

# WORLD OF SKY STORIES TEACHER'S GUIDE

The following Teacher's Guide is designed to help you prepare your class for their upcoming presentation of *A World of Sky Stories* when the Northern Stars Planetarium visits your school. Much of the enclosed material is for you, the teacher, to help you prepare your students. Puzzles and work-sheets are designed to be copied and distributed directly to your students. PLEASE NOTE: Not all of the material in this guide may be appropriate for your particular class. Some of the material may be too old or too young because this program is adaptable for several age levels. Please use only what is appropriate.

## PROGRAM OUTLINE

This presentation will move around the globe finding sky stories from different cultures. We will locate the part of the world each story is from on a map, before each story begins. As your students will see, sky lore has been told by people all over the world. Your program will consist of stories from the following list:

1. **“How Night Was Let Loose and All the Animals Came to Be”** A tale told by the Mundurucu Indians of Brazil.
2. **“Who Made the Sun?”** An aboriginal story from Australia.
3. **“The Lazy Ones and the Hard Working Ones” (Subaru & Mitsuboshi)**. A story from Japan about the Pleiades.
4. **“Moon Tales”** Views of the pictures on the moon from India, Ivory Coast, & Mexico.
5. **“The kidnapping of Persephone”** (Virgo the Maiden) A Classical Greek story that explains the seasons.
6. **“Three Hunters , a Bear, and a Boy”**. An Inuit (Eskimo) story from Baffin Island about the stars of Orion.



## VOCABULARY

**Aborigines:** The native people of Australia.

**Constellations:** Connect-the-dot pictures in the sky, using the stars as the dots.

**Dreamtime:** A long ago mythical time in Aboriginal lore.

**Indian:** This term arose from a misunderstanding when Columbus erroneously believed he was in the Indies (today called the East Indies in southeast Asia). It was only natural for him to name the people he met "Indians".

**Inuit:** The name that "Eskimo" people call themselves and would often rather be called.

**Legend:** A story that has been handed down orally over many generations. Such stories were often told as being true, but may or may not have been believed. It is common for such stories to have both human and animal characters; the characters might be mortal or immortal. They often have magical powers.

**Meteors:** Also called "Shooting Stars" or "Falling Stars", meteors are not really stars at all. They are tiny rocks burning up in the atmosphere due to friction caused by their rubbing with the air. In space they are called "Meteoroids"; burning in the atmosphere they are called "Meteors"; and if they survive the journey to the ground, the rock left over is called a "Meteorite."

**Meteor Shower:** This is when many meteors fall to Earth in a short period of time. The typical number might be 40 to 100 per hour.

**Milky Way:** A faint band of light that arches across the night sky. It is made of billions of stars. Native Americans referred to it as "The Spirit Path," or "The River."

**Mitsuboshi:** The Japanese term for the three stars of Orion's Belt.

**Myth:** A story similar to a legend, but often more serious in nature. They are often explanatory, the "How it Came to Be" type of story.

**Nomadic:** Refers to people who are constantly on the move.

**Northern Lights:** "Aurora Borealis" are flickering lights that appear in the northern sky. They are caused by disturbances on the Sun; the energy from these disturbances interacts with Earth's upper atmosphere, causing it to glow.

**Oral Tradition:** This is how most legends arose. It means that these stories were never written down, they were kept alive through live story telling.

**Subaru:** The Japanese name for the *Pleiades* or the *Seven Sisters*.



## Create a Living Story

This is similar to the old party game where everyone adds one sentence to the previous person's sentence and makes up a story as it goes along. In this case, we want you to prepare the children a bit first by introducing the main characters of the story, then they can supply the action.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Tape recorder

**PROCEDURE:** This activity will take one week to complete. Beginning on Monday, it will finish on Friday.

Tell the children that long, long ago, people didn't have television or radio or movies or even books. What did people do for entertainment? You will get many answers such as dancing, singing, and storytelling. Tell them that today we are still interested in storytelling. (Make it clear that we are interested in stories that people simply tell rather than book stories.) Ask the children where people told these stories. Inevitably, someone will say in a circle around a campfire. Have the kids move their desks out of the center of the room. Clear a large spot and have them sit in a big circle. You might even pull the window blinds to darken the room to be like night time.

Now you should introduce the characters of the story. The characters will all be from constellations in the sky. Here is a list of several, but don't feel that your class's story needs to use all of them. Too many characters in one story gets confusing. (One suggestion is to start out with three characters, let the story begin and make one full trip around the circle. When it gets back to you, you can introduce a new character from the sky.) You will be giving the kids the characters, but the kids will make up the story's action. It can go on as long as you feel appropriate, but don't make the story longer than your kids can remember because they will be asked to repeat the same story each day for the rest of the week. Use the tape recorder to record the first version of the story told on Monday.

