

Sea Turtle Puppet Play

— Nancy Forer

Visiting the Carolina coastline, I was newly introduced to the wonderful and mysterious world of sea turtles.

During their long lifetimes they travel far and wide, often swimming over a thousand miles to return to summer beaches from whence they hatched for the purpose of laying their own eggs. This done, the female sea turtle covers the eggs with warm sand and returns to the sea. About two months later these eggs hatch and by the light of the full moon the “hatchling” babies find their way to the sea before the cold winds begin to blow. They must complete this sandy journey by nighttime’s shelter to avoid hungry predators.

I was inspired to write a simple rhyming puppet story along with a very simple pentatonic song to accompany it. I include patterns for making the turtles and some suggestions for staging the story for different ages and settings.

The story is broken into pieces for children from toddler to kindergarten ages. The beginning verse could be used as a complete story for the youngest toddlers and the song sung as an introduction and ending. The following verses could be added for the nursery child, a new verse each day. The entire story could be given as a whole to the older kindergartener. As such, it is a story to grow with.

I felt a sea turtle handglove puppet as “Sea-Sea” but she could be made using felt cut from the pattern

I include. The hatchling babies can be made as finger puppets.

Staging for the youngest audience could be as a simple lap story. A blue cloth draped over the storyteller indicates the deep, blue sea. A green cloth suggests the sea grass where the turtle will swim to hide.

The hand gesture is done mainly with the wrist turning from side to side. Slowly allow the forearm to sway slightly outward, pause, then inward, indicating a drifting motion, as if the turtle is being carried by an invisible, waving current.

For preschool audiences, the story could be simply staged as a table puppet story, using a small table or playstand covered in cloths. Include areas for the sandy beach, shoreline and the deep, blue sea with the green cloth “sea grass” to hide behind.

Older children could even stage the story themselves, making it as elaborate as their imaginations, to present to classmates or to an invited audience. This is a beautiful benefit of having a story grow with the child over time.

The little song could be played on the recorder and/or sung.

Parts could be given: One child moves the “Sea-Sea” puppet. Another child could be responsible for the sun; another child, the stars, and another, the moon. The rest of the children could be hatchlings, moving their finger puppets.

The finger puppets could be made during a parent evening.

This little story has the potential to create community and a growing consciousness for an appreciation of nature and our neighbor. ♦

Nancy Forer assisted for almost two decades in the nursery/kindergarten classes at the Waldorf School of Princeton, which she helped start as a pioneering parent. She also taught a parent/child class there. Since then she has become a grandmother and has moved to North Carolina to be closer to her own children. She has assisted the nursery class at the Emerson Waldorf School in Chapel Hill.



Sea-Sea, the Sea Turtle

*Sea-Sea is a sea turtle.
She lives in the deep, blue sea.*

*She swims down to the bottom
where the grass grows thick and green.*

*And there she hides behind that grass
where she cannot be seen.*



*Sea-Sea nibbles on the grass
when she gets hungry,*

*Then swims up through the deep blue sea
to where the sun shines bright.*

*She lifts up high her little head
to smile at the light.*

*Then down she swims in the deep, blue sea
down where the grass grows thick and green.*

*And there she hides behind that grass,
where she cannot be seen.*



*One fine and very special day
Sea-Sea swims a long, long way.*

*On a sandy beach she crawls,
when the starry night-time calls.*

*Here she digs a hole so fine
to lay her eggs to rest some time.*

*She kicks the sand to hide her eggs
Then crawls to the sea upon her legs.*

*Sea-Sea swims in the deep, blue sea
down where the grass grows thick and green.*

*And there she hides behind that grass
where she cannot be seen.*

*Nights and days and days and nights
The time is now just right.*

*The big, round moon in the nighttime sky
watches the eggs hatch by and by.*

*Little sea turtles crawl out in the sand
across the beach and over the land*

*Back to the sea, the moon lights their way.
The turtles get wet, then swim away.*



*Now they, too, live in the big, blue sea
and swim down deep where we can't see.*

*Down where the grass grows thick and green
Where they can hide and won't be seen!*



Song:

*A - A B D' E' D' - A
Sea - Sea is a sea tur-tle*

*A G G G E' D' A
She swims in the deep, blue sea*

*A ---- B
SWISH - SWISH*

*A ----- G
SWASH - SWASH*

*D' B A
FLIP and FLAP*

*D' D' B A - B - G
She swims most happ-il-y.*

Sea Turtle Templates

Enlarge to desired size

(to fit hands/fingers)

