

The HERP Project Puppet Presentation
Carolina's Story (adapted from the story by Donna Rathmell)

Characters



Sea Turtle (Carolina)



Box Turtle

Narrator (real person)

Doctor wearing lab coat or scrubs (real person)

[Sea turtle appears on stand]

Carolina: Hi my name is "Carolina." I'm a sea turtle. You are probably familiar with my relative the terrestrial box turtle but I am a little different.

Box Turtle: Hi Carolina, did I hear my name mentioned?

Carolina: Well, speak of the devil! Let's tell our friends how we are different.

Box Turtle: Sure, one thing that I can do that a sea turtle cannot do is pull my head inside my shell and close the shell completely. Watch this! [Pull in head and front legs on puppet and then push head and legs back out]. This helps protect me from some predators and also helps me from drying out during hot summer days.

Carolina: That's right, but I don't need to use that strategy to avoid predators because I have really strong flippers to help me swim instead of claws or webbed feet like other types of land and freshwater turtles. I use my front flippers for swimming and my back flippers for steering. I am a master swimmer!

Box Turtle: That is very true. You might also notice that we are very different in size. In North Carolina the most common sea turtle is the loggerhead and it can weigh about 360 pounds and an Eastern Box turtle might weigh only one pound.

Narrator: Thanks for sharing with us the difference between box turtles and sea turtles. [box turtle drops behind curtain]. Thanks for joining us today Carolina. I hear you have some pretty interesting stories to tell our friends.

Carolina: I do! Let me tell you about the time I washed up on the beach. Most of the time female sea turtles only come onto the beach to lay eggs. In North Carolina, healthy male sea turtles do not come onto the beach. On this particular day though, i was not on the beach to lay eggs but i was very sick and could not swim well anymore.

Narrator: That sounds very interesting, but also very scary.

Carolina: It was a very scary time in my life, but through the experience, I found there were a lot of people who cared not only about me but about other sea turtles as well. My story starts on the day that I washed up on the sandy beach. I was barely alive. Some people found me and called the Sea Turtle Rescue Team. They came and took me by truck to the sea turtle hospital.

[enter Doctor from opposite side of stage from narrator]

Doctor: Hi Carolina! It's good to see you.

Carolina: Oh, hello Doctor Tom! I was telling everyone about the time the volunteers took me to the Sea Turtle hospital.

Doctor: Oh, I remember that day very well, you were really sick! [looking at audience] I checked over Carolina to see what was wrong. I looked in her eyes, in her mouth, and I even took some of her blood. That's how I found out that Carolina had turtle flu. Sea Turtles can get sick just like you get sick. We gave Carolina a shower to clean off her shell and to help her feel better. [moving hand over top of turtle shell] This part of the turtle shell is called the carapace. The shell on the bottom is called the plastron.

Carolina: To be perfectly honest, Dr. Tom, I didn't like that shower very much. I just wanted to be left alone but I was so sick I couldn't even crawl away.

Doctor: The next day volunteers at the sea turtle hospital spent hours cleaning barnacles off of Carolina's shell. [looking at Carolina] You didn't like that brushing and scraping either.

Carolina: Not at all!

Doctor: [addressing audience] We had other turtles at the hospital that day too. Some had been hit by boats when they came up to the surface to breathe. Turtles have lungs just like people and they need to breath air just like we do. We had another turtle who had eaten some floating plastic bags. He thought the bags were jellyfish, which is what he normally eats. He could not tell the difference because turtles do not have very good eyesight.

[turning back to Carolina] We rubbed antibiotics into your open sores.

[looking back to audience] Boys and girls do your parents ever put special ointment on you when you have a cut or a sore?

Carolina: I remember when you took x-rays of my injuries. I was so scared I wanted to cry. You will never guess what happened next, the doctors gave me a shot! Have you ever had a shot?

Narrator: You got a shot?! I thought only boys and girls got shots, I didn't know turtles could get them too.

Carolina: I started to feel better and then realized I was very hungry. The volunteers at the hospital brought me something to eat.

Doctor: That's right, as you started to eat you gained more and more energy to play and explore your new home at the sea turtle hospital. I remember that you loved to play with the water coming out of the pipe into your tank.

[Doctor steps away]

Narrator: Finally the big day came. Carolina was well enough to go home. Everyone was so excited but sad to send their friend away. The volunteers put her in the truck and took her to the beach where she had been found 4 months earlier.

Carolina: That was something else to get a ride in the truck! Waaaaay different from my first truck ride. I remember that I could hear the waves and smell the salt water as the volunteers carried me onto the beach. I was so excited. As soon as they put me down, and I felt the warm waves, I ran into the water and started swimming. I remember feeling so thankful to all the people who helped me at the sea turtle hospital when I was sick.

Narrator: Wow Carolina, that was an amazing story, thank you for sharing with us.
[looking at the audience] There are people at the museum here today from our North Carolina Sea Turtle Hospital, you should stop in to see them.