

Enrichment Activities for *TEN ONI DRUMMERS*

by Matthew Gollub © 2000-2007

“Ichi, ni, san, TUN-TUN!” Scary dreams are not much fun...

This simple rhyming tale of Japanese *oni* (OH-nee) works as a counting book, a reassuring bedtime story, and introduction to Japanese (and Chinese) writing.

Warm-up Discussion BEFORE Storytime:

—Ask students if they can count to ten in any other language besides English. Ask students what they do at night when they have scary dreams. Could the ten colorful monsters on the cover of this book make nighttime a little less spooky?

Discussion AFTER Storytime:

—By now students will realize that despite their fierce looks, the oni in this story actually protect the young boy. Such a twist of plot may help the students create their own stories about monsters who, despite their appearances, are “good.” Have students brainstorm scary “monsters,” then ask how the monsters might turn out to be friendly. For example, maybe the infamous monster in the closet is really just trying to tidy up all the toys.

Creating ONI art:

—The book’s nighttime illustrations, filled with goblins and Japanese drums, provide ample inspiration for a mural with your class. Different students can be responsible for creating different *oni*. (When they look closely at the illustrations, they’ll see that each *oni* has a Japanese number on its jacket.) The mural can hang as a collage or as stand alone drummers. Use paints or colorful construction paper; students can make the *oni* as tall and as individual as themselves!

Getting acquainted with KANJI:

The numbers 1-10 are among the simplest *kanji*, or Chinese characters (which are also used in Japanese). Provide students with paintbrushes, paint and paper so they can imagine they are at school in east Asia! Stroke order and balance are important when writing *kanji*. Please refer to the demonstration chart at the end of the book.