

Feathers: A Jewish Tale from Eastern Europe

Read Aloud Guide

Themes: Caring, Responsibility, Community

Book Brief: This children's picture book teaches a timeless lesson about the dangers of gossip. In this rhythmic retelling of a traditional Jewish folktale, a wise rabbi uses a clever challenge involving feathers to show a villager that words spoken in haste can never be taken back.

Author:
Heather Forest

Illustrator:
Marcia Cutchin



Before Reading

The Cover: Ask students to make a prediction about the story based on the cover.

The Pictures: Take a brief picture walk and ask students what they notice.

Prior Knowledge: Ask, "Have you ever had someone say something about you that was hurtful or untrue?"

Vocabulary: Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [Vocabulary Guide](#).

Purpose for Reading: "As we read, think about how words can be hurtful. Do you know what a rumor is? Do you know what gossip is? Think about how you would feel if someone spread rumors or gossip about you."

During Reading

Check for understanding & make connections:

- Who does the main character blame for carrying forth her words?
- What does the people's clothing in the illustrations tell you about the time period of the story?
- Can you take back your words, once they are spoken?
- Where does the woman take the pillow?
- How were the feathers scattered?
- Why couldn't the woman catch or gather up the feathers?
- What is the lesson the rabbi was trying to teach everyone?



Think Aloud:

"I notice that this story takes place at another time in history."

I'm wondering..."Could this story still take place today?"

After Reading

Our Purpose: "What life lessons are we learning by reading the book, *Feathers*?"

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.

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Extension Activities



Characterization

Directions:

- 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?
- Identify where her change in facial expression correlates with a change in her feelings.

Writing

Directions:

Have the students write about the phrase from the book, using the guiding questions.

If I were as light as a feather I would...

Introduction would include questions such as:

- How would you feel?
- Where would you go?
- Why would you do something?
- Who would be with you?

Science

Directions:

Research different birds and their feathers.

(Use digital tools or reference books to research)