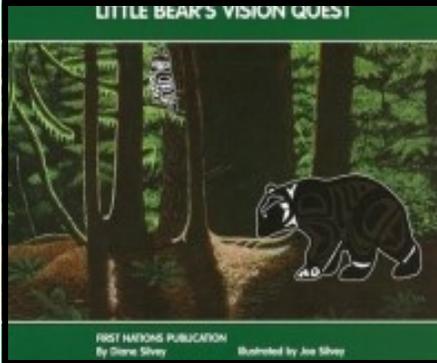


**Talking Circles: Helping to build Community in the Classroom and
Improve Oral Language and Communication Skills
Putting the Talking Stick into practice: What makes a good friend?**

Learning Intentions:

- I can be a good listener and help to create positive community in my classroom.
 - I understand how talking circles and a talking stick can be helpful.
 - I can speak from the heart, be truthful and be caring towards others
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Learning Outcome:

- use speaking and listening to interact with others for the purposes of contributing to a class goal, sharing ideas and opinions, solving problems
- listen purposefully to understand ideas and information, by generating questions, visualizing and sharing, identifying opinions or viewpoints, ignoring distractions
- use speaking and listening to improve and extend thinking, by acquiring new ideas, making connections and asking questions, comparing and analyzing ideas, developing explanations, considering alternative viewpoints, investigating problems and creating solutions.

(Note that talking circles can be used for discussions in any subject area, or for working on connections, questions, inference, etc).

Materials

Class talking stick,
Space to gather in a circle
Little Bear's Vision Quest Kit KT3171 from LRC (it has little puppets of the characters).

Teacher Reference:

1. Stephen Covey Indian Talking Stick: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUxi-Zc45tA (note that this video is American and the use of word Indian is used. In Canada, we use the term Aboriginal).
2. Talking Stick explanation - in this document as one example of the meaning of talking stick symbolism

Lesson

1. Introduce the learning intention: What makes someone a good friend?
2. Use stories to inspire talking circles before students feel safe enough to discuss their own needs: Trudy Ludwig stories provide excellent content. There are also a list of books related to the six pillars which fit nicely: <http://web.sd71.bc.ca/literacy/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/SixPillars3.pdf>
3. Continue reading Little Bear's Vision Quest
4. Review Protocol from the Power Point– acknowledge territory, direction of circle, no talking unless it's your turn, may disagree but only when it's your turn and in a polite way.
5. For each talking circle, give a question to be answered or a subject to be discussed. For older children one strategy to get children to feel safe and valued in the circle is to get them to write down their idea on a sticky note so that when it gets to them they don't have to worry about what to say. As trust increases in the group, this may not be necessary.
6. Ideas to give students if they are feeling as though their idea has already been shared (it doesn't matter, you could say it in different words, give an example, or come up with a new idea).
7. Please note that in the first few talking circles it may be necessary to interrupt. One way of explaining this is that we are still "practicing" and normally the teacher's voice is to be heard no more than the students' voices.
8. After the talking circle, list the criteria for a good friend that has been created as a class. Leave space to add to it as more ideas are brought forward. This criteria can also act as a "code" for how students in the room are to be treated.

What is Important: Talking Sticks and Talking Circles