**CHARACTERS:**

Andromeda	A princess
Cassiopeia	A queen
Cetus	A sea monster
The Big Dog	Orion's hunting dog
The Little Dog	Orion's other hunting dog
Leo	A lion
Lepus	A rabbit
Orion	A great hunter
Perseus	A hero
Pleiades	Seven beautiful sisters who dance
Taurus	A bull

**CONCLUSION:** Tell your students to go home and share the story with someone in their family. Each day, have them sit in the circle again and try to retell the story they created. Repeat this until Friday. The general story line should stay about the same, but the details will grow and change. After their telling on Friday, have them listen to the first version of the story you recorded on Monday. Which one is better? Is it the same story? Which is more interesting? They should be able to see how stories change with repeated tellings. They will also love hearing themselves on tape. They will have created a living story.

## THE STORY OF BERENICE'S HAIR (Greek)

It happened that one there was a king named Ptolemy Soter (pronounced 'Tolemy') who had a beautiful queen named Berenice. Ptolemy went away to war to fight against the nearby kingdom of Assyria. The war lasted many years and Berenice became frightened that her husband might never return. Fearing for his life, she went to the temple to pray that her husband would return victorious. In her anxiety, she promised that if the gods would assure Ptolemy's safe and victorious return, she would sacrifice her beautiful long hair to Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of love and beauty.

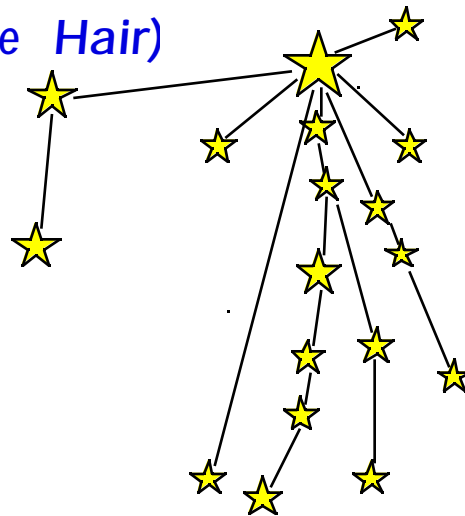
After weeks of waiting anxiously, Berenice was relieved when Ptolemy returned home in victory, safe and sound. The kingdom rejoiced at the king's return, but when Berenice told Ptolemy about her promise to sacrifice her beautiful long hair to Aphrodite, Ptolemy became very angry. Berenice's hair was the crowning glory of his queen; it was looked after with loving care by Berenice's many ladies-in-waiting. It was the admiration of the entire kingdom. It inspired poets and artists. Nothing, however, could be done; a promise before the gods could not be broken. Berenice went to the temple where her beautiful locks of hair were cut off and laid on the altar by the priests.

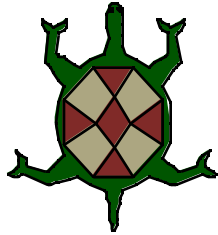
The next day when the king went to the temple to see his wife's hair, he was furious to find that it had been stolen. He summoned the guards to kill the priests for allowing this to happen. Just at the moment the guards were about to behead the priests, the court astronomer arrived and yelled, "Stop! Please, your majesty. 'Tis not the fault of thy priests. Just wait until dark and thou shall understand."

So when the day turned into night, the astronomer took the king outside and pointed into the heavens. "Look! Dost thou not see the clustered curls of thy queen, too beautiful for a single temple to possess?" And there in the sky between the Great Bear (The Big Dipper), Leo the Lion and Virgo the Maiden was a faint mass of twinkling stars. The astronomer declared, "Zeus, himself, came to the temple last night and gathered the locks of hair. He carried them high into the heavens where he and Aphrodite placed them for the whole world to marvel at." The king was satisfied with this great wonder and Berenice was delighted to be so honored by the gods themselves.

-Paraphrased from: Julius Staal's  
New Patterns in the Sky, pp. 149-150.

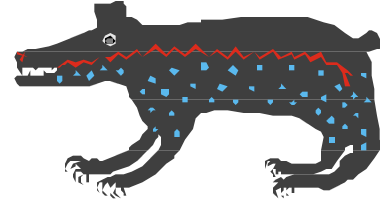
### Coma Berenices (Berenice Hair)





## The Rainbow

(Sioux Indian)



A long time ago when the spirits walked the Earth, one of them was telling how he helped the winged creatures and the four-leggeds who are brothers and sisters of the Indians.

“I have made feathers for the birds to keep them warm and to flee their enemies and to dance before their mates,” the Spirit said.

