

Chatty Towers

Activity: Children will create a totem pole to tell the story of their class.



Objective

Children will identify themselves as part of the class community.

Targeted Standards

III. Social and Emotional Development

III.AD.4.d. Identifies self as a unique member of a group (e.g. class, school, family or larger group)

http://www.floel.org/standardsresource/standards.html#d=III&a=four_year_olds

Checking for Understanding

Children will make connections between themselves and the classroom community.

Scaffolding

- Provide hints and assistance (point to name cards or pictures) to those children experiencing difficulty identifying how they represent or contribute to the classroom community (e.g. snack helper, flag holder).
- Be mindful to introduce new, specific vocabulary to the children by connecting new vocabulary (e.g., Raven) to familiar words (e.g., bird).

Extension

- Social Studies, Art: Children use oatmeal canisters to create an individual totem pole-depicting what makes them unique as an individual.
- Math: Make small poles of different heights using a variety of materials (blocks, cubes, etc.). Measure and compare the heights of the poles.
- Life Science: Have a discussion about animals or trees.

Materials Needed

Boxes

Butcher paper (to cover boxes)

Markers

Crayons

Glue

Construction paper

Optional art material (pom poms, feathers, natural materials, etc.)

Paint

Paintbrushes

Pictures of totem poles

Book: Totem Tales: A tall story from Alaska
by Deb Vanasse & Eric Brooks

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Procedures

Preplanning

1. Read *Totem Tale: A tall story from Alaska* by Deb Vanasse & Eric Brooks. If book is not available, share information and pictures about totem poles and their purpose (serve as emblems of a tribe, represent stories or important events, used as a way to record history, etc.).
2. Stack boxes and set up painting/ or coloring stations. Optional: cover boxes with Butcher paper.
3. Decide where children will display the totem pole and how many children will work on each section of totem pole (e.g. two children per box).

Activity

1. Invite children to join you for the reading of the book. Introduce the book; First point to the picture of the totem pole, then ask the children, “Does anyone know-what a totem pole is?” As you read the book note vocabulary with alliteration (a series of words begin with the same consonant sound). Ask appropriate questions about the story.
2. Begin a discussion with the children regarding the story and the use of totem poles (they tell a story, etc.). Talk about the importance each person has in a community and how each child represents a part of the classroom community.
3. Listen as children respond and engage in the conversation (making connections between themselves and their classroom community, ways they can help each other within the classroom community, etc.).
4. Point to the boxes and tell the children that today there is an exciting activity available to them. They will be able to create a totem pole that tells the story of their classroom community.
5. Brainstorm session (with the children): Discuss what makes the classroom community special? What story will be told (e.g. daily schedule, classroom jobs, etc.)? Write down the children’s comments. Decide (as a group) how the totem will be created (daily activity; classroom jobs, etc.). Provide opportunities for children to plan and generate their own ideas regarding their representations. Provide assistance, as needed.
6. Transitions: Present the materials available, review expectations for behavior and use of materials, and clean up. Dismiss children from whole group to the activity area.
7. Active role: Walk around listening and responding to what children are saying and doing (e.g., “Why did you choose ...?,” “How did you decide on ...?”). Allow children time to explain their creations. Recognize and acknowledge children’s efforts by providing specific feedback.
8. Reflection: Upon completion of activity each group of children presents their box and their representation. The boxes are stacked up and the complete story is read.
9. Discuss how each child contributes to the community within the classroom (e.g., how they represent a part of the community), and how the classroom community benefits.
10. Optional: Choose a name for the classroom community.
11. Choose a place to display the totem pole. Provide children -opportunities to “tell the story” to their families using the totem pole.
12. Continue the activity: Allow opportunities for additions and revisions to the totem pole as children deem necessary.