

## Telling a Spring Break Tale

“Once upon a time,” Nathan’s grandpa began, “there lived a court jester named Nathaniel. Court jesters make kings and queens laugh. Nathaniel loved his job but today Nathaniel was worried. How could he make the king and queen laugh? He had lost it.”

Three-year-old year old Nathan shifted in his car seat. He loved it when Grandpa told stories in the car. Grandma smiled from behind the steering wheel.

“Lost what Grandpa?” Nathan asked.

“He lost,” Grandpa said solemnly, “his magic ...”

Grandpa paused and pulled out a paper bag from the restaurant they had been to for lunch. “Reach inside Nathan,” Grandpa instructed, “and pull out one thing. Don’t peek!”

Grandpa had hidden a few objects inside that bag. From the bag Nathan pulled out a...

“Feather - from the parking lot!” shouted Nathan.

Grandpa continued, “This was no ordinary feather. This feather was magic. When Nathaniel held it he danced like a leprechaun. Its magic made people laugh. Now the feather was lost and Nathaniel needed help to find it.”

Grandpa looked out the car window for a character to add into his story. “Tall woman walking a black dog, have you seen my magic feather? When I hold my magic feather it makes me dance like a leprechaun.”

“I have not seen your feather,” said the tall woman walking the black dog, “but I did find this.”

Grandpa held out his hand for the feather and passed the paper bag to Nathan again. Nathan reached inside and pulled out a....

“Fork,” said Nathan.

Grandpa continued, “That is a fine plastic fork,’ said Nathaniel, ‘but it is not my magic feather.’”

Grandpa looked at Grandma and added her into the story, then Nathan’s teddy bear, and finally a squirrel scampering across a hydro wire. In the story Nathaniel asked each one if they had seen his magic feather. In turn each replied, “I have not seen your feather, but I did find this.” which cued Nathan to pull a different object from the paper bag. Each object became part of the story too as Grandpa said, “That is a fine \_\_\_\_ but it is not my magic feather.”

With the bag emptied, Grandpa concluded his story. “No one could find Nathaniel’s magic feather. A big tear pooled in the corner of Nathaniel’s eye and trickled down his cheek, splashing onto the ground beside him.” Grandpa traced his finger from the corner of his eye, down his cheek, his fist hand landing on the seat beside Nathan. Slowly Grandpa opened his fist for Nathan to see.....

“The magic feather!” exclaimed Nathan.

“What was lost is found,” said Grandpa, “and Nathaniel danced, like a leprechaun, all the way to the castle.”

*Why tell stories? Nathan’s grandpa knew.*

Storytelling helps children:

- Develop imagination
- Improve speech through listening and joining in
- Recognize patterns (repeated parts of the story) which are important for math and reading
- Listen and concentrate
- Share values and culture
- Think about new situations, how to solve problems, and emotions
- Feel important and close to an adult
- Have fun, even on long car rides!