“I gave the turtle his house, the muskrat his fur coat, and the bear his strong claws and keen nose. To the elk I have given antlers; to the bobcat I have given the color of trees. I have given strength to the mountain lion. I know of none that I have not helped.”

Just then a mother deer look up. “You have given me to run like the wind,” she said, “but how will the fawn be saved from the sharp teeth of the coyote?”

“I will help you,” the Spirit said. He took his brush and painted and colored the fawn with spots of sunlight and ever since the fawn can hide safely in the leaves and shadows.

In the bright days of summer the flowers danced above the grass like a carpet of sparkling jewels. Great was their gift of pleasure to the runners who carried news from village to village. Happy were the feet of the maidens and joyful were the winged ones (birds) of the air dancing among the blossoms. But the flowers were bowed in sadness.

The Great Spirit was puzzled and he listened.

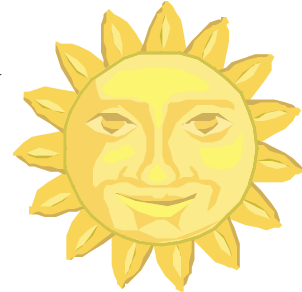
“Where will we go when the white giant (snow) comes from the north and we all must die?” the flowers were saying. “We too make the Earth good to look upon. Should we not go to a Happy Hunting Ground of our own?”

The Spirit nodded his head smiling. So now after the rain clouds of summer you may see the lovely flowers of last year arching across the heavens in a rainbow. That is how the rainbow came to be.

(A Sioux myth adapted from *Legends of the Sioux*, a film by Charles W. Nauman for the South Dakota Department of Highways.)

## THE STORY OF DAEDALUS AND ICARUS (Greek)

Daedalus was known throughout Greece as the greatest craftsman and inventor in all the world. His name spread even to King Minos on the island of Crete. King Minos pleaded with Daedalus to build him a cage to hold a terrible monster called the Minotaur. The Minotaur was half man-half bull. This hideous beast ravaged the island of Crete, devouring men, women, and children at his will. No one in all the land could destroy or even control this horrible creature.



Daedalus accepted King Minos' challenge and built the king a large and elaborate maze he called the Labyrinth. The passageways were so complicated that anyone who entered the Labyrinth could never find their way out again. And so, the Minotaur was trapped within the maze.

The people of Crete were so happy that they praised Daedalus unendingly. But King Minos became very jealous and he imprisoned Daedalus, along with his son Icarus, inside the Labyrinth. Daedalus and Icarus could not find their way out of the maze and were in constant fear of the Minotaur. It seemed there was no escape and only a matter of time before their doom would be sealed by meeting the hungry, hideous creature.

Daedalus, however, had not given up hope. While no man nor beast once inside the Labyrinth could ever find their way out, he noticed that one small creature came and went as quickly and easily as the wind – the birds. For the Labyrinth had no roof and the birds could fly in and out. But men could not fly. Could they? Daedalus instructed his son Icarus to collect as many feathers as possible. Icarus didn't understand why, but he did as his father asked. When enough feathers were gathered, Daedalus, the master inventor, fashioned wings from the feathers, holding them together with thread and wax. He made a large pair of wings for himself and a smaller pair for Icarus.

When they were ready make their flying escape, Daedalus told his son, "Icarus, remember to always maintain a moderate height. If you fly too low, the fogs and vapors will weigh down your feathers and you will not be able to fly. If you fly too high, the heat of the Sun will melt the wax and your wings will fall apart." But Icarus, excited about escaping and flying, did not listen. With a few sweeps of his wings, Icarus was flying above the Labyrinth. The Minotaur and the king's guards looked up in disbelief at the father and son flying overhead.

At first they were very nervous being so high, but gradually they became accustomed to the sensation of flight. Icarus slowly grew bold and did more and more daring stunts in the air. Daedalus tried to tell him to stay in the middle levels of the sky, but the sound of the wind kept Icarus from hearing. Soon, all Icarus could think of was touching the stars themselves. He flew higher and higher. Slowly, the Sun warmed and melted the wax. One by one, the feathers began to drop out of the wings. Icarus struggled but could no longer maintain his flight and he fell to a watery grave in the sea below. Daedalus flew on



alone. His eyes were full of tears and he cursed the skill that allowed him to make the wings. When he arrived safely on land, he built a temple to Apollo and hung up his wings as an offering to the god. Never again did he attempt to fly.

