

FEATHERS AND ROCKS

You have an impact on others

Target competency	Use prosocial behaviours
Cross-curricular competency (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communicate appropriately
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand that one's words and actions have an impact on others



REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

In the last workshop, we talked about the importance of helping others. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how it went.

*The challenge was to try to help a friend in need.

THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

It's the end of the day by the time the group gets back to school. It's time to go home. Leo and Charlie experienced all kinds of adventures and emotions during their day at Camp OFF-TRAIL. They had so much fun, they can't wait to go back next year.

Leo and Charlie are also happy to know that they'll see each other tomorrow for their first day of school. Their parents are waiting nearby. But before they run off to join their parents, Leo and Charlie still have something to talk about.

"Thanks for spending the day with me, Charlie. You're very kind," says Leo. "Thank you for helping me find my backpack. You're very generous," replies Charlie. "I'd like to give you this feather. I picked it up when the others were trying to find my bag. I think it's a feather from a very rare and beautiful bird. It'll help you feel better when your smile looks like an upside-down banana, like this morning on the bus. See you tomorrow!"

Charlie and Leo each head home with a big wave. Their first day at camp was a great adventure!

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DID YOU KNOW?

Between the ages of 3 and 5, children increasingly develop the ability to empathize. They become more aware of other people's emotions and will even try to comfort one another, without being asked to do so by an adult. However, they still have difficulty realizing that their actions and words can have an impact on others. Adults can help children to learn by using images and inviting them to put themselves in a friend's shoes and ask how they would feel if it happened to them.

What's more, although empathy is innate, children learn a great deal about this concept by observing the gestures and words of adults. So, the more sensitive and caring adults are toward students and other adults, the more children learn how to do the same.

(Naître et grandir, 2016g)

INSTRUCTIONS¹

1. Before carrying out the activity, get yourself a feather and a rough rock. If you wish, you can also provide a feather and a rock for each student.
2. Start by showing your students the feather. You can let them handle the feather and ask them:
 - What do you feel when you touch the feather? Is it soft or hard?
 - If you drop the feather on the floor, what happens? What do you hear?
 - If someone threw a feather at you, would it hurt?
3. Then ask students to handle the rock and ask them:
 - What do you feel when you touch the rock? Is it soft or hard?
 - If you drop the rock on the floor, what happens? What do you hear?
 - If someone threw a rock at you, would it hurt?
4. Explain that there are “feather words” and “rock words”. “Feather words” are sweet, they make us smile, laugh. Ask students to give examples of “feather words” and help them if necessary.
5. “Rock words” are hard, they have the power to hurt us... Ask students to give examples of “rock words” and help them if necessary.
6. Then ask students to say a “feather word” to another student in the class.
7. To conclude the activity, you can explain to students that when we say or are told “rock words”, it's like filling our pillow with rocks. The risk is that you won't sleep as well as if you fill your pillow with feathers.
8. Hand out the *Feather Words and Rock Words* handout to the students and ask them to colour it.

9-11

12-14

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¹ Activity adapted from Danie Beaulieu, Ph. D., Académie Impact

COMPLETION ACTIVITY

Explain to the students that this was the last day of Camp OFF-TRAIL for Leo and Charlie this year. Tell them that, even though camp is over, you encourage them to continue using the strategies they've learned to make themselves (and others) feel good. Ask students how they enjoyed the activities, what they remember and what they learned. Use the reminder posters to help them or provide reminders as needed. If you wish, you can also give your students the OFF-TRAIL certificate of participation. You will find these documents on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To encourage reinvestment, you can keep a feather and a rock in the classroom to visualize the concepts when you're resolving a conflict between two students. This way, they can quickly make the connection between their words and actions and the effect they had on the other student. You can then suggest restorative gestures using word pictures or "feather" gestures.

You can also ask students to name kind words. Write them down on a sheet of paper and place them in a jar. During the week, you can pick out words and read them. You can also add other ideas. This will help students develop their vocabulary of kind words.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Escoffier, M. (2013). *Me First!* Enchanted Lion Books.
- Church, C.J. (2007). *Come On, Digby!* Simon & Schuster Children's UK.



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HANDOUT TO PRINT
“Feather words” and “rock words”

