting ends;

Then we leave for home,  
With the things we brought,  
Carefully crossing at each street  
’Til safely home we’ve got.

*Chorus.*

**The Quartermaster’s Store**  
*(Song Type: chorus)*

There’s cheese, cheese, with shocking dirty knees,  
In the store, in the store;  
There’s cheese, cheese, with shocking dirty knees,  
In the Quartermaster’s Store.

*Chorus*
My eyes are dim, I cannot see,  
I have not brought my specs with me;  
I have not brought my specs with me.

There’s eggs, eggs, on little bandy legs...  
There’s lard, lard, they sell it by the yard...  
There’s beans, beans, as big as submarines...

**I’m A Beaver**  
*(Clementine)*

I’m a Beaver, I’m a Beaver,  
I’m so very glad I am.  
First we all go into River Banks.  
And then we build our dam.

Feed the Beaver, feed the Beaver,  
Say our Promise, say our Law,  
Say our Motto, go to lodges,  
Where we cut, or glue or draw.

We play games, all together,  
And we have a lot of fun,  
We do our River Banks, build our dam,  
Say goodnight to everyone.

Happy Beavers, heading homeward,  
Very carefully and then,  
Have a good time  
(‘til next week over Christmas, etc.)  
’Til we meet here once again.

**Chop The Tree**  
*(Row, Row, Row Your Boat)*  
*(Song Type: round)*

Chop, chop, chop the tree,  
Build our little dam;  
Share, share, share the work,  
Help us if you can.
STORYTELLING AND PLAYACTING

Stories fire up a Beaver’s imagination, kindle the emotions, bring the past to life and open up the future. Stories entertain and sustain interest; they also help children identify and understand the important ideals of honesty, loyalty, friendship, kindness and sharing.

At storytelling time, leaders and Beavers develop a special feeling and relationship.

Part of the fun of storytelling comes when you involve Beavers in the process. You can do this with action rhymes, finger plays or stories which ask Beavers to add sound effects or join the refrain.

Finger plays introduce Beavers to acting out stories. As they listen and learn to respond to rhyme, they develop language skills and muscle coordination, and learn concepts of over and under, up and down, in and out. Rhymes in stories help Beavers to coordinate speech and body movements, and encourage them to listen and follow instructions.

When you use techniques which involve Beavers in the storytelling process, you encourage them to become storytellers themselves.

Beavers have unrestricted imagination. If you give your young listeners the desire to satisfy their curiosity through stories and books, it will remain with them throughout their lives.

Follow these basic rules and you won’t go wrong:

- Use stories that are simple
- Tell short stories (10 to 15 minutes) maximum
- Be well prepared.

Introducing A Story

An excellent way to introduce a story to Beavers involves bringing in objects or pictures related to the story. Let the children talk about them and tell their own stories, then lead into your story. Ask a librarian’s advice. He or she will know what kind of story is best to develop a particular theme.

Today’s children are very sophisticated in their appreciation of storytelling because they watch children’s television programs that employ professional storytellers. But, to a child, there’s nothing more fascinating than a real, live person telling a story. Be flexible and try other things besides the standard fairy tales and adventure stories your Beavers may already know.

Learn the story well before you try to tell it. Know the plot and keep it uncomplicated; know the correct sequence of incidents. Improvise. When you don’t have to read the story, you can pause during the telling, looking slowly around at those eager faces, giving them the thrill of wondering, “What’s coming next?” Children at this age thrive on suspense.

In your own words, build up to the high points in the story. Centre upon one main character, and always keep this person in view.

If you’re interested in telling the story, your Beavers will be interested in listening. Watch your audience and share your story. Beavers can tell if you’re bored or if you’re reading a story for your own pleasure. If you’re not interested in the story they’ll lose interest, and tell you so quite bluntly.
Speak clearly and slowly. You know the story, but the Beavers may not. Give them time to think about what you’re saying and adapt it to their own imaginary settings and their own experiences.

Although you may not be able to get yourself completely into their imaginary world, try to make yourself as much of the story as the Beavers do. Become a partner in adventure and discovery, a part of the fantasy you’re weaving. Remember, to children the story is not just another fairy tale. It’s real. They may dream about it for months, and probably will apply it to their play.

