

If I Were a Bird

Poetry & Language



Set up

- Set aside 30 minutes
- Prepare the kitchen table for the session
- Print out these instructions
- Collect ingredients:
 - Feathers
 - Notebook or Blank paper
 - Pen/pencil

Consciously Breathe

- Look your partner in the eyes and say, “Let’s breathe together”
- Take three deep inhales and exhales together

Sing and Move

- Sing the song together: “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” or other favorite song that evokes flight, travel or movement. (See lyrics if needed.)
- Begin to make up easy movements to go with the song.
- Invite your partner to mirror your gestures.
- Repeat the song without the lyrics (use la-la-la) and enlarge the gestures.

Call and Response

- Say the words below and have your partner repeat after each line
- Start by saying, “Repeat after me.”

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all –*

- Bonus! After saying the words together a few times sing the opening lines of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” Create a medley by saying the words, using call and response and singing the song.

Create Together

- Say the lines of the poem “The Eagle,” by Alfred Lord Tennyson, together using “call and response.”

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.*

*The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.*

- Explore the feathers by asking permission if you may touch them to the back of the person’s hand, gently touch their cheek and talking about how the feather feels. Explore the different things the feather can become for example a quill, or if you hold it under your nose a mustache. Gently move the feather and feel it catch the air. Be playful!
- Repeat the lines of the poem “The Eagle,” together using “call and response.”
- Begin to ask a series of questions around the theme of flying. (e.g. If you were a bird where would you like to fly? What would you see? If you could travel anywhere where would you most want to go? What foods would you eat there? What smells would you encounter? What sounds would you hear? How would you feel in that place? Let them know this is a creative way to think. That we don’t often think of ourselves as birds or imagine that we can fly. Talk about how we are using our creativity and our imagination.
- Write down the person’s answers to the questions. These become the lines of the poem. If possible write the exact words and phrasing they use, this will help strengthen the poem.
- You may also answer the questions as a way to prompt the person. This may feel like a discussion and their answers should guide the questions.
- Once you have a number of answers and are feeling the poem is complete, you may say, “I think we have our poem.”
- Perform the newly created poem using “call and response.”

- BONUS: add movement as you say the words of the poem.

Celebrate Each Other

- Positively acknowledge a moment of accomplishment
- Examples “The words you said about the going to London or the mountains or wherever those choose to fly to remind me of a perfect day;” “I loved imaging tasting food in France, together when we said the poem.”
- Savor the moment