

Phase 2 Preparing to find out

Learning outcome SRP 4.5

Inquiry question: What is a right?

Activity 2.1 Right and wrong

Focus question: What do we mean by right and wrong?

Preparation:

- Select a stimulus story in which a character experiences a moral dilemma or use the stimulus story provided (*Resource 7*).
- Make enough copies of the story so that each student has his/her own.
- Choose thinking exercises from those provided below to complement planned discussion. If desired, these can be conducted on another day.

Stimulus story: Sawyer, A. (2004). *A penny, a sweet and a clean slate.*

Life on the goldfields is tough for Jim and his father. One day, Jim's dad sends Jim on an errand, and he decides to pop into the general store for a look-around along the way. Inside, Jim spies a basket of freshly baked rolls. With no-one about, he quickly pockets one and takes off. When his dad's mate catches him with the roll, Jim is given a choice: Go back to the store and own up, or face up to a hiding from his father...

Procedure:

- Students read the stimulus text.
- Conduct a discussion using the plan below or one you have developed yourself.

Discussion plan:

- ❖ *Was what Jim did wrong?*
- ❖ *How do you know?*
- ❖ *How do we know what is right and what is wrong?*

- Conduct the thinking exercises you selected during Preparation.

Thinking exercises:

Is right always right and wrong always wrong?

- ❖ Students to work in groups or small pairs.
- ❖ Students quickly brainstorm a list of things they believe are always right and another list of things that they believe are always wrong.
- ❖ Choose one of the behaviours listed as wrong and explore in the next exercise.

Is stealing always wrong?

Pose a series of hypothetical questions which explore different situations involving lying (or one of the other behaviours identified in the brainstorming activity). Try to think of situations which demonstrate that 'right and wrong' are not always 'black and white'.

- ❖ Is it okay to steal if you're sure you won't get caught? Why?
- ❖ Is it all right to steal if you are in desperate need? Why?

What's 'right'?

- ❖ Students work in small groups to write a list of synonyms for the word 'right'.
- ❖ Use the sentence clues provided in *Resource 8* to stimulate thinking.
- ❖ Reconvene whole group to share and discuss small group lists.
- ❖ Record a class list of synonyms on a piece of paper which can be kept and referred to during later lessons.

Thinking exercises adapted from Cam, P. (1993). *Thinking stories 1: Philosophical inquiry for children*. Teacher resource/activity book. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, p. 40.

Reflection:

- Students record the focus question in their reflective journals.
- Students write down their thoughts and feelings in response to the question in light of what they have read and discussed.

Activity 2.2 Fairness

Focus question: Is doing what is fair the same as doing what is right?

Preparation:

- Copy and cut out word study cards (*Resource 9*).
- Copy and cut out scenario cards (*Resource 10*) and place in a hat.

Pre-discussion reflection:

- Students record the focus question in their journals.
- Students reflect on the question then write personal responses.

Procedure:

- Write the word 'fair' on the chalkboard/easel.
- Students grouped in pairs. Each pair given a word pair card.
- Pairs discuss the meaning of the word 'fair' in the context of the word pair. One person from each pair asked to be prepared to report back to the class. Challenge students to try not to use the word 'fair' in their explanation.
- As students report back to the class, record the words used to explain the concept 'fair' underneath the word 'fair' on the chalkboard.
- Tell students that the group is now going to consider some stories that might help them think more deeply about the concept of fairness.
- Select a student to read a scenario card from the hat.
- Student reads the scenario.
- Discuss whether what happened in the scenario was right, then if it was fair. For example: *When Melissa was punished for lying to protect her friend, was that right? Was it fair?* Ask students to explain their points of view.
- Repeat for other scenarios.

Reflection:

- Give students time to revisit the response to the inquiry question recorded earlier in their journals.
- Students to write further reflections in response to group discussion.

Activity 2.3 Revisiting right and wrong

Note: Activity 2.1 should be completed before commencing this activity.

Focus question: Can something seem right to one person and wrong to someone else?

Preparation:

- Display discussion maps made during previous discussions.

Procedure:

- Students write the focus question in their reflective journals.
- Briefly re-visit some of the ideas discussed about fairness, right and wrong during previous discussions.
- Use points raised during the previous discussion to investigate whether students believe that 'right' and 'wrong' can be defined in absolute terms, or mean different things to different people, and at different times.
- Conduct a discussion using the plan below or one you have developed yourself.

Discussion plan:

- ❖ *Are people born knowing what is right and what is wrong?*
- ❖ *What if people disagree about what is right and wrong?*
- ❖ *Whose version of what is right should count?*

Reflection:

- Students use their reflective journals to record their thoughts and feelings about what they have read and discussed.

Activity 2.4 Justice

Focus question: What is justice?

Preparation:

- Write the focus question on the chalkboard/whiteboard.
- Make up three cards labelled 'Just', 'Unjust' and '?'
- Cut up scenario cards (*Resource 11*).

Procedure:

- Ask students to explain what they think is meant by the word 'justice'.
- Introduce the idea that people's ideas about what is right and wrong inform their sense of justice.
- Conduct a thinking exercise to investigate the group's understandings related to justice. For example:

Justice

- ❖ Distribute scenario cards.
- ❖ Ask students to consider whether the things which happen to the people in the scenarios described are just, unjust or neither.
- ❖ Students to choose whether what happened in the scenario is just, unjust or neither and place the scenario card in the appropriate category.
- ❖ Ask students to explain their answers.

children's rights, children's lives

A module of study developed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Reflection:

- Students use their reflective journals to record their thoughts and feelings about what they have read and discussed.