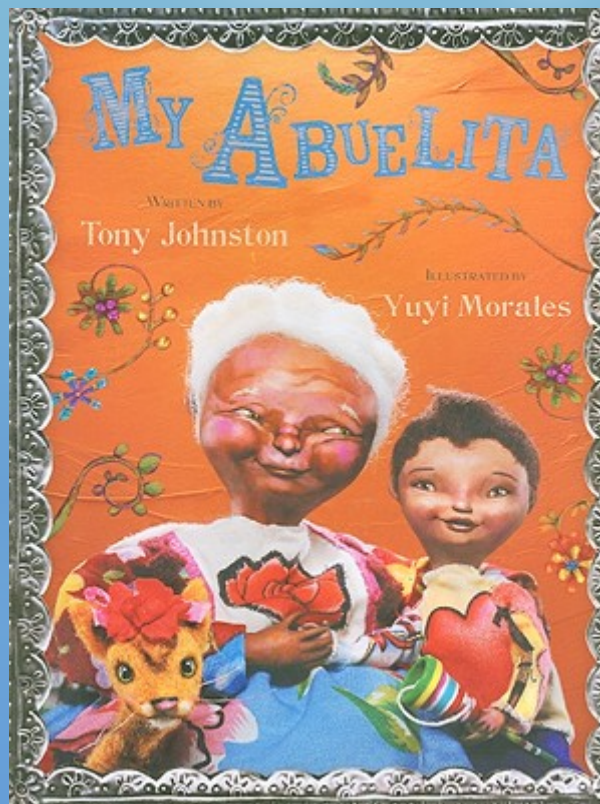


TALES FROM MOTHER LAND: Mothers, Grandmothers and the Stories They Tell

A Book Discussion & Activity Guide for *My Abuelita*



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Cultural Literacy Programming Course – Dr. Jamie Naidoo

TALES FROM MOTHER LAND

Mothers, Grandmothers and the Stories They Tell

Ages 4-8

Goal:

This lesson plan is designed to illustrate the importance of families through tales of the bonds between mothers and grandmothers with their children and grandchildren. It is also designed to emphasize the value of our cultural heritage, and to teach how our traditions can be passed on through stories.

Opening Activity

Song:

Here we are together, together, together;
Oh, here we are together in our library;
There's *(name)* and *(name)* and *(name)* and *(name)*.
Oh, here we are together this bright, sunny day.



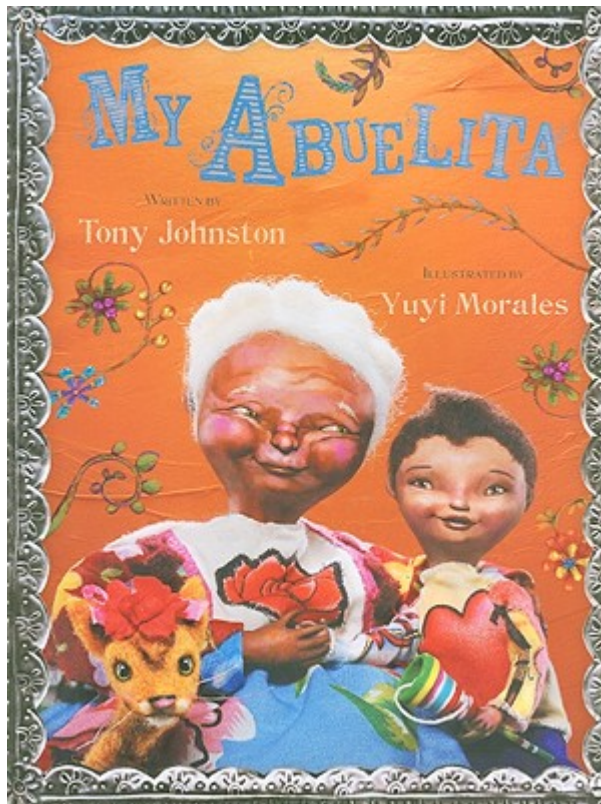
(Traditional words and music.) Note: *phrases can be changed to suit the occasions, such as: Here we go a-marching or Here we are a-clapping.*

Fingerplay:

This is a family (*hold up one hand, fingers spread*)
Let's count them and see,
How many there are,
And who they can be (*count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*)
This is the mother (*touch pointer finger*)
Who loves everyone
And this is the father (*touch big finger*)
Who is lots of fun.
This is my sister (*touch ring finger*)

