

# Artful Conversations

STORIES FROM THE PAST (PARENTS' EDITION)







# *Broadening Horizons, Enriching Minds*

Brain development, executive functioning and language-rich interactions have significant impact on children's development. Research tells us that laying strong foundations for children in these areas will have long-term benefits, as they become more confident, motivated to learn, and successful in their school years and beyond.

Families can use museums and libraries, among other community resources, to create rich language experiences to support our children's brain development. Engaging them in conversations can help sharpen their observational skills, enable them to communicate and express their ideas, as well as encourage them to take on different perspectives, think critically and solve problems.

As we unravel the stories behind the artefacts in the museums, our children will learn more about the culture and heritage of people who lived in the past. At the same time, our children will learn about Singapore's history and understand their own cultural heritage better. Books in the library, too, can help children build connections to the wider world and deepen their learning experience.

**Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past** is a resource kit for families. It is designed to harness the rich collection of artefacts and books offered by museums and libraries. The fun and interactive activities will help you create engaging and meaningful learning experiences to broaden and enrich our children's minds. It is also a great opportunity to strengthen family bonding and relationships.

As Marcel Proust, a 20th century French Novelist aptly put, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." I encourage you to use this resource kit to create rich learning experiences for your children. Open up their minds to a world of wonder, imagination and discovery!

**MR EUGENE LEONG**

Chief Executive Officer

Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

# *Partners in Education*



Museums and libraries can open up a world of imagination and wealth of educational experiences for young children.

The early years provide a wonderful window of opportunity to introduce your child to the rich collection of museum artefacts and stories.

Research shows that such experiences can help shape young brains, pave the way for strong language and communication skills, strengthen social-emotional development, and raise awareness about culture, heritage and values.



# *Families as Partners* *in Education*

As parents, you can help your child experience and connect with the museum's artefacts in a personal way through conversations and discussions. Grandparents, too, have an important role. Share anecdotes, experiences and memories of your childhood about the history and culture of Singapore.

Your child thrives when the home-preschool partnership is strong. Parents and grandparents, you can use this resource kit as a starting point to build this partnership.

Talk to your child's early childhood educator on how you can guide and support your child's learning and development at the museum, or work together to enrich his experience.

## **Here are some tips on partnering your child's early childhood educator:**



Express your interest in sharing your family's visit to the museum with your child's classmates and other parents

Share your observations of your child and how he responded to the visit to the museum.



Ask for additional activity ideas to enrich his learning.

Contribute to the preschool's newsletter.





# *About Artful Conversations*

## *Stories from the Past*

**Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past** is set in the context of an exciting journey of adventure, exploration and discovery.

The story unfolds when the Asian Civilisations Museum receives a box of artefacts from an anonymous donor. It invites a renowned archaeologist to help unravel the stories behind each artefact. The archaeologist invites an assistant (your child) to accompany him on the journey.

The archaeologist encourages the child to observe and examine each artefact in each country. Along the journey, they meet different characters and get to know fun facts about the various artefacts.



Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum,  
2014-00463

### **Cabinet**

India, Caromandel Coast, 15th century.  
Lacquer, wood, iron.

This chest mixes designs from many sources. The exterior is carved in low relief with scrolling vines and animals, showing the influence of both Iranian and Chinese art. The interior is brilliantly painted in gold on red lacquer, a typical Chinese technique.

# *About the Museum*



The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) is devoted to exploring the rich artistic heritage of Asia, especially the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans. Opened in 1997 and in its present building by the Singapore River since 2003, the museum traces its roots to the Raffles Museum, founded in the middle of the 19th century. ACM focuses on the many historical connections between the cultures of Asia, and between Asia and the world.



# The Resource Kit

There are eight story cards which are fully illustrated. Each card comes with a useful description of the museum artefact with ideas to engage your child.

**Activity**

**A view of Singapore harbor**  
Singapore, around 1850  
Oil on canvas

Three European ships dominate the foreground of this view of Singapore harbor painted by an unknown Chinese artist. There are sailboats on the water and the buildings in the distance. The painting is at Anderson's Collection due to its place at the heart of the painting.