Try to make every time you tell a story like the first time you heard it. Remember the tingle in your spine? Pass it on!

In a large group it’s difficult to satisfy the needs of all the Beavers. Why? Because they have differences in taste, temperaments and ages. You may decide to do your storytelling in lodges or tail groups.

Know the children in your group. Generally, Beavers this age love thrilling, adventuresome stories. Be sensitive. Some children are more timid. Be prepared to tone down the story a little if a child seems upset. Perhaps you can invite them to sit close to you.

Some colonies find the best stories are those the leaders make up themselves. Make up different episodes for different occasions and eras, and weave these into fantastic settings which, at the same time, help your Beavers learn. You can lead them through an adventure at the Egyptian pyramids or take them on an African safari or an expedition to the North Pole to meet a polar bear. What can you dream up?

Act It Out
You don’t have to be a gifted actor to do this. Your Beavers aren’t looking for perfection. They admire and respect you, and will think you are the greatest.
You can act out a story in many different ways. Give each character a special voice, for example. In some colonies, each leader adopts the voice of a different character to help the Beavers identify them even easier. Perhaps one of your lodges would like to tell a story to the rest of the colony by having the Beavers speak for the characters.

You can also give life to a story by acting it out in pantomime or, if you find that too difficult, through simple facial expressions or body movements. How silly can you make the troll look? If a Beaver misses a word because of the child’s limited vocabulary, he or she may guess what the word means simply by your actions.

Involve the Beavers by asking them to act the story with you, or encourage them to try their own interpretations. If they’re familiar with the story, they’ll correct you during the telling. This may turn out to be more fun than you expected.

You can also act out a story by using a flannel board, pictures, slides, puppets, tapes or records. These approaches give children a point to focus on while they listen to the story, and provide them with opportunities to use more than one of their senses. Unfortunately, if you use slides, you may limit their imaginations. The setting may not be exactly as they saw it.

On the other hand, because you can build on it, the flannel board allows your listeners to apply their imaginations in developing the setting even further. Or, if you have artistic talents, you can make simple sketches on a flip chart to bring alive the story’s characters.

![Image]

**Timing And Setting**

A child’s concentration is limited. Keep a storytelling period short. If you want to tell a long story, choose carefully and tell only one chapter at a time so that you leave the Beavers eager for storytime at your next meeting.

Set an informal atmosphere with Beavers sitting in a cosy arrangement and lights turned low. Describe the story’s setting and use your imagination to dramatize the sounds made by trains or wind or other elements in the story. Allow time to let Beavers savour these details. You might be able to liven the story with a song in which all the children can join.

Make room for questions, as well, but keep it under control to avoid losing the story line or finding that one little Beaver is running the show. Be prepared for problems, interruptions and distractions so that you won’t come undone if they happen. If the situation becomes impossible, give up gracefully and suggest a short game or song to release the pent-up energy. When things settle down again, you may be able to continue.

Let Beavers tell a story of their own at the end of your story. Perhaps you can make a game of it to draw out some of the shyer Beavers.

**Storytelling Aids**

*Story Boards*

Many leaders use story boards to help them tell stories. You can make one from felt, flannel or velcro. Some are magnetic.

Keep board stories simple, using only a few large characters or objects to illustrate as you go along. Start with one character on the board and build from there.
Keep the characters hidden until they take their place on the board so your audience doesn’t know what’s coming next. And remember to face the Beavers, not the board!

When the story is over, ask your Beavers to help you take the characters off the board. They’ll remember the story as they do the job, and probably will start telling it to each other.

**Finger Plays**
Before telling a story to the Beavers, think of hand movements you might incorporate. Beavers enjoy finger plays like these.

**The Beavers**
Five little Beavers sitting on a well (Cup hands)
One peeped in and down he fell (Raise one finger)
Beavers jumped high (Raise hands and wave above head)
Beavers jumped low (Lower hands to floor)
Beavers jumped everywhere, to and fro.

Four little Beavers... etc.

**Ten Galloping Horses**
Ten galloping horses came through the town *(Wiggle 10 fingers)*
Five were white *(Hold up left hand)*
Five were brown *(Hold up right hand)*
They galloped up and galloped down *(Wiggle 10 fingers)*
Then galloped away, out of town! *(Hide hands behind back)*

**Mood Stimulators**
Drama workshops often encourage leaders to make use of exercises which help youngsters develop their dramatic potential. You can use any of the following examples very effectively for this purpose.

