



GOOD NIGHT SLEEP TIGHT

Bedtime Rituals for Kids (and Their Grownups)

Hi!



My name is Dr. Andrea Conger and I'm an anthropologist.

An anthropologist is a scientist

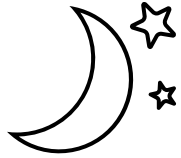


who studies humans.



There are many kinds of anthropologists. We all want to know what are the things that make us special as humans. One of the things that all humans, all over the world, from little kids to grown-ups have in common is that we all practice rituals.

Rituals are things we do the same way every time, kind of like a routine. Rituals help us humans do many things. They help us move from one activity to another like when you line up a certain way at school or put away your snow boots and get out your summer toys. Rituals also help us see order in our world and know where to go. Do you have a special seat at the dinner table, do the same things for a particular holiday? And Rituals help us feel safe and calm when things change or are unsettled. We use special routines, objects and activities to reassure us that some things stay the same. This can be very important, especially these days when so many things are changing and working a little differently.



Time for bed!

One common ritual that helps us feel safe and calm, helps us know what's going to happen next, and helps us move from one activity to another is our bedtime ritual. Bedtime rituals are important to us all and help us fall asleep and be healthy.

When it's time for bed, I do the same things every night. First, I get into my pjs. The fuzzy ones with tiny pictures of ice cream cones are my favorite. Next, I have a bedtime snack using my special mug with the heart on it. After that I go to the bathroom, wash my face and hands, and use my blue toothbrush to clean my teeth. I brush for exactly two minutes every night. Then I climb into my bed and get my pillows and blankets arranged just right; long pillow on the side, squishy one under my head. I like to read a little before I sleep and share my stories with a special stuffy friend, Otto the Otter. I've had him since I was a very little girl. Finally, I turn on some music and listen to my favorite song as I drift off to sleep.

Do you have a bedtime ritual? Use this packet to explore your own rituals and read about Froggy and his bedtime.



Use the comic strip squares to draw, write, or create your own bedtime ritual.

First I...

Next I...

What is your favorite part of this bedtime ritual?

How does it make you feel when the ritual is changed?

Totem: A totem is an object or action used as part of a ritual to help you feel safe.

A lot of people have totems in their bedtime rituals...turning on a night light, arranging dolls or stuffies in a particular way, checking under the bed or in the closet for monsters. Totems are very important and can be found in many types of rituals all over the world.

Draw, create, or write about any totems you might have in your ritual, or imagine a totem that might help with something your fear in another part of your life.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a drawing or written response. It occupies the lower half of the page.

Ritual Object: Ritual objects are special things that we hold sacred (are very important and we take very good care of) and we need for our ritual to work.



There are many kinds of ritual objects people use and take care of. Perhaps you have a special stuffed animal, doll, or blanket. Maybe you have a certain toothbrush or drinking cup that you really need to have when you go to bed.

Draw, create, or write about a ritual object that is important to your bedtime routine.

Draw a bedtime ritual for someone else (Your grownup, a family pet, or perhaps a friend). Ask them what they do. Or, imagine a new bedtime ritual. What would a unicorn do? A princess, Spiderman, or your favorite toy? (add stickers, photos, even another page of squares if you want) Don't forget to include any totems or ritual objects needed.

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Rituals are important in our lives.

Rituals help us understand order and predictability making it easier to move from one thing to another (day to night, winter to spring, kindergarten to first grade). Recreating a school ritual at home, for example, can help distance learning feel more familiar and doable.

Rituals help us feel safe and comforted. They can be especially important in times when we feel out of control, scared, or like there are too many changes. Try making a ritual around something new or scary to help you feel more confident and in control.

Rituals are for everyone. People all over the world, from tiny babies to grandmas and grandpas, all participate in rituals. Ask someone you love what rituals they enjoy, or talk with your family about rituals you do together. Have you made any new rituals to deal with the pandemic?

Rituals are everywhere. There are many kinds of rituals in our lives. We have daily rituals such as bedtime or school routines, and special event rituals such as things we do for holidays or birthdays. See how many rituals you have in your family? What is your favorite and why?

Rituals can grow and change. If you could make up a totally new ritual for your family, friends, community, the world, what would it be? How would it work and what would it do?

Rituals make us human



Dr. Conger is a public anthropologist and a professor at Saint Olaf College. She wants people to know what anthropology is and how it can help them in their everyday lives. This kit is sponsored by RCL and is part of the Adventures With Anthropology program run by Dr. Conger. Find more at andreaconger.com/adventures and check out more great RCL programs!

Dr. Conger earned her PhD from Indiana University Bloomington, her MA from the University of Limerick in Ireland, and her BA here in Minnesota. She has lived all over the world and was a professional dancer before becoming an anthropologist.