## **MATA-RIKI or LITTLE EYES; THE PLEIADES** (Polynesian)

*The Pleiades is that small cluster of stars forming Taurus the Bull's shoulder. It is also called "The Seven Sisters".*

The Polynesians call the Pleiades star cluster "Mata-riki" or "Little Eyes." They believe that long, long ago, before people inhabited the Earth, these stars formed a single star. This was the most brilliant star in the sky. Its light rivaled that of the quarter moon, and when it rose, its reflection sparkled and danced along the sea and the whole world was white from its shining.

But unfortunately, the star was not only beautiful, it was also extremely proud and was always boasting of its splendor among the other stars. It would say, "I am more beautiful than any of you. Yes, even more beautiful than the gods or the jeweled heavens themselves."

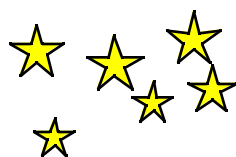
Now the god Tane, guardian of the four pillars of heaven, heard this and was angry. He determined to drive this ill-mannered star out of the sky, away into the dark regions. To do so, he sought the help of two other stars, Sirius and Aldebaron. Sirius was the second brightest star in the sky and naturally had no great sympathy with a rival who was brighter than he. And Aldebaron was located so close to the brilliant star that his own light was perpetually dimmed by that of his neighbor. Both therefore agreed readily to Tane's plan.

One dark night, the three allies crept up behind their quarry and made ready to chase it from the skies. The star was badly frightened when it saw them coming, and at first it ran and took refuge under the waters of a stream, the Milky Way. But Sirius climbed to the source of the Milky Way and diverted the course of the water. As it drained away, the poor fugitive was left unprotected and again it fled from them, under the arches of heaven and far beyond the silver palaces of the gods. It was swift of foot, and before long it had completely outdistanced them.

It looked as though the star might escape altogether, but Tane was a god, and not one to be outwitted. Suddenly he picked up Aldebaron and hurled him with such rage and vigor that the star was struck unaware as it ran, and smashed into six pieces. Then the god and his companions were satisfied and went away.

The six little fragments limped back to their place in the sky. Since that time Sirius shines as the brightest star in the sky, and Aldebaron is undimmed by any near rival. Yet the "Little Eyes," small as they are, remain exceedingly brilliant and sometimes whisper proudly to each other that they are more lovely as six than as one. They no longer dare boast aloud how beautiful they are, but when nights are dark and quiet they still lean down close to see themselves in the mirror of the oceans, and they know that they have no equal.

--Paraphrased from: Stories in the Stars, Sky Mythology from Around the World, A Special Publication of the International Planetarium Society, 2000.



## **OTHER WAYS OF SEEING THE STARS & CONSTELLATIONS**

*The stars we see overhead are seen by peoples all over the world, but not everyone imagines the same star pictures. Surprisingly, many cultures divide up the sky in fairly similar groupings, but sometimes forming different scenes or pictures from the same star groups. Here we offer the constellations we know today, and the way other cultures have viewed them:*

**Gemini:** The Twins *Greek*, The Guardians of Rome *Ancient Romans*, The Place of Decision *Native American*, The Peacocks *Arabian*, Two Gazelles *Egyptian*.

**Milky Way:** The Spirit Path *Native American*, The Sky River, *Native American, Polynesian, Japanese*, The Mud Trail Made When Turtle Crossed the Sky, *Native American*.

**Orion:** Long Sash *Native American* , Three Hunters (the 3 stars of the belt) and a Wounded Bear (Betelgeuse) *Inuit*, Frey the God of Fertility *Scandinavian-Norse*, Orvandel the Giant Sea Warrior *Scandinavian-Norse*.

**Pleiades:** Seven Sisters *Greek*, Dancing Girls *Native American & Aborigines*, Lazy Ones *Japanese*, Little Eyes *Polynesian*.

**Scorpius:** The Scorpion *Greek*, The Azure Dragon *Chinese*, The Fire (referring to the red color of Antares, a red star) *Chinese*.

**Sirius:** The Dog Star *Greek and Western Cultures*, The Star of the Nile *Egyptian*.

**Ursa Major:** The Big Dipper *American*, The Great Bear *Greek & Native American*, Thor's Wagon *Scandinavian-Norse*, The Drinking Gourd *Slaves in the United States in the early 1800's*.

**Ursa Minor:** The Little Dipper *American*, The Little Bear *Greek*, Little Fisher *Native American*.

**Virgo:** Persephone *Greek*, Maiden of the Wheat Field *North of England and South of Scotland*.

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*Please remember to pre-read any stories before sharing them with your students, not all stories may be appropriate.*

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(NOTE: All myths and legends should be read by the teacher prior to student reading or reading aloud in class as the content may not be appropriate for certain age levels [myths tend to be racy at times].)

### Audio Tapes\*

Moroney, Lynn. *The Feather Moon*, Oklahoma City: Lynn Moroney, ©1988.

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