**Warm-ups**
- Shaking and stretching
- Frozen tag, poison tag
- Different styles of movement (e.g. slow motion, fast motion, in mud, sand, water, etc.)

**Statues**
Start in pairs where each Beaver takes a turn being the sculptor who makes his or her partner into a statue. First let them choose whatever theme they like and later narrow it down to a particular area like sports, occupations, etc.

Gradually increase the size of the groups. Let them become statues illustrating what happy, excited, watching, listening and smelling look like. Combine the emotions with earlier themes (e.g. an excited hockey player; a bored bus driver).

Try sequential statues. Think of the baseball player up to bat, for example. What is the batter’s first position, next position, and next?

**Characters**
Let Beavers imagine certain situations, and build characters from them (e.g. a group of people in an elevator, waiting for a bus, at a party).

Try role playing. Assign Beavers characters, situations, and a problem to resolve.
Movement

Encourage Beavers to move as if they were taking a Sunday morning walk; walking in different seasons and under different weather conditions; walking in mud, water, sand, grass, snow, etc.

Have two Beavers stand facing each other and move together as if each was the other’s reflection in a mirror. Next, ask them to:

- Move from point to point, alone and in groups, using different styles.
- Move in time to certain styles of music.
- Pretend you’re exercising on a machine.

Experiment with mime. Play charades, hold a wordless conversation, pretend to be sad and show what happens when something cheers you up (transformation).

Perception

Come into the room, look around, listen and touch. Move around to music. When it stops, touch something white, soft, bumpy, warm, cold, etc.

Play variations of Kim’s Game (Beavers look at items on a tray, close their eyes and try to remember what they saw). Change something in the room and ask your Beavers to tell you what is different.

Play a rhythm game, circle tag or Red Light/Green Light.

When your colony is all primed and ready to go, you can proceed in many directions. If you’re centering much of your evening around drama, you might try one of the following ideas.

Garbage Bag Stories

Organize the colony into lodges or tail groups and give each one a drama coach and a garbage bag containing enough items to equip every Beaver with an article of clothing or a prop. Make zany choices when you fill the bags.

Give groups a certain time to prepare a skit. Encourage them to use a master of ceremonies who will introduce each act and make sure actors don’t improvise too long.

Dramatize A Story

Work in small groups. Tell your Beavers a story you’ve selected or they’ve suggested for dramatization. Is there plenty of action? Then, help the Beavers divide the story into pictures or scenes, and let volunteers use their own words to act out each scene. Encourage your other Beavers to add their ideas to the improvisation. Once a scene is set, practise it once again and move on to treat the next scene in the same way. Encourage everyone to take part in the planning and presentation. Keep the staging as simple as you can.
Audience Participation

Using a story you narrate while the Beavers join in is a great way to set an exciting tone for a special evening, whether on Halloween or for other themes or events.

Organize the colony into groups of about three Beavers each. Help each group decide which sound they will make whenever their character is mentioned in the story.

A leader then reads the story slowly and dramatically, pausing long enough for the Beavers to add their special sound effects. For example, in a western story you might have the following effects:

- **Cowboy** *(Ye Hah)*
- **Blacksmith** *(Clang Bang)*
- **Horse** *(Neigh)*
- **Baker** *(Here’s the Dough)*
- **Long Black Snake** *(Hiss-s-s)*
- **Sailor** *(Where’s the Ocean?)*
- **Mayor** *(Welcome to Rattlesnake Town)*
- **Cactus** *(Prickle, Prickle)*
- **Farmer** *(Plant the Corn)*

See how imaginative you can get inventing a story that uses these or other characters.

RESOURCES

- Scouts Canada’s *Fun at the Pond*
- Scouts Canada’s *Beaver Song Book*
- Scouts Canada’s *The Best of the Leader Cut-out Pages*
- Scouts Canada’s *The Campfire Book*
- Scouts Canada’s *Song Book*
- Scouts Canada’s *Campfire Sing Along CD or Cassette*
- Public libraries
- Book stores