She helps and she plays,
And this is the baby (*touch little finger*)
He's growing each day.
But who is this one? (*touch thumb*)
He's out there alone,
Why it's Jackie, the dog,
And he's chewing a bone. (*wiggle thumb.*)

Focus Book

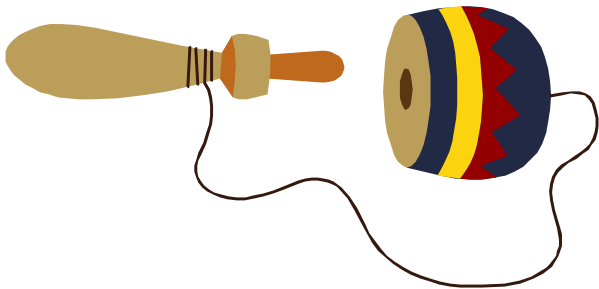


My Abuelita

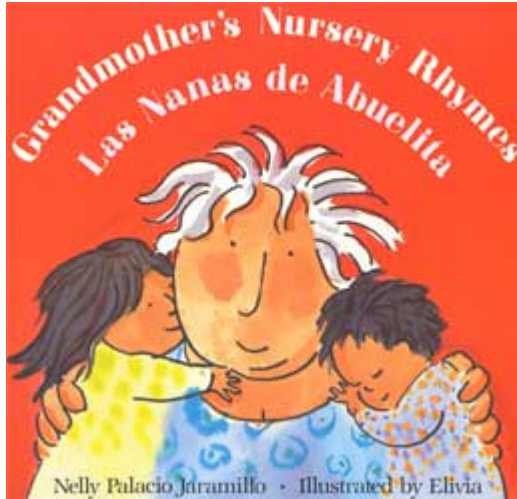
Written by Tony Johnston

Illustrated by Yuyi Morales

A young boy lives with his grandmother, and he calls her Abuelita. He loves her, and she loves him. She also loves her work. Each day she wakes up with the sun to prepare for her very important job. She stretches and bends; she yodels and hums. As they go through the morning rituals of bathing, dressing and having breakfast, Abuelita continues to make strange noises to get ready for work. Finally they load her jalopy with a temple, skeleton, plumed serpent, dolls, headdress, sun and moon, and head off for Grandma's job as astoryteller. The bond between grandmother and grandson is gorgeously illustrated by Morales' whimsical use of dolls to create the artwork. With rich color and fantastic details, the reader is carried away into their fascinating world. Tony Johnston has devised an intriguing and humorous story that keeps the readers' attention to the very last page, as they wonder, "What is Abuelita's job?"



Other Recommended Titles

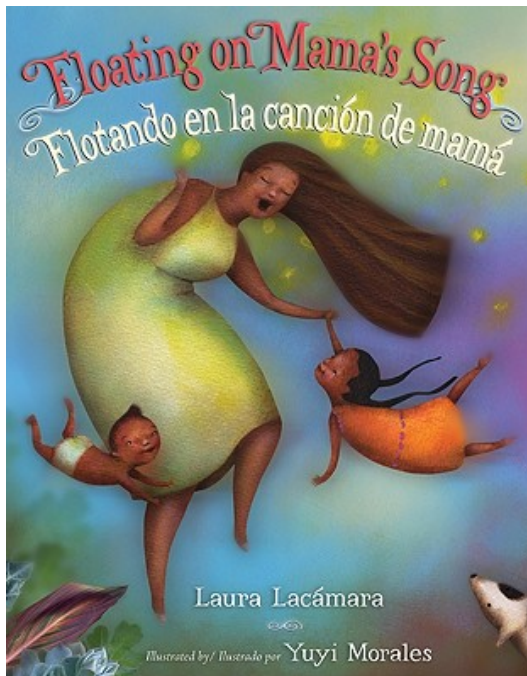


Grandmother's Nursery Rhymes

(Las Nanas de Abuelita)

Nelly Palacio Jaramillo and Elivia

With bright and whimsical illustrations, this fun storybook with both Spanish and English translations combines riddles, lullabies, tongue twisters and nursery rhymes in a way that is ideal for sharing as a family, and would be a unique way to learn English as a second language.

