



Feelings Explorer

Classroom Guide

Every emotion is a landscape worth exploring

CASEL Competency: Self-Awareness

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 50–60 minutes

Category: Growing Up

Learning Objectives

- Build a rich emotional vocabulary beyond "happy," "sad," and "mad"
 - Practice sitting with uncomfortable feelings without rushing to fix them
 - Understand that emotions are like weather — they move through, they don't define you
 - Discover that exploring feelings makes them less overwhelming, not more
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Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Emotion • Explore • Landscape • Curious • Frustrated • Proud • Nervous • Grateful • Overwhelmed • Peaceful

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Emotion landscape cards (printed)
- Large paper and watercolors
- Journals or paper
- Feeling faces reference chart
- Optional: sensory materials (smooth stones, feathers, sandpaper)

Before Reading

Connection Question

If feelings were places you could visit, which one would you explore first? Why?

Background Building

This is an extended emotional journey (20 verses) where the hero visits different feelings as if they were actual PLACES. Angry Mountain, Sad River, Worry Woods, Joy Meadow, Surprise Cave, Gratitude Garden. The hero doesn't rush through — they sit in each place, look around, and learn what that feeling wants to tell them. The biggest discovery? You don't have to FIX a feeling. You just have to be CURIOUS about it.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero arrives at an uncomfortable emotion-landscape** — This place looks hard to be in. But the hero is staying anyway. Why is it important to sit with a feeling instead of running away?
- **When the hero discovers something useful inside a "bad" feeling** — The hero found something inside this emotion! Anger taught them about boundaries. Sadness showed them what matters. What might this feeling be teaching?
- **When the hero realizes feelings are like weather — they pass** — Even the biggest storm moves through. Feelings are the same. How does knowing they'll pass change how you handle them?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero visited feelings like they were places. If you could draw a map of your emotions, what would the landscape look like?

↳ Where would you spend the most time? Where would you avoid? Why?

2. The story says feelings are like weather — they move through. Why is that comforting?

↳ What's the longest a "storm" feeling has lasted for you? Did it pass?

3. The hero learned that you don't have to FIX a feeling — you just have to be CURIOUS about it. What does it mean to be curious about a feeling?

↳ How is being curious different from trying to make the feeling go away?

4. Which emotion-landscape surprised the hero the most? Which would surprise YOU?

↳ Is there a feeling you'd like to understand better?

Facilitation Tips

This is a longer story with deeper content. Consider splitting across two sessions. Give children genuine time to sit with each emotion — don't rush. If a child connects deeply with one feeling, let them stay there. The lesson is in the EXPLORING, not the finishing.

Emotional Payoff

The hero discovers that feelings aren't problems to solve — they're landscapes to explore. Each one has something to teach, even the uncomfortable ones. And like weather, they MOVE THROUGH. You are not your feelings; you are the explorer who visits them all.

After Reading Activities

Emotion Landscape Maps

Duration: 20 min | Materials: Large paper, watercolors, markers

Each child creates a "Feelings Map" with different emotion-landscapes. Angry Mountain (red, jagged), Sad River (blue, flowing), Joy Meadow (yellow, open), Worry Woods (dark, tangled). Label each area and draw what you find there. This becomes a personal reference tool for naming feelings.

Weather Report Check-In

Duration: 5 min daily | Materials: Weather symbols chart

Daily "emotional weather report": each child reports their internal weather. Sunny? Cloudy? Stormy? Partly cloudy with a chance of giggles? Use weather metaphors to practice: "My weather right now is ____ because ____." No weather is wrong weather.

Feelings Interview Pairs

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Question cards, paper

In pairs, children "interview" each other about a feeling: "Tell me about a time you felt _____. What did your body do? What did you want to do? What did you actually do?" Record on paper. Practice: being curious about feelings instead of judging them.

Writing Prompts

- Draw the emotion-landscape you visit most often. What does it look like? What do you find there?
- Write your emotional weather forecast for the week. Include at least one "storm" and one "sunny break."
- If you could write a letter to one of your feelings, which would you choose? What would you say?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we explored "Feelings Explorer," an extended journey through the landscape of emotions. Your child learned that feelings are like weather (they pass), like places (you can explore them), and like teachers (they have something to tell you). Most importantly: you don't have to FIX a feeling. You just have to be CURIOUS about it.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Do a family "weather report" at dinner: everyone shares their emotional weather today
- When your child has a big feeling, try saying: "That's interesting. Tell me about that feeling." (Curious, not fixing.)
- Create a family feelings map together with everyone's favorite and least favorite emotion-landscapes

With warmth,
Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Color Monster by Anna Llenas
- In My Heart by Jo Witek
- Today I Feel... by Madalena Moniz
- When Sadness Is at Your Door by Eva Eland