

Philosophy and Literature Unit Plan

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Abstract

This unit plan examines various ways teachers can introduce philosophy into middle school classrooms and the impact adding philosophy into a classroom can have on students. Philosophy can help students learn how to handle various situations in their lives. This paper focuses on using literature as a means to introduce philosophy into the current curriculum. It provides students with the opportunity to discuss real world situations that they could encounter and gives them the chance to talk with their peers and get different perspectives on important issues. In this paper, I will explore using literature to discuss important topics like bullying, poverty, friendship, prejudice, altruism, and telling the truth. Teachers often need to implement various strategies to engage students in the lesson. Due to the nature of this topic, cooperative learning will be a strategy used in many of the lessons. Working together will give students the chance to collaborate and improve their confidence when discussing controversial topics.

Philosophy is often discussed in terms of branches. This paper will focus on the branches and the topics included in each one. Ethics is the branch that includes topics relating to values and will include fairness, friendship, happiness and charity. Epistemology is the branch that explains how we know things. Topics in this branch include what makes things true and understanding the feeling of others. Metaphysics is the branch that is the study of reality.

Rationale

The educational system in the United States is not equal or fair for all students. Students in low income or high poverty areas seem to suffer the most. These students are quite

often several years below grade level for a multitude of reasons. Not only do they have limited resources at home, but due to limited funding, they have less technology in the classroom, less access to counselors, and overall fewer opportunities for academic success.

Students in the high poverty areas do not have the same educational opportunities. Philosophy is certainly not something that most students in low income areas often get offered. Students learn by doing and experiencing real world situations. Allowing students time to discuss and contemplate real world issues can help them to deal with issues in the classroom and in their personal lives. In my own classroom, many of my students do not have stable homes and philosophy has provided them a chance to talk about some of the issues that are not addressed at home.

In order to write this unit and prepare to teach it, I used the knowledge gained from the Teachers' Institute of Philadelphia course "Philosophy, Science, and Society." I also thoroughly researched how to increase critical thinking in students and how to incorporate philosophy into literature for middle school students. My research included literary resources that could be used to introduce various topics for philosophical discussions and debate. My goal was to create a safe learning environment where students could feel connected to each other and their community despite their differences. I wanted students to feel free to share their experiences and opinions and hopefully be open to hearing and respecting the experiences and opinions of others in the class.

This unit is designed for fifth and sixth graders with ages ranging from ten to twelve years old. The school I work in serves students from kindergarten through eighth grades. It is a title one school and all of the students are eligible for free lunches. The students from kindergarten through fourth grades are in self-contained classrooms, except for a 45-minute lunch period and an hour prep or special period. Students in fifth and sixth grades, have two teachers. One teacher for Reading and Science, and the other teacher for Math and Social Studies.

The purpose of this unit to incorporate philosophy into the existing curriculum through literature and community involvement. Middle school students are naturally curious and thoughtful thinkers, so they are at a wonderful age to introduce philosophical ideas. In order to deepen the student's understanding of their community and the role they play in it, teachers need to teach more than the content in the curriculum. They need to meet the basic needs of students in order to meet their educational needs. This unit plan meets the standards and objectives required by the School District of Philadelphia, but incorporates philosophy into the current curriculum provided.

In order for teachers to meet the many needs of students, they often have to play multiple roles in a classroom, not just teacher. They are counselors that deal with bullying issues. They are nurses that must remind students to take their medication every

day. They are mediators that meet with students to help them work through conflicts and find resolutions that don't include fighting. They are disciplinarians and have to enforce rules. The role they play may change several times during the day and each day is different and challenging in various ways. By teaching philosophy to middle school students, teachers can create a sense of community within the classroom and help students to reflect on real-world situations while sharing their own perspectives.