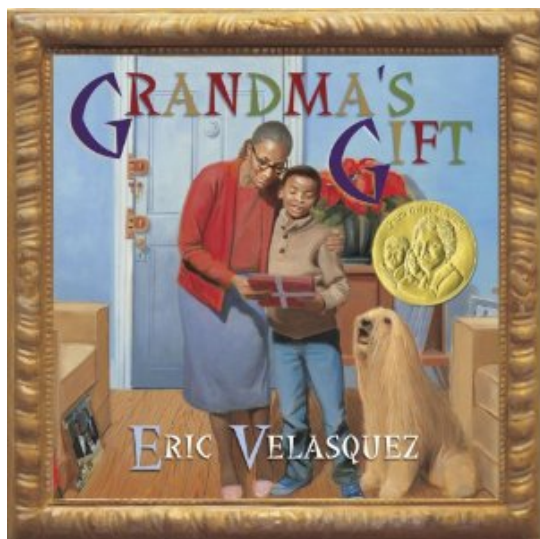


Floating On Mama's Song

(Flotando en la canción de mamá)

Laura Lacámara and Yuyi Morales

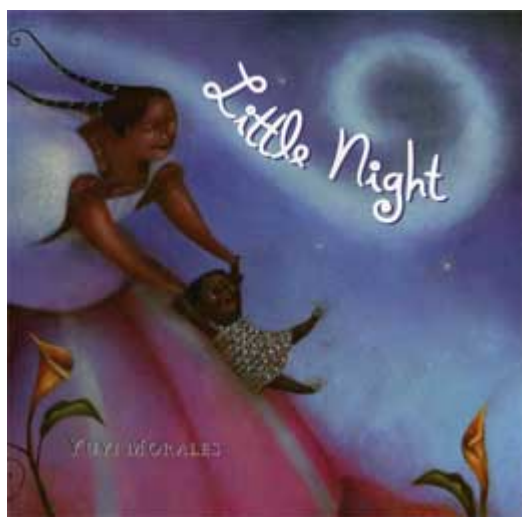
What a seventh birthday! Anita's Mama is floating, and so is everything around her. Her Mama has the gift to make things float when she sings, but some of the neighbors don't like it when their animals are up in the air, so Mama has to stop singing. Mama grows sad, and it affects all the animals, then Anita and her family realize what a true gift they have. With bright, dynamic illustrations by Yuyi Morales, this bilingual picturebook will make an imaginative addition to collections.



Grandma's Gift

Eric Velasquez

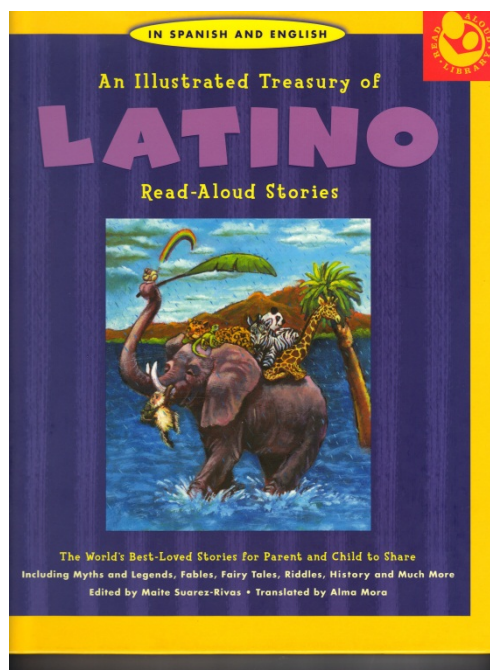
This richly detailed picturebook re-lives the author's memories of visiting his grandmother in Spanish Harlem. The close bond between the two is revealed as they shop and cook traditional foods. His grandmother also takes him to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to complete an assignment to see Diego Velazquez's portrait of Juan de Pareja. The touching story and gorgeous oil paintings truly are a gift



Little Night

Yuyi Morales

Mother Sky wants Little Night to come to bed, but Little Night still wants to play. The two go through familiar bedtime rituals, but with fantastical details. The bath has bubbles made from clouds, and Little Night has a milk-mustache made from the stars of the Milky Way. This touching story is complemented perfectly by Morales' gorgeous illustrations that magically depict a mother's love.



