**What can storytelling offer?**  
Children have an innate love of stories. Stories create magic and a sense of wonder at the world. Stories teach us about life, about ourselves and about others. Storytelling is a unique way for students to develop an understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures, and can promote a positive attitude to people from different lands and races.  
  
There are a number of ways in which storytelling can enhance intercultural understanding and communication. Stories can…

* allow children to explore their own cultural roots
* allow children to experience diverse cultures
* enable children to empathise with unfamiliar people/places/situations
* offer insights into different traditions and values
* help children understand how wisdom is common to all peoples/all cultures
* offer insights into universal life experiences
* help children consider new ideas
* reveal differences and commonalties of cultures around the world

**Other benefits of storytelling   
Stories…**

* Promote a feeling of well-being and relaxation
* Increase children's willingness to communicate thoughts and feelings
* Encourage active participation
* Increase verbal proficiency
* Encourage use of imagination and creativity
* Encourage cooperation
* Enhance listening skills

Stories reveal universal truths about the world. Through stories we see how very different people share the same life experiences and how human nature can transcend culture.   
  
**A last word…**  
Young Learners share a remarkable variety of personal experiences, values and ways of understanding. The language they learn in the classroom is the tool they use to shape their thoughts and feelings. It is more than a way of exchanging information and extending ideas, it is their means of reaching out and connecting with other people. Stories can link not only between the world of classroom and home but also between the classroom and beyond. Stories provide a common thread that can help unite cultures and provide a bridge across the cultural gap.

Adapted from a workshop by Paula Stoyle, British Council