

Twixt & Tween

Programs for Elementary Children

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Things to consider:

- Budget, the space you have for programs, staff available.
- The importance of keeping this age involved at the library. If you loose them now they may not be back. Consider the need to develop the habits of life-long learning.
- Be sure what you plan is appropriate for the target audience. What you can do with 8-12 year olds is very different than what you can do with 5-7 year olds.
- What time works best for your patrons? Early-release days? Weekends or evenings?
- Length of the program. Food or no food. Registration or walk-in?

BookWorms Unite! Book discussion for 8-12 year olds.

- Each gets to talk about what they have been reading.
- Each receives a reading notebook, which they get to personalize.
- Each week the leader tries to get them to focus on a different aspect of the book, i.e., their favorite character and why he/she is their favorite; the most exciting part of the plot, etc. She also asks directed questions to stimulate discussion.
- They do a simple craft each week and have snacks after their booktalking.
- It is an hour long, and done in 6-8 week sessions. Enrollment is encouraged but not required. It is useful to give an idea of how many notebooks, snacks & crafts to prepare.



“It’s important to make them feel like it is their program. By personalizing the sign-in sheet and coming up with creative ways of selecting the order they talk, it keeps it fun. Children from the various schools get to meet new kids. In the 6 to 8 weeks of each session, they get to be friends. Most continue through many sessions.” Jean Umholtz.

Act-Around: Drama for 6-10 year olds.

- Each week featured a story which was first read aloud, then acted out.
- Children figured out what parts were needed, and sometimes even added parts.
- Sometimes had very simple props & costumes, but often not.
- Children did not have to play a part, but remained with parents as the audience.
- Younger children were usually given non-speaking parts.
- The story was repeated with different children in the main roles.
- Half an hour, no food, no enrollment.



“Stories with crowd scenes of people or animals were easy to fit any size crowd. Some that worked well: “The Monkey and The Crocodile” by Paul Galdone; “Daisy the Firecow” by Viki Woodworth; “Scarecrow’s Hat” by Ken Brown; “Sody Sallyratus” by Terri Sloat; “The President and Mon’s Apple Pie” by Michael Garland; “The Baby Bee Bee Bird” by Diane R. Massie; “Under the Quilt of Night” by Deborah Hopkinson.” Dana Hart.

Story Theatre: Public presentations for 8-12 year olds.

- Each session featured a particular story or play, and each built upon skills learned.
- They played games, such as “What are you doing?” to introduce mime, and the use of action. Did poetry readings using various voices.
- Children got to adapt and personalize the stories, adding characters or fracturing plot.
- Children created props, dressed puppets (if a puppet play), recorded text, made invitations.
- Dana found "On Stage: theater games and activities for kids" by Lisa Bany-Winters useful.
- Registration required and weekly participation encouraged. One hour with simple snacks.
- Last week was a public performance open to the public.



Adventures on the Anthill: An Adventure Club for 5-7 year olds.

- Each week featured a read-aloud book (Ant & insect stories to match summer theme).
- Various work/activity stations: a magnetic ant farm game, chalk art on the library’s side-walks, scavenger hunts, problem solving games, puppets & improvisational acting.
- Hour and a half, enrollment encouraged to have enough materials, ice water to drink.



Dana Hart was glad she had encouraged registration, as her anticipated size of 30-50 soon grew to 80-100 children. This allowed her to adapt her plans before the session started and allowed me to adjust the budget to allow for more supplies.

Bugapaloosa: Creating giant bugs with 8-12 year olds.

- A one time event to create Children’s Room decorations.
- Staff prepared the papier-mâché balloons in different size and shapes ahead of time.
- Used as part of our bug scavenger hunt, printed in both English & Spanish.
- Got names and contact for those who wanted their giant bugs at the end of the summer.

Tea Party: A fancy affair for 5-12 year olds.

- An annual event, with a different theme each year.
- Tea sandwiches and a dessert served on real china & fancy table cloths.
- Staff usually take on roles of the theme.
- Often have live music as part of the performance.
- Limit enrollment to the number of seats available + 10 (living dangerously).



Mystery Mondays: Mystery Games (each for different age range)

- 4 different games purchased : Juanita Rose Violini; www.kids-mysteries.com 262-377-7230
- Repeated each game—doing each once in June and again in July.
- Children were assigned a character ahead of time, so they knew their role.
- Each played their part and/or followed the clues, to try to solve the mystery.
- Enrollment was limited by the number of parts.

In hindsight, I would have done the same game two weeks in a row. We had to store all the props and get them back out. We had some different volunteers in June and July, so had to do training twice. Dana Hart.

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