

Better Conversations

Part 2

Use props

<i>The Problem</i>	Getting to know someone can be awkward. How can we make it easier to share our story with strangers?
<i>The Premise</i>	<p>Storyteller Lyn Ford often leads storytelling-based community outreach programs. For one of her favorite projects, she partnered seniors in assisted living facilities with high school students in “paired shares.”</p> <p>“We encourage stories with prompts. The older person will bring something to our circle and tell a story about it. One brought a beautiful painting, and one brought a small statue. One brought a hat that had all kinds of fishing hooks on it that had actually been her father’s.” The objects served as a kind of memory prompt as well as a point of material interest for the kids to connect to.</p> <p>“The young people gain an appreciation not just for people from a different generation, but also for circumstances that connect in some way to history,” Ford says. “And they realize that they have a history that they can share, too.”</p>
<i>The Application</i>	<p>Storyteller Antonio Rocha developed a program for kids that tells them about the world through souvenirs and artifacts he has collected during his travels.</p> <p>You might not have a collection like that, but you probably have some objects that help tell the story of who you are. It might be something you make and share with others, like a dish for a potluck or a recipe you write down. It might be something special, like a quilt your grandmother made for you, or something ordinary, like a photo on your phone.</p>
<i>How It Works</i>	<p>Did your classroom have show & tell sessions when you were a kid? This follows the same principle. Some people find it difficult to talk about themselves – their histories, their families, and their points of view. Having a prop of some sort can give the speaker and the listener a third thing to focus on, which makes the exchange easier.</p>

Find the full toolkit on the [More than One Story Resources](#) page.