

Charlie and the Octopus

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Book Summary

An octopus follows Charlie home from the aquarium. And that's where everything goes wrong. When Charlie fails to convince his parents that a mischievous octopus is the culprit of the chaos, he takes matters into his own hands.

Young children sometimes feel misunderstood by adults. The activities shared here offer some ways to practice essential communication and problem-solving skills so students can better advocate for themselves.

What Are You Doing?

Use this activity before reading the story to explore how communication can be confusing.

Goal: To understand what someone is saying when their actions communicate something else

SEL Skills Focus: Responsible decision-making (identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems)

Opening:

1. Gather students together for an online whole-class meeting.
2. Explain that this activity requires focus and good listening.
3. Demonstrate how the activity works.
 - Begin acting out brushing your teeth.
 - Prompt the student next to you on the monitor to ask, "What are you doing?"
 - Respond by saying, "I'm mopping the floor."
 - Prompt the student who asked you the question to begin acting out mopping the floor.
 - As the student acts out mopping the floor, prompt the next student to ask, "What are you doing?" The first student continues to mop but says they are doing a different activity. The second student begins to act out the new activity.
4. End the activity and take any questions.

Optional: Brainstorm together some common, simple activities students could act out while seated in front of their monitor. Those ideas could be typed in a document that could be shared during the activity if you feel your students would benefit from more support to be successful.

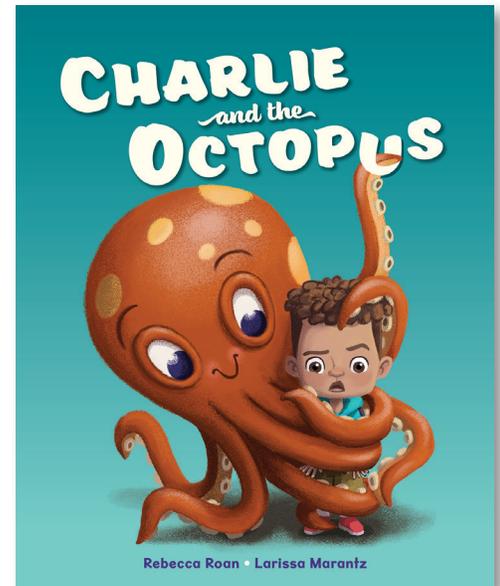
Optional: Challenge students not to repeat an activity.

Body:

1. Begin the activity by going around the online screen until everyone has had a chance to pantomime an action. (You may need to prompt the next student since the order of students may vary depending on the devices being used.)

Closing:

1. Acknowledge that this activity may be hard for some and easy for others to do.
2. Ask a few reflection questions, such as:
 - What might make this activity hard for someone?
 - What about this activity might be easy for someone?
 - What are some strategies to make it easier?
3. Challenge students to look for instances in the story when Charlie tries to communicate with his parents and they misunderstand what he is trying to tell them.



Specifications:

32 pages

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This book addresses the following social and emotional learning skills:

- Helps with less desirable tasks and activities when asked
- Independently recognizes when others need help
- Gives an honest answer or opinion when asked
- Able to take the initiative to work toward a positive outcome
- Accepts responsibilities assigned to them without sulking
- Can see positive possibilities when faced with a challenge or disappointment