**LOOK**

- ▶ Look closely at the painting and describe what you see.
- ▶ Spot three differences between the painting and the picture below.



**IMAGINE**

- ▶ Imagine you are at the port now.

What would you see? What would you eat? What would you be doing at the port?

**COMPARE**

- ▶ Look closely at the buildings and transportation around us. Compare it with those in the painting. How are they similar? How are they different?

**AMAZING REASONS**  
**The Little Singapore Book**  
Written By: Sim De Min & Joyaline See Tuly

**Activity**

**Steps for making the making of porcelain**  
China, around 17th  
Porcelain

The stages of porcelain production – preparing clay, shaping and glazing, firing, firing in a kiln – are shown around the sides of this large porcelain bowl. Trace around the sides of the large bowl several production in class.



**LOOK**

- ▶ Look closely at the artwork. What colours can you find?
- ▶ Put the puzzle pieces from the template together.

**THINK**

- ▶ Do you know the steps to making this artefact? Try arranging the picture cards in sequence. Use the template provided.
- ▶ What do you think this artefact is used for?

**DESIGN**

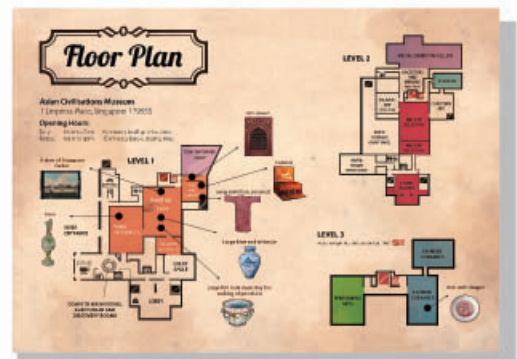
- ▶ Design your own bowl using the air-dry clay. Try this recipe at home to make your own play dough.

**Salt Dough Recipe**

<b>Ingredients:</b>	<b>Steps:</b>
• 1 cup salt	1. Pour water into a bowl.
• 1 cup flour	2. Add (sieved) food colouring to water.
• 2½ cup water	3. Add salt and flour into coloured water.
• Food colouring	• Mix all ingredients together.
	4. Start kneading with salt dough.
	• You should see a few cups.

**AMAZING REASONS**  
**Bowls of Happiness**  
Written By: Brian Tan

The resource kit also includes a map to help locate the selected artefacts in the museum. There is an assortment of hands-on materials such as an air-dry clay, finger puppet templates, and even a sticker badge for the archaeologist assistant to allow your child to immerse himself before and after the journey.



Looking to further enhance your child's experience at the Asian Civilisations Museum?

Check out the book recommendations by the National Library Board in the activity cards. Read the synopses to find out more about the books. Call numbers of the books are provided to help you locate the books easily. Spend time enjoying these books with your child, and try out the fun and interactive activities.

More importantly, have fun while you explore, discover, and bond with **Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past**.





# About The Artefacts



Cabinet



A view of Singapore harbor



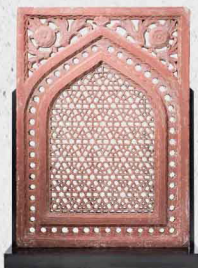
Large fish tank depicting the making of porcelain



Dish with dragon



Long coat (baju panjang)



Jali screen



Large blue and white jar



Ewer

# Recommended Books & More Activities



**Sasha visits the Museums**

**Author:** Shamini Flint.

**Publisher:** Singapore : Sunbear Pub., c2007.

**Call No.:** Juvenile Lending Singapore English 428.6 FLI

**Summary:**

In this book for children, Sasha and Mama set off together on a journey of discovery and learning. Join them as they visit the Asian Civilisations Museum, the Singapore Art Museum, the National Museum and the Singapore Philatelic Museum. On her journey, Sasha explores different artefacts, sculptures, paintings and even stamps from all over the world. She also learns about the historical buildings and their fascinating history.

