



Hands-on experiences at the National Museum of Singapore help children gain an appreciation of their history and culture

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Museums are avenues of learning where children acquire knowledge of their heritage and values, and of their place in the world.

Museums are full of exciting stories just waiting to be discovered. The National Museum of Singapore (NMS), for instance, houses a vast collection of objects and materials that weave together rich narratives about Singapore and its people. Told through artefacts that range from 3D animations of natural history drawings to toys from an earlier era, these stories shine the spotlight on our past, cultural heritage, values and belief systems, and have the ability to shape children's view of the world.

"Early exposure to museums nurtures children's budding curiosity. It helps them discover more about the world, and about themselves in relation to the world," says Ms Lock Hui Qi, Assistant Manager (Curatorial & Programmes) at NMS.

In particular, stories about our nation and the early settlers who built it – including how they overcame hardships – facilitate character-building and the formation of positive values and dispositions such as grit, perseverance and resilience. Taking this into account, ECDA partnered with the National Library Board (NLB) and NMS together with early childhood professionals and art and drama specialists to develop the new 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit for educators and parents.

CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT

The resource kit adopts a storytelling approach to harness the richness of various places like NMS as educational spaces to support children's learning beyond the classroom. It contains hands-on and interactive activities and experiences to enrich children's appreciation and understanding of Singapore's history, heritage and culture while developing their language, cognitive and social-emotional skills. Children are encouraged to role-play and dramatise to enable them to walk in the characters'

shoes. This helps them develop a better understanding of the past and fosters values such as empathy and compassion. There are also activities and book recommendations with follow-up suggestions, such as planning a family outing to places of cultural interest like Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India.

Visits to the museum can also foster family bonds and inter-generational conversations. "The artefacts on display can spark meaningful conversations among family members and prompt them to share about their favourite objects and family stories," says Ms Lock.

Parents can readily use the kit while having a family day out at the museum. "Because the kit is fun, it holds children's interest as they learn about our values, culture and heritage," says Mr Kenny Teh, father of Elliot Teh, 5. "Even as Singapore progresses at a rapid pace, it is important not to forget our roots."

DESIGNED WITH KIDS IN MIND

Besides the kit, other NMS resources also present artefacts in formats familiar to young children. Examples include



The 'Creative Conversations' kit comes with fun stories and activity cards



'Get Curious! The Official Interactive Family Guide to the National Museum of Singapore', which introduces over 40 objects in the museum's permanent galleries; and the 'Early Learning Resources' set of booklets, which organises artefacts according to the alphabet, colours and numbers. Later this year, NMS will launch a second set of booklets based on the themes of shapes and opposites.

"These resources can be integrated into the preschool curriculum to achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes, spark children's curiosity, and help them discover the history of Singapore in an accessible manner," says Ms Matilda Hong, Assistant Manager (Curatorial & Programmes) at NMS.

In addition, the museum runs children's programmes that offer greater engagement with the exhibits. A popular one is the 'Be A Young' workshop series, which is based on the permanent galleries and lets children take on different personas to experience Singapore in the past – an explorer, toymaker apprentice or tourist. NMS has also launched an online game version of the 'Be A Young Toymaker' workshop. This interactive game, which is hosted on TinyTap, allows children to explore old games and toys from the 1950s and 1960s.

Such programmes enable parents and educators to engage children in conversation, which in turn encourages two-way communication and hones their language development and critical thinking skills. "Through interactive, immersive exhibits, the museum provides a fun and safe environment for children to explore things they are unfamiliar with and develop new modes of learning and enquiry. These skills are foundational in getting them curious about the wider world they live in," says Ms Hong.

WHAT'S ON SHOW

Current and upcoming NMS exhibitions for the whole family.



Home, Truly: Growing Up with Singapore, 1950s to the Present

Till 29 Aug 2021

This exhibition showcases moments and experiences in Singapore's past and present that express our identity and collective memory. Collect the 'My Photo Scrapbook' guide at the gallery entrance, which lists 10 exhibition highlights to look out for.

Picturing the Pandemic: A Visual Record of COVID-19 in Singapore

Till 29 Aug 2021

Singapore's pandemic experience is presented through photographs, films, artefacts and stories. Use the 'Family Guide' to talk to children about the exhibits. It is a good way to engage them on contemporary issues related to Singapore.



Museum artefacts can spark children's budding curiosity

STRIKE UP A CREATIVE CONVERSATION

'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' explores the lives of Singapore's early settlers, their trades and occupations, and their values and dispositions which were passed down through generations.

Dr Jacqueline Chung, ECDA Fellow and Academic Director of Anglican Preschool Services, notes that the activities in the kit focus on children's discovery of the world, a key learning area under the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Curriculum. "Through these activities, children develop skills such as observing, comparing, classifying, predicting and questioning. These skills support children's ability to communicate what they think and feel, and the way they make connections with the world around them," says Dr Chung.

She offers three tips on using the kit.

- > **Read stories in an expressive, animated manner.** "Adults who look and sound interested and enthusiastic have a powerful influence on children's responses."
- > **Resist talking too much.** "Encourage children to describe, compare and contrast items in the kit. Ask them what they find interesting and why. Conversations should be back-and-forth contributions between adult and child."
- > **Share your personal experiences relating to items in the kit.** "Children like to hear stories that involve people they know. Invite grandparents to also share their anecdotes, which make for wonderful bonding moments."



GET THE DIGITAL VERSION!

Download the 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit at go.gov.sg/shapingourfuture or scan this QR code.

Don't forget to use the hashtag #StartCreativeConversations when posting about it on social media!



learn

win



→ Three lucky readers will each receive a 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit.

Simply answer this question:
Name one activity your child can do with the 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit.

Send your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

Closing date: **20 August 2021**



Worlds Apart

Teach children to appreciate different countries, cultures and people from all walks of life.

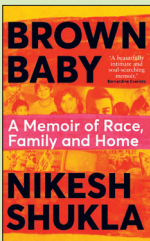


> Mark & Mary Explore Indonesia

By Ben Loh

Join Mark and Mary on a travelling edutainment experience as they tour the world. In this part of the *Around the World* series, Mark and Mary explore Indonesia and discover exciting places and national dishes. This is a great book to learn about the country's world heritage through beautiful illustrations.

Contributed by *Khirti Belani, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*



> Brown Baby: A Memoir of Race, Family and Home

By Nikesh Shukla

OverDrive link: nlb.overdrive.com/media/5352225

Funny yet heart-wrenching, Shukla's memoir is like a confidante to anxious parents raising children in an increasingly turbulent world. *Brown Baby* offers unapologetic advice on talking to children about diversity – be it gender, race or heritage – and preparing them for an uncertain and often hostile world, while showing that it is possible to believe in hope.

Contributed by *Lisa Zuliana Binte Zulkifli, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*

Events @ NLB



Check out these online Zoom programmes.



Toddler Songs and Rhymes

A fun-filled virtual session with music and lyrics suitable for children aged 1 to 3.



Food Allergy and Eczema

Join this webinar to discover new findings in food allergies and eczema in babies and young children.

Free admission. Registration is required. For more information on these and other programmes, visit go.gov.sg/nlb-golibrary. Online resources such as storytelling videos are also available at nlb.gov.sg/discovereads/diy-resources.

FOR YOUR DAILY DOSE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSPIRATION...

Grow@Beanstalk is your one-stop early childhood (EC) resource portal for inspiring stories, useful tips and activity ideas, as well as the latest happenings from the EC sector.

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Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk, or scan the QR code



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Check out our Instagram page for exciting developments in the EC sector. Be inspired by what educators say about giving a good start to every child.

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