Rooted in good character!
Class tree: Citizenship and Character Education

MAKE A ROAR about YOU!

Students will be introduced to the traits of good character by brainstorming ideas together as a class.
Use these ideas to create a framework for the needs of your class.
Have them role-play actions that determine good character or use the rules of your room to reinforce ideas that you developed at the beginning of the school year. These ideas can be linked to the key words in *A Lion's Mane* during the unit.

What does good character look like?
What does good character sound like?
What does good character feel like?
Who in the Community shows good character?

Lesson Preparation - Teacher or Parent Volunteers:
- Gather materials to create the tree (see HELP below).
- Prepare lion die-cuts with a hole-punched border around the lion's head/mane. Your local School Board office should have a lion die-cut you can use or perhaps a local scrapbooking store. Etsy has some great suppliers on their site. Alternatively, go to www.saffronpress.com for some lion images (see Colouring Pages).
- Cut 10cm strips of yarn in colours representing all the children's hair in the room and make loops – tying the ends together in a knot. Every time a child is a good friend, helps another student etc., they receive a piece of yarn to loop into one of the holes on their lion's head. **The fuller the mane grows, the greater your character becomes!**

Do you need HELP making a tree?

One option is using Styrofoam balls or a long rectangular block as your base. The branches could be twisted brown chenille stems (different lengths) or pipe cleaners that you stick into the base to create an arid tree! You can make several small trees (one for each group) or a larger class one. Remember to paint the base.

Crumpled up tissue paper "leaves" can be glued onto the tree if desired. Decorative twigs from the craft store will probably be more durable to hold the lion die-cuts if making one large tree.

If you decide to create the tree(s) with the students, this lesson will integrate learning from Science and Social Studies to enrich students' understanding. You could even create a Step-by-Step class book by taking photographs of the process and publish it for the Literary Event!

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Introducing your character tree to the class:

1. Create an arid tree to be placed in your room using environmental materials or the instructions above. You can fill the pot with heavy rocks and stones to mirror the habitat of where a lion would live. [This also adds to the Naturalist Intelligence by modeling our respect for the environment and the Aboriginal Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers.]
2. If weather does not permit the collection of environmental materials, then design a tree using found materials such as cardboard tubes or twigs from holiday decorations. [See instructions in HELP above].
3. Once your tree is prepared, give each student a lion die-cut to decorate.
4. Remind students to place their names or initials on the back.
5. Explain that they will receive a piece of yarn to add to their lion's mane every time they display good character.
6. Have each child take a turn over a period of time sharing an appreciation statement about one of their peers. For each statement, share a piece of yarn with that child to loop into their lion's mane to ensure everyone is included.
7. Hang the lions (lionesses – see note below) on your tree and watch those manes GROW!
8. ALTERNATIVE OPTION: Instead of hanging the lions on the tree, glue a short piece of pipe cleaner or chenille stem to the back of the decorated lion die-cuts. Stick the lions into the Styrofoam "landscape". By adding smaller trees, you could create a wonderful visual habitat as well as encouraging Good Character!

Please note: since the lion's mane is attributed to the male lion, please talk about EQUALITY at the beginning of this activity. Girls are as strong as boys and can accomplish as much as boys too!
Although female lions do not have a mane, girls in the classroom will represent their own positive contributions and show strength of character by "growing" a lion's mane – a concrete visual to make the issue of EQUALITY even more meaningful to each of them.

(Many Sikh girls also choose to wear turbans for this very reason. It is a representation of their strong identity and ability to make independent decisions).

Of course, the girls are welcome to use a lioness template instead if they prefer, as long as they understand a lioness has no mane.