## **Fun Things to do with your kids:**

1. Have a museum month. Each week, trace Sasha's footsteps and visit the four museums. Take photographs and create a museum scrap book.
2. Visit the Chinatown Heritage Centre, the Indian Heritage Centre and the Malay Heritage Centre to discover the early lives of the Chinese, Malays and Indians and their heritage.
3. Fill small jars with different spices used by ethnic groups in Singapore and label them. Talk about the shape, touch, taste and smell, and how these spices may be used in cooking.



**The Little Singapore Book**

**Author:** Sim Ee Waun & Joyceline See Tully

**Publisher:** [Singapore] : Pepper Dog Press LLP, 2015.

**Call No.:** Juvenile Lending Singapore English 959.57 SIM

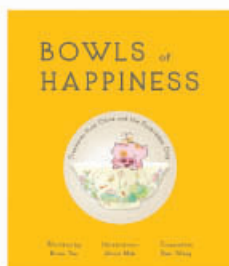
**Summary:**

The Little Singapore Book is a fresh take on the story of Singapore, its people, and their lives, from the old kingdom of Temasek to the present day. The book introduces young readers to our history and culture through a journey of vibrant narratives and vivid illustrations with fascinating details. Children will be fascinated by the different buildings and its structures, and their significance, and how the past has evolved.

## **Fun Things to do with your kids:**

1. Look for suitable YouTube clips of the old Singapore. Compare and contrast the Singapore then and now. Talk to your grandparent, grand-aunt/uncle or an elder person and the experiences and changes they have had while growing up.
2. Go on an expedition armed with a camera and clip board. Explore the structures of Thian Hock Keng Temple, Sultan Mosque, Sri Mariamman Hindu Temple, Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, and St Andrew's Cathedral. Find out when these were built.
3. Create your own 'rojak'. Dice and mix the following ingredients - a pear, water apple/jambu, a red apple, ½ a cucumber, 10 cherry tomatoes and 4 pineapple slices. Add 3 chopped Kaffir Lime leaves and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice.





**Bowls of Happiness : Treasures from China and the Forbidden City**

**Author:** Sim Ee Waun & Joyceline See Tully

**Publisher:** [Singapore] : Pepper Dog Press LLP, 2015.

**Call No.:** Juvenile Lending Singapore English 959.57 SIM

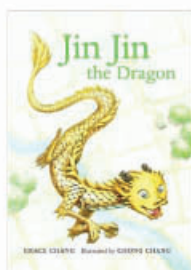
**Summary:**

**\*\*Winner of the American Library Association's Parent's Choice Gold Award\*\***

Piggy's mom loves her so much that she decides to make her a special porcelain bowl. As mom makes the bowl, Piggy enters the world being painted on its outside. She meets and learns about the animals used on these Chinese artworks and their messages of happiness and good-fortune. This book teaches children about Chinese artwork and culture, and their universal spirit of generosity, love, and respect for nature.

**Fun Things to do with your kids:**

1. Talk about happiness and what it means to be happy.
2. Create a 'Happiness Porcelain Capsule'. Crush a recycled can slightly and paint it completely white. When the can is dry, draw design or motifs using blue markers. Each day, ask your child to think about one thing that made him happy. Write on slips of paper and drop into the can. Revisit these periodically.
3. Look at the bowls in your house. Discuss how these bowls are used. Think of other ways to use these bowls. When dining out, observe the types of bowls used (e.g. size, shape, colours and motifs)



**Jin Jin the Dragon**

**Author:** Grace Chang

**Publisher:** New York : Enchanted Lion Books : C2007.

**Call No.:** Juvenile Lending Picture Book English 398.2 CHA –[FOL]

**Summary:**

Jin Jin the dragon does not know what kind of creature he is, so he embarks on a journey, assisted by other animals he meets along the way. The quest is to find Old Turtle and Crane, who will help him learn his identity. How will he feel when he learns who he is? This book includes information about Chinese writing and the place of the dragon in Chinese lore.

