

ANANSI THE SPIDER

Project Skills:

- Youth will identify three talents they have and how they can use these talents to help others.

Life Skills:

- Learning to learn

Academic Standards:

- English Standard A.4.2: Reads and responds to literature.

Grade Levels: K-2

Time: 45 minutes

Supplies Needed:

Make Anansi-style spider Activity

- *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott (ISBN: 150080469)
- Plastic solo cups
- Paper templates
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Tape
- Paper punch
- Pipe cleaners

Enhance/Simplify - Snacks

- Round crackers
- Peanut butter
- Stick pretzels
- Raisins

Enhance/Simplify - Gliders

- Paper
- Pipecleaners
- String
- Straws
- Scissors

Do Ahead:

- Read books to become familiar with the stories.
- Copy the Anansi template (see page 3), 1 for each youth.

BACKGROUND

This story is an African folktale in which Anansi the Spider, a trickster, falls into trouble. Luckily he has six sons, each of whom has a special skill. Together they use teamwork to rescue Anansi. The genre of the book is “folklore,” a special kind of story telling that some cultures use to tell their traditional stories. They use these stories as oral traditions that help their culture maintain its continuity. The story of Anansi is from an old culture, the Ashanti of West Africa. Anansi is a folk-hero to the Ashanti. This funny spider likes to play tricks on others. This book is about one of his adventures.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Read *Anansi the Spider*

Read the book out loud. Before reading, help youth examine the cover to predict what the book will be about. Point out how Anansi is made up of very simple shapes.

While reading, stop at appropriate times to allow for discussion and to point out new and interesting words. Have kids listen for names of Anansi’s sons and their special talents. Some pages in the book have neither dialogue nor text, only illustrations to “tell” the story. Have youth decide what is happening on those pages.

After reading, allow youth time to reflect on the book. What is the light that was put in the sky? Ask them to describe their favorite part or to share something new that they learned from the story.

Activity: Make Anansi-style Spiders

Tell the youth that they will be creating their own spiders like Anansi. Give each child a piece of the paper with the template printed on it (see attached page). Show them how to find the center of the template. Tell them that this is where they will want to draw their own spider face. Encourage youth to be creative.



Once they have finished coloring their spider’s face, instruct them to cut out the template on the solid black line. Show them how to insert the template into the cup so that the spider face is showing. Tape the paper to the cup to secure it.

Help them to punch eight holes (four per side) around the lip of the cup. Let them choose eight pipe cleaner pieces to use as their spider’s legs. Instruct them to put the end of each pipe cleaner through a hole in the cup and twist.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Let’s write down the names of Anansi’s six sons on a large piece of paper. What are each of the son’s talents? (See Trouble, River Drinker, Cushion, Game Skinner, Stone Thrower, Road Builder)
- Share your spider with the group and explain why you decorated it in the way you did.

Sources:

- Created by Kathy Kauth, Urban 4-H Coordinator, UW-Extension, Brown County
- “Education Place” at www.eduplace.com a site owned by Houghton-Mifflin, contains pre-K-8 resources for teachers, students and parents. Categories include Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Intervention, Professional Development, activities, games and textbook support. For a review of Anansi the Spider under “TeacherViews,” go to www.eduplace.com/tvIEW/pages/a/Anansi_the_Spider_Gerald_McDermott.html.
- “Introducing a New Book” under “Helpful Hints” is adapted from The Michigan Team Nutrition Booklist, Michigan Team Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences, Michigan State University, 2002.
- “Spider Gliders” activity under “Enhance and Simplify” is adapted from [http://www.sci.mus.mn.us/s/sln/tf/s/spiderglider/spiderglider.html](http://www.sci.mus.mn.us/sln/tf/s/spiderglider/spiderglider.html).

Apply:

- What are some of your talents?
- How could you use your talents to help someone you care about?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY**Enhance for Older Children:**

Older youth could put on an “impromptu” Anansi-style play. They could re-enact the story or make up a new Anansi fable.

Activity: More Books

- *Anansi and the Talking Melon* (ISBN: 0823411672)
- *Anansi and the Talking Stick* (ISBN: 0823417638)
- *Anansi Goes Fishing* (ISBN: 0823410226)

Activity: Make a Spider Snack

Incorporate a spider snack made from round crackers, peanut butter, stick pretzels and raisins. With the peanut butter, make a cracker sandwich. Insert eight pretzel “legs” into the filling. With a dab of peanut butter, set two raisin eyes on top.

Activity: Spider Gliders

1. Fold a paper in half and draw half of each segment of the spider (head and body).
2. Unfold, decorate and cut out the spider’s body.
3. Cut a piece of straw to fit in the spider’s body and tape it to the back.
4. Bend pipe cleaners to create legs and tape to the straw on the back of the spider.
5. Cut 15 feet of string. Attach left over straw to the ends of the string.
6. Pull the string through the straw on the spider’s back, creating a loop of string over the spiders head.
7. Hang the glider from a doorway, pull the lines apart and the spider will crawl up the glider.

HELPFUL HINTS**Introducing a New Book**

Use these basic, pre-reading strategies to get students interested in a new book before reading it:

- Examine the cover to predict what the book will be about.
- Read the title of the book to, or together with, students.
- Identify the author and illustrator.
- Introduce important concepts and vocabulary words that might be confusing to students prior to reading the book.

While reading:

- Stop at appropriate times to allow for participation and discussion.
- Encourage youth to interact with the text while listening to it. This helps them to understand and remember the important points.

After reading:

- Provide students with a time to reflect on the book.
- Ask them to describe their favorite part or to share something new that they learned from the story.

Reviewed by Wisconsin 4-H Afterschool Team: September 2005.

