



Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *Rata and the Waka/ Aotearoa* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *Rata and the Waka*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of trees, forests, waka and other boats, and New Zealand native birds and animals.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

Trees: *Why did Rata need a tall, straight tree for his waka? Would chopping down a big tree with an axe be an easy job or a difficult job?* (The children may like to act out chopping down a tree with an axe.)

Forests: *Has anyone been to a New Zealand forest? What did you see there? What did you do?*

Waka: *What is a waka?* (Direct the children's attention to the illustration of a waka on p. 16.) *Has anyone seen a waka? Has anyone been in a waka?* Discuss the similarities and differences between waka and other boats.

Native Birds and Animals: *What are some New Zealand native birds and animals?* (Direct the children's attention to the saddleback/tieke on the cover and the kōkako on the title page.)

Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

PP. 2–3: *What was Rata excited about?* (Making a waka for his iwi.) *What did he forget to do first?* (Ask Tāne, god of the forest, for permission to cut down the tree.) *What kind of tree did Rata choose?*

(Answers may include *a big tree; a tall, straight tree; tōtara; or kauri* depending on prior knowledge.)

P.P 6–7: *Why are the birds, insects, animals, and crawling creatures of the forest called Tāne's children?* (Because Tāne is god of the forest and the creatures are the guardians of the forest.) *Why were they angry when they saw the tree lying on the ground?*

P. 8: Discuss the word *determined* and its meaning. *How did Rata show determination?*

PP. 10–11: Challenge the students to name as many of the birds and animals as they can. *How has the illustrator shown that the birds and animals are singing "magical songs"?* (With the use of luminescent koro coming from their mouths.)

P. 15: *In this story, the kiwi talks to Rata. How do we know that the kiwi is talking?* (Use of speech marks and signifier "said the kiwi.") Discuss the word *forgive* and what it means to forgive someone.

P. 16: Discuss the words *chattering* and *chirping* and note the *ch* digraph. Talk about these words as examples of alliteration and onomatopoeia. (The children may like to make the sound of creatures chattering and chirping.) Ask, *What gift did the creatures give Rata? Why did they give him a gift?*

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Teacher's Notes continued

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Use the illustrations of native birds and animals in *Rata and the Waka* as a springboard for inquiry. Research their Māori names e.g., fantail/pīwakawaka; lizard/mokomoko; ant/torotoro.

Share-read a Māori legend about a native bird or animal e.g., How the tieke (saddleback) got its red markings.

Lead a discussion on how many native trees and forests are now protected, and people have to seek permission from local councils before cutting down a native tree.

Lead a discussion on how *Rata and the Waka* is a story that reminds us to ask permission before we act. There are many stories from different cultures that remind us to do something. Brainstorm some examples e.g., *The Three Little Pigs* reminds us to make wise choices, *Little Red Riding Hood* reminds us to be mindful of who we trust.

Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read *Aotearoa*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of New Zealand, names, Māori culture and carving, native trees, waka, Tāne, and tuatara.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

Māori Greeting: *Does anyone know how to say hello in the Māori language? It is kia ora.*

Perspective/Geography: Look at the cover of *Aotearoa* and discuss that the photo is an aerial view of a piece of New Zealand coastline. Ask, *How has this photo been taken?* Discuss the geographic features that can be seen from above (ocean, coastline, beach, hills, river, bush) and how this view is different to the view that would have been seen from a waka or a sailing ship by the first people to New Zealand.

Location of New Zealand/Geography: Look at the map on P. 1 of *Aotearoa* and note the location of New Zealand. Explore the concept of New Zealand being an island nation in the Pacific Ocean. Discuss the photo showing bush and a waterfall. Ask, *What is a waterfall?*

Names: Discuss that both New Zealand and Aotearoa are official names. Talk about some names having meanings, explore the phrase "Land of the Long White Cloud," and invite the children to share the meanings of their names. Discuss that some people and places are named after other people and places e.g., New Zealand was named after the Dutch province of Zeeland. Draw on the children's prior knowledge of names and naming conventions.

Waka: *In the past, why did Māori travel in waka around the coast of Aotearoa and up rivers?* (Ensure the children understand that there were no roads and that the land was covered in forests and bush. *Is making a waka a big job or a small job? Has anyone seen a waka being made or wood being carved? Tell us about how it is done.*

Tāne-Mahuta/Trees: *Has anyone seen Tāne-Mahuta in Northland? Has anyone seen any other really big trees?*

Tuatara: *Has anyone seen a tuatara? Where did you see it? Why is the tuatara special?*

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Teacher's Notes continued

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

If possible, arrange for the children to visit a waka, either in the community or at a museum.

Imagine what it would be like to go on a long voyage in a waka. Have the children write stories about a waka voyage to a new land. Ask them to name the land.

Have the children design their own waka. How many people will it seat? Where will it travel? Does it have any special features e.g., a covered area for shelter from bad weather.

Share-read the Māori legend of Rangi and Papa and discuss Tāne's role in the events.

Invite the children to pick one native bird or animal for further study. Use P. 8 of *Aotearoa, Tāne's Children: The Tuatara* as a model to write a factfile about their bird or animal.