**Fun Things to do with your kids:**

1. Visit the zoo. Talk about the different animals that share similar physical characteristics with the dragon. Spend more time at the reptile section and observe the snakes, Komodo dragon and the iguanas.
2. Play iSpy as you walk down the streets of Chinatown. Lookout for dragons especially on the rooftop of Chinese temples.
3. Create a mythical creature with characteristics of other animals. Use materials found at home such as shoe boxes, newspapers, and toilet rolls. Create a mythical story and add illustrations.



**The Amazing Sarong**

**Author:** Quek Hong Shin

**Publisher:** Singapore : Epigram Books, [2015] ©2015

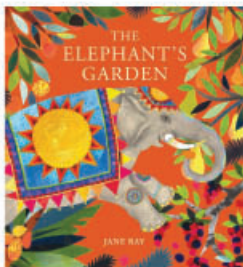
**Call No.:** Juvenile Lending Singapore English QUE

**Summary:**

Isn't a sarong just a boring big piece of cloth? Nora and Adi are about to go to the beach when their mother takes off her baby sling and hands it to the two children. They discover that there is more than meets the eye to this seemingly ordinary sarong. Join Nora and Adi as they play and discover what unexpected fun, joy and new encounters the sarong can bring.

**Fun Things to do with your kids:**

1. Bring the Amazing Sarong alive! Using a long piece of cloth like a scarf or a shawl, have fun using it different ways. For instance, make a head gear, as a blindfold for a game of hide and seek or even as a picnic mat. Be adventurous.
2. Find out about Sarkasi Said, a renowned batik artist in South East Asia. Talk about the different elements of art on the batik (e.g. colour, lines, shape, and texture). Walk along Arab Street to look for shops selling batik.
3. Visit the Peranakan Museum to find out about batik in other cultures. Look out for Sarongs, Baju Panjang and other similar garments with batik influences.



### The Elephant's Garden: A Traditional Indian Folktale

Author: Jane Ray

Publisher: Boxer Books, 2017.

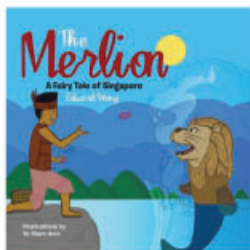
Call No.: Juvenile Lending Picture Book English RAY

#### Summary:

A humorous fantasy story of greed set in a small Indian village. Jasmine's garden has the most delicious fruit in the village - but someone is eating all her beautiful apples and apricots, kiwis and kumquats, papayas and peaches. Determined to discover the thief's identity, Jasmine waits . . . and waits. Little does she imagine that when he arrives, he'll lead her on a magical journey through the skies.

#### Fun Things to do with your kids:

1. Create a mosaic of colours. Cut lengths of yarns and paint each in different colours, and it dry. Spread glue generously over a piece of thick paper. From the centre of the paper, place the yarn in a spiral pattern until all the yarns are glued and forms a circle. Allow it to dry completely.
2. Fold a paper in half and open it up. Arrange coloured blocks in a simple pattern on one half of the paper. Your child can copy the same pattern on the other half. Make a game out of it taking turns to arrange and copy.
3. Take a walk in the park. Check out leaves, flowers and even the benches in the park for symmetrical patterns.



### The Merlion: A Fairy Tale of Singapore

Author: Edward Wong

Publisher: [Singapore] : Partridge, [2016] ©2016

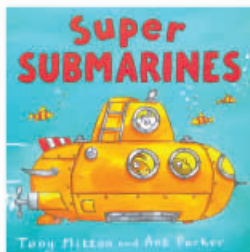
Call No.: Juvenile Lending Singapore English WON

#### Summary:

This fairy tale is linked to the discovery of Singapura, the Malay term for "Lion City" by Prince Nila, the son of the Sultan of Palembang, a Malay kingdom in Southeast Asia. Read about how Prince Nila's boat was caught in a typhoon, while leading an expedition across the ocean. He was mysteriously saved by a sea monster, which turned out to be his long lost friend, the Merlion.