An Illustrated Treasury of Latino

Read-Aloud Stories

Maite Suarez-Rivas and Alma Mora

Illustrated by Ana Lopez Escriva, Luis Fernando Guerrero, Margaret Ringia Hart, Alex Levitas, Ruth Araceli Rodriguez, and Shannon Workman

This book includes a wonderful collection of Latin American folklore. Each story is short enough to read in a few minutes, and is captivatingly illustrated. With Spanish and English text, it would be ideal for families to share together, a unique way to introduce children to other cultures, or a nice introduction for those who would like to know more

Topics for Discussion/Questions

- ★ What do you think Abuelita does for work?
- ★ Why does she stretch and yodel?
- ★ Why does she have to take temples, serpents, suns, moons, headdresses, and dolls to work?
- ★ When looking at the pictures, point out objects that are unique to Mexican culture and art, such as the pillow with the picture of Frida Kahlo, the placemats, painted furniture, and clothing.
- ★ What do you think Abuelita's stories are about?
- ★ Who tells you stories? Do you know anyone like Abuelita? How are they like her?
- ★ Why is it important to tell stories?
- ★ Discuss the dolls and artifacts used by Abuelita. Ask the children what they think they mean. Explain their significance.
- ★ Abuelita uses the dolls, temples and serpents, and other artwork to represent her culture. What could you use to represent your own culture?
- ★ The cat's name is Frida Kahlo. Discuss the real Frida Kahlo.
- ★ Discuss family relationships.

Activities

1. **Let's Get Moving:** After you have read the book and discussed it, go through the book again and have the children act out all the activities performed by Abuelita and her grandson. Have them bend, stretch and take deep breaths. Then, have the children pretend to take a shower and say "Glub! Glub! Glub!" Let them "towel off" and hum at the same time. Tell them to yodel. Then, let them "Boom!!!"

Variation: Do the above activities as you read the book.

2. **Do You Remember Where?** Tell the children to pay special attention to the pictures as you read the book. When you finish, ask them if they can remember where certain objects were? See how many details from the pictures that they can remember.

3. **Make Your Own Abuelita!** Using the paper doll template found on Yuyi Morales' website (http://www.yuyimorales.com/my_abuelita/for_you.html) print out the picture of Abuelita on cardstock. Let the children cut it out, then give them craft sticks and glue. Allow them to create their own stick puppet of Abuelita.

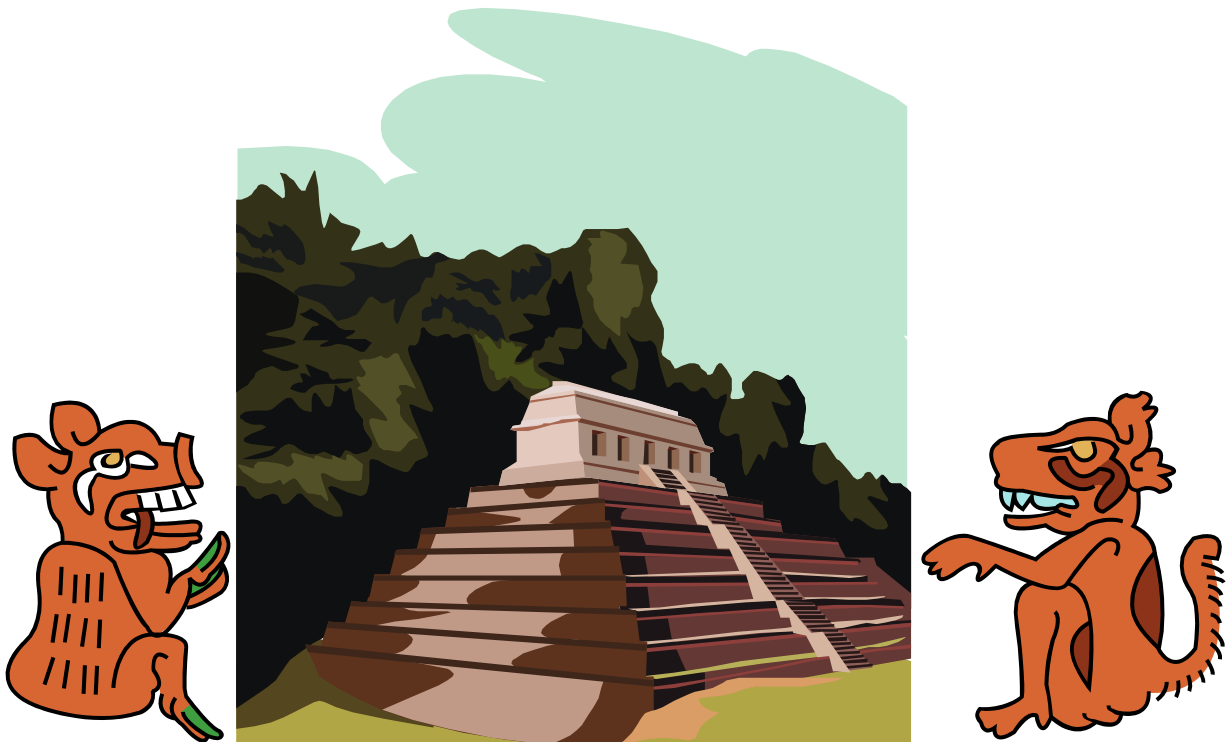
4. **Hot Pepper Relay:** The book describes Abuelita as being as wrinkled as a dried chile. Have the children divide into two teams. Have a large oven mitt for each team, and on it place 3 chile peppers. Have the children walk down the room while balancing the peppers (they cannot touch the peppers with their other hand), then come back to their team. They must hand off the mitt with the peppers to a teammate. The first team to finish wins.