Not only are students benefiting by sharing their experiences with their classmates and becoming more critical thinkers, research shows that students that are exposed to philosophy in elementary school are making gains in Math and Reading. One popular study in England showed that by teaching philosophy one time a week for a year, students improved their Reading and Math by two months on teaching. (businessinsider.com)

Although there are many benefits to adding philosophy into the curriculum, philosophy is usually not seen as a necessity in elementary school. Many teachers don't feel like they have the ability to add teaching material to an already full curriculum. They either feel there is no time in the day or they are not permitted by their administration to deviate from the district curriculum. The best approach to adding philosophy is to create a cross curricular plan to incorporate it into other subjects.

This unit will use popular children's literature to introduce philosophy into the classroom. Some themes that will be addressed include bullying, telling the truth, altruism, prejudice, friendship, and poverty. Community involvement will be included by completing a community service project based on one of the themes studied.

Objectives

This unit is designed for fourth to fifth grade students. The objectives of this unit include the following:

- Students will be able reflect and summarize a text in order to determine the theme of the story, drama or poem.
- Students will be able to describe the narrator's point of view in order to explain how the point of view influences the events described.
- Students will be able to compare two or more characters, settings, or events in order to describe how the characters, events or setting impacts the story or theme.
- Students will be able to work collaboratively with peers in order to share their own ideas in a persuasive manner.
- Students will be about to conduct research on various topics in order to build knowledge and write opinion pieces on topics, supported by facts and reasons.

- Students will work with the Young Heroes Program and Project Home to complete a community service program where they collect supplies for a local homeless shelter and visit the shelter.

Standards

- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.5.2
Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL5.6
Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.5.3
Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.SL.1
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1
Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Strategies

During this unit, the teacher will use many different strategies to keep students engaged in the lessons. There are so many different strategies available, it is important for teachers to use ones that they are comfortable and that work for their students. The teaching strategies in this unit plan can be modified as needed to fit the needs of the students.

Cooperative learning is probably the strategy used most through the unit. This strategy gives students the opportunity to work together. Research has proven that

students learn more effectively when they work together. It also helps students build self-confidence (www.teachhub.com). Many students that are shy or not confident in sharing information can often participate in a smaller group setting or working with just one other partner. In this strategy, it is important for the teacher to set the expectations of the tasks before students get into learning groups. If students are working in larger groups, it can be helpful to assign roles to each student to ensure all students are participating in some way.

Another strategy used in this unit is the use of graphic organizers. Organizers can help students to put their thoughts and ideas into an easy to use visual tool. Organizers help students see information in a simple format. In this unit, students will work with partners to brainstorm and then create Venn diagrams, t-charts, and other organizers.

In most classrooms, teachers use the turn and talk strategy to engage students and give them the opportunity to share ideas with a partner. This is where students sit next to each other, turn to face each other, take time to share ideas and then turn to share their ideas with the teacher and the rest of the class. This strategy should be taught early in the year and practiced so students are comfortable with working with a partner. I find it helpful to have students work with a partner. Each partner is assigned a letter, either A or B. It makes it easy to manage the turn and talks this way. I usually give the question for discussion, then set a timer and give partner A a few minutes to talk and then when the timer goes off, B gets the same amount of time to speak so that both students have the opportunity to share information.

Background

The word philosophy is a Greek word that means “love of wisdom”. Philosophy is an ancient discipline and has been studied for thousands of years. Philosophy is typically a class offered in colleges, not in elementary schools. Since critical thinking skills are essential for people of all ages, it would make sense to start teaching philosophy to children of much younger ages.

Philosophy is about asking questions. Unlike other classes in school, there is not always one single correct answer. Philosophy is often open ended questions or topics that can be debated amongst students. To introduce philosophy to students, it is important to provide concrete examples for students, but to remain open minded. Students need to know there is not always a single “correct” answer and be open to other possibilities. Sometimes discussion topics may take a different direction based on student responses so being flexible is important to allow students some freedom in directing the discussion.

The study of Philosophy can be broken into branches: Ethics, Epistemology, and Metaphysics. The branch referred to as Ethics includes many questions that have students discuss their values. Values and ethics are interesting topics because some

values are shared by many people, yet other values are widely debated. Some topics considered in this branch include fairness, friendship, happiness, charity, and lying.

Another branch of Philosophy is known as Epistemology. This is the study of explaining how we know things. Topics included in this branch include