#### Fun Things to do with your kids:

1. Have a day out. Go on a quest to discover the five official Merlion statues around Singapore. Find out what the Merlion symbolises.
2. Draw a silhouette of the Merlion on a large piece of paper. Make a collage using an assortment of materials you can find at home such as old magazines, scraps of fabric, cotton balls and even crayon shavings. Get creative!
3. Talk about the value of friendships and what it means. Recall an experience when your child shared or cared for his friend or a family member. Talk about his feelings and how he felt.



### Super Submarines

Author: Tony Mitton and Ant Parker.

Publisher: New York : Kingfisher, [2014

©2006

Call No.: Juvenile Lending Picture Book English 623.8 MIT

#### Summary:

Explore an underwater world with Rabbit, Bird, and Mouse in this marine adventure about submarines. Zippy wordplay, zappy art and a visual dictionary make this title a must have for bookshelves everywhere. Available for the first time in paperback, this book is filled with lively rhyming text that perfectly complements the bold, bright illustrations. A picture dictionary identifying submarine parts makes learning engaging and fun. It also helps children build their vocabulary.

#### Fun Things to do with your kids:

1. Visit the library and borrow books on submarines. Talk about the different submarines and what they are used for.
2. Make a submarine out of recycled materials you can find at home such as large plastic bottles, straws and bottle caps. You can use markers to make your submarines colourful.
3. Compose a short rhyme about a submarine using the phrase 'Super submarine'.



# Resource Links



## Early Childhood Development Agency

[www.ecda.gov.sg](http://www.ecda.gov.sg)

The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) serves as the regulatory and developmental authority for the early childhood sector in Singapore, overseeing key aspects of children's development below the age of 7, across both kindergartens and child care centres.

## Grow@Beanstalk

[www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk)



**Grow@Beanstalk** is a resource portal for early childhood educators and parents with children 6 years and below. VISIT US if you are looking for inspirational stories from our early childhood sector, practical tips and useful resources, and updated news and happenings from ECDA and the early childhood sector!

## Beanstalk Singapore

[www.facebook.com/beanstalksingapore](http://www.facebook.com/beanstalksingapore)



'LIKE' our Facebook page for daily posts covering content for the early childhood sector! Early childhood educators and parents can stay updated on the latest happenings in the early childhood sector and engage in healthy discussions on early childhood matters!

## @BeanstalkSingapore

[www.instagram.com/beanstalksingapore](http://www.instagram.com/beanstalksingapore)



'FOLLOW' us on Instagram too! Get sneak insights of exciting happenings in the early childhood sector!

## The National Library Board

[www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)



The **National Library Board (NLB)** manages the National Library, 26 Public Libraries and the National Archives. The board encourages appreciation and awareness of Singapore's history through their wide range of programmes and collection on Singapore and regional content. Digital and audio books, newspapers and magazines for children of various genres are available on the website. Some are available in Singapore's four official languages. The website provides up to date events and programmes from storytelling to heritage tours.

## Asian Civilisations Museum

[www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg)



The **Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM)** is devoted to exploring the rich artistic heritage of Asia, especially the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans. Opened in 1997 and in its present building by the Singapore River since 2003, the museum traces its roots to the Raffles Museum, founded in the middle of the 19th century. ACM focuses on the many historical connections between the cultures of Asia, and between Asia and the world. Singapore's history as a port city that brought people together from all over the world is used as a means of examining the history of Asia. The museum curates special exhibitions bringing magnificent objects from around the world to Singapore. Signature programmes like the annual ACNM After Dark, Saturdays@ACM, and Lunchtime Concerts encourage visitors to connect more closely with culture and the arts.



# Artful Conversations

Stories from the Past

is a joint initiative of

**The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)**

**The National Library Board**

**The Asian Civilisations Museum**

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\*ECDA Fellows are a selected group of exemplary early childhood professionals with high levels of leadership and professional expertise. They partner ECDA to drive quality improvements in the sector and develop the early childhood fraternity.

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Building sketches on cover by **Zach Koh, 10 years old.**



A Joint Initiative of



Supporting Platforms

