

# FEATHERS

By Heather Forest

Pre-Kindergarten

## **Outcome:**

Children will be exposed to the character education categories of kindness, responsibility and decision-making. Students will identify attributes, form hypotheses, predict outcomes, increase vocabulary skills and compliment another student.

## **Materials:**

2 bags of multi-colored, arts and crafts feathers

## **Introductory Activity:**

The teacher directs students to observe a handful of colored, arts and crafts feathers. Ask students to describe attributes and encourage them to apply their knowledge and life experiences. Anticipated responses might include: animals, soft, tickling, flying, fur, birds, etc.

After sufficient observation, have each student select a feather and gather together in a tight circle. Upon instruction, have students simultaneously toss their feather into the air and try to catch their same color feather. Could this be done? Why or why not? Did feathers go straight up and come straight down? Talk about the distance these feathers traveled.

## **Teacher Reading of Story:**

While reading, the teacher should stop and explain any words in the book that might be new and/or difficult for the students. Addressing the words in the context of the story creates increased understanding, vocabulary development, and vocabulary extension by word function (adjectives). For example, "I'm going to read that sentence again and leave out the difficult word and see if you can fill in the blank with a describing word". Examples from the story may include, but are not limited to, the following sentences:

The wise old rabbi's gone *mad* indeed.

You have *soiled* my own good name.

What I said was in *jest*.

## **BUILDING COMPREHENSION**

### **Checking Comprehension:**

- Where did the story take place?
- Where did the feathers come from?
- Could she catch all of the feathers? Why or why not?

### **Characterization:**

- How can you tell if someone is happy or sad? (facial expression, attitude, posture, position in space)
- Based on the facial expressions of the main character, describe how she feels about her actions.
- Do you think her feelings change at any point during the story?

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## **Characterization cont.:**

- Identify where her change in facial expression correlates with a change in her feelings.
- Compare and contrast the main characters expressions with those of the village people. Why do you think they often differ? (Their attitudes towards her actions appear to be very different.)
- Using the pictures, provide adjectives to describe different characters moods and personalities based on their body language.

## **Predicting Outcomes:**

- Do you think the woman expects to be forgiven by the village rabbi?
- Based on the illustrations in the book, can you predict when this story might have taken place?
- When the rabbi assigns the woman her task, do you think she assumes it will be difficult or easy to accomplish?
- Do you think the woman and the rabbi have similar views of the task?
- Based on the woman's ability to complete the task, do you think she has learned a valuable lesson? Can you predict whether you think she will speak unkind words again?

## **Drawing Conclusions:**

- Now that you have met the woman and the rabbi, how would you describe them?
- What was the task that the rabbi assigned to the woman? Was this a realistic task that could be effectively accomplished?
- Did the rabbi get his point across to the woman? Do you think he could have made the same point by using only his words, or was an assigned task required?
- This story is based on a traditional folktale. What parts of the story do you think might change as it is shared from family to family and culture to culture?

## **Sequencing:**

The woman's personality goes through a series of changes as the story progresses. Can you identify a beginning, middle and end to the story and compare these sections of the story to the woman's personality? Identify the setting, problem and solution and retell them as they were presented in the book.

## **Follow Up Activity:**

- After reading, ask the class why they thought it was difficult for the girl to collect all of the feathers that came out of the pillow.
- Highlight the comparison of our words and actions to the feathers that floated through the air.
  - For example: unkind words, just like feathers, can fly in many directions and are very hard to retrieve.
  - It is difficult to take back an unkind statement made towards another person.
  - Students might need some direction in making this comparison.
- Instruct the students to scatter like feathers all around the room.
- Hand students a feather and direct them to search for a partner who has the same color feather. Matching partners according to feather color is an effective classroom management strategy.

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## **Follow Up Activity cont.:**

- Once partnerships are formed, students describe each other using kind words.
- After five minutes, the children come together in a group and sit with their partners.
- The teacher will use the color of feathers to identify which pair of students will share their kind words.

## **Extension Activities/Centers:**

- Sorting feathers at a table according to different attributes: shape, color, size (large, small, ascending, descending).
- Painting with feathers to experiment with brush strokes.
- Auditory Discrimination activities that require students to listen to a pair of words.
  - The children will have to determine if word pairs are the same or different: take-take, float-flip, went-went, had-has.
  - The children will have to determine if the word pairs start with the same phoneme: shook-sadly, feather-few, humor-pillow.
  - The words can be spoken by the teacher or recorded on a tape.
- During November, students could illustrate what they are thankful for on a feather and use the feathers to “dress a turkey” on the bulletin board.