5. **Sun & Moon Fans:** Abuelita carried models of the sun and moon in her car. A well-known Latino myth tells of the creation of the sun and moon. To make your sun and moon myth fan, sketch a sun with erasable colored pencils on a recycled file folder (or use a paper plate). Experiment with different faces and try unusual shapes for the sun's rays. Use crayons or markers to color your sun with bright, warm colors such as yellow, orange, and red. With scissors, cut around your sun. Trace the outline on another file folder. Sketch a crescent moon, or any other moon stage you wish, within the outline. Add a face and other details such as stars and comets. Use cool colors, such as green, blue, and purple to create a moody, cool moon. Cut out your moon. Accent both with glitter glue. Glue the sun and moon together, back to back. For the fan handle, slide a craft stick between the two layers before the glue dries. Air-dry your fan. Add patterns or designs to the fan handle.



6. **Woven Placemats:** Abuelita had colorful woven placemats on her table. Students can make their own woven placemats from paper. Fold a large piece of construction paper in half by bringing the shorter sides together. Measure a line 1 inch (3cm) from the open end with a ruler. Use scissors to cut 4 parallel lines from the fold up to your line. Space the cut lines an equal distance apart from each other and the side of the paper. Unfold your fiesta mat base. Cut a second large piece of construction paper into strips, cutting straight across the paper from long side to long side. Weave strips over and under the slits into the base. Alternate each strip so that where one goes over, the next strip goes under. Weave as many strips as you can. There will be strips left over. Attach loose ends of strips to the mat base with glue. Draw pictures on the mat with crayons or markers. Note: To save time, strips can already be prepared.



Websites

<http://www.crayola.com/>- This website is filled with free coloring pages, multi-cultural craft ideas, games, and resources for parents and educators. Includes lesson plans. The fan and woven mat crafts above were found here.

<http://www.yuyimorales.com/>- This website is about the life and work of Yuyi Morales. Visitors to the site can click on individual books to obtain more information about them, find crafts related to them, and see how the artwork was created. The Abuelita paper doll came from this site, and can be used without permission for classroom activities.

www.ehow.com/- Ehow advertises itself as “trusted advice for the curious life”. It has bountiful resources on family, food, health, home, money and more. At <http://www.ehow.com/cultures/>, there is a huge list of world cultures, with links to interesting information, history and crafts on each. The idea for the hot pepper relay came from this site. http://www.ehow.com/list_6331931_ideas-kids-fiesta-games-crafts.html

www.familycrafts.about.com/- This site is a wonderful resource for craft projects. Visitors can find a craft based upon age, gender, type of product used, theme, holiday, and more. There is also a search window for the site to allow searching of crafts for specific ethnic groups or cultural themes.

www.multiculturalchildrenslit.com/- Includes annotated bibliographies of children’s literature from around the world, as well as links to other websites that might be of interest on that subject.

**Lesson Plan by Felicia Fuller Lindsay. Many thanks to Lauren Martin for creative input.
Created for Cultural Literacy Programming Course taught by Dr. Jamie Naidoo, Univ of Alabama – SLIS.**

