

# Young Audiences of Atlanta, Inc.

## Study Guide for Teachers

### Sherry Norfolk

#### "Pathways to Freedom"

**Grades:** 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

**Audience Limit:** 350

**Length:** 45 minutes

#### Program Overview

Pathways to Freedom is composed of a rich tapestry of stories drawn from history, legend and folklore exploring the many pathways to freedom followed by fugitive slaves. The program aims to awaken students to new revelations about our nation's history particularly from the African American perspective. Students will be enlightened as they listen to everything from the zany and comedic tales of Brer Rabbit to the more serious and sobering accounts of daring runaway slaves.

#### About the Artist: Sherry Norfolk

Sherry, with a B.A. in Elementary Education (Indiana University 1974) and a Masters in Library Science (Indiana University 1979), performs and teaches storytelling residencies through the Georgia Council for the Arts, Alabama State Council on the Arts, Tennessee Arts Council, Alaska Arts Council, South Carolina Arts Commission, and Young Audiences of St. Louis. Her 17- year career as a children's librarian led her to storytelling as an effective means of motivating children to read, and her years in the pre-K and primary classroom taught her the power of storytelling as an educational tool. Sherry currently serves as consultant to Turner South in developing and implementing their "Storytelling in Education" project. She and her husband Bobby are the co-authors of *The Moral of the Story: Folktales for Character Development* (August House Publishers, 1999).

#### Audience Etiquette

- Before the program, discuss with your students what makes a good audience.
- Compare appropriate behavior for different kinds of audience situations- e.g., rock concert, sporting event, ballet.
- Students will get more out of the program if they come prepared. Use this guide to help students anticipate what to listen and look for.
- Set a good example. Catch up on paperwork after the performance.

# "Pathways to Freedom" - Sherry Norfolk

## Program Description

This energetic program offers students the opportunity to hear about some of the daring and courageous ventures of African Americans through a rich tapestry of folktales drawn from history, legend and folklore. Some of the more salient features of the program include "The Freedom Riddle", a true account of a slave who riddled his way into freedom, tales of Brer Rabbit exploring Brer Rabbit's significance to the slaves and tales of the Underground Railroad including how the railroad got its name. Every story creates an atmosphere for students to make connections to their own lives and promotes an environment fostering visualization, imagination and transformation of people, places and events. While the program's structure varies according to each unique tale, sessions include introductory activities, interactive and reflective activities, connections to the core curriculum and culminating activities summarizing the main idea of the story. Once the program ends, students leave with a broadened understanding of American history.

## Overview of the Art Form

Storytelling is the art of using words, gestures, facial expression, and body language to bring a story to life in the listener's imagination. From the beginning of time, storytelling has been the way cultures have preserved and celebrated their memories, passed on their values and belief systems, entertained, instructed and reported. Today, storytelling is recognized as one of the most effective brain-compatible teaching strategies, accessible for children with diverse abilities and disabilities, and applicable to all "ways of knowing." Storytelling continues to invite us all to "Enter the Theater of the Mind-the Imagination!"

## Learning Objectives

- Students will broaden learning of the plight of runaway slaves.
- Students will learn how the concept of freedom was manifested among many races and creeds of people.
- Students will become familiar with legends that have emerged about runaway slaves , e.g. people who could fly, people beneath water, invisible people.
- Students will learn to listen actively and analytically.

## Vocabulary, Terms, Definitions

**Fugitive** - Runaway.

**Slave** - A human being owned by or subject to another as a result of capture, purchase or birth.

**Fugitive Slave Law** - An 1850 law that required runaway slaves to be returned to their owners.

**Abolitionist** - A person who worked for an end to slavery in the United States in the 1800's.

**Underground Railroad**-A system set up by opponents of slavery to help African American slaves escape to the free states of the North and to Canada.

## Pre and Post Activities

### PRE

**Language Arts** - Ask students to brainstorm every phrase they can think of that has the word "underground" in it. Discuss the meanings of these phrases with the students. (8-10)

**Current Events** - Ask students to research countries where slavery is legal. Have them to find the conditions associated with slavery in a particular country. (11-12)

### POST

**Multicultural, Character Education**- After listening to the stories, ask your students if any of them have had major situations where they were treated unfairly and they wanted to run away. (8-9)

**Character Education** - After listening to the stories, have students to discuss some the people they considered heroes. Then ask: Can you remember a situation in your life when you felt like a hero? Then, have them to share the experience. (9-12)

## Relevant Curriculum Standards

### *Language Arts 8.15, 9-12.26*

Students will discuss and analyze stories about African Americans.

Students will invent solutions to problems using critical thinking techniques,

Students will respond to various forms of literature, and to tales and stories about African Americans.

### *Theatre Arts 8.33, 8.36, 9.33-*

Students will discover common experiences and ideas in stories and folklore.

Students will identify and describe recurring cultural motifs and social themes in stories and folklore from various cultures and analyze how universal themes transcend time and place.

## Resources

### Books

- Hamilton, Virginia. *Many Thousand Gone*. Alfred A. Knoph, 1993.
- Harley, Sharon et al. *The African American Experience*. Globe Book Company, 1992.

### Websites

- [www.historychannel.com](http://www.historychannel.com)
- [www.ugrr.org](http://www.ugrr.org)

## **Curriculum Connections**

This program is designed to be a powerful tool to bridge history with legend and folklore with the central theme of exploring the many pathways followed by African slaves prior to the Civil War. The program directly supports the 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies curriculum in the study of Georgia and the American Experience. It is also immediately aligned to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade United States History study of local history and the pre-civil war.