

A+SEL Lesson Plan 1 • For Ages 5–8

Charlie and the Octopus

By Rebecca Roan and Larissa Marantz

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 activity shared here offers 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:

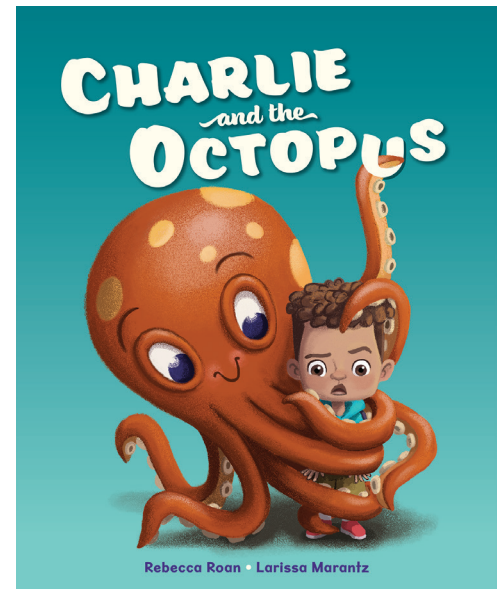
1. Gather the students together to create a standing circle.
2. Explain that this is an activity that requires focus and good listening.
3. Demonstrate how the activity works.
 - a. Begin acting out brushing your teeth.
 - b. Prompt the student standing next to you to ask, "What are you doing?"
 - c. Respond by saying, "I'm mopping the floor."
 - d. Prompt the student who asked you the question to begin acting out what you said.
 - e. As the student acts out mopping a floor, prompt the student next in the circle to ask, "What are you doing?" That student acts out what is said.
4. End the demonstration and take any questions.
5. Optional: Brainstorm together some common, simple activities students could act out in the circle. Write down the ideas shared on chart paper if you feel your students could benefit from more support to be successful.
6. Optional: Decide whether students can repeat what someone else said or not.

Body:

1. Begin the activity, going around the circle until everyone has had a chance to pantomime an action.

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 times in the story when Charlie tries to communicate with his parents and they misunderstand what he's trying to say.



Specifications:

32 pages

9" x 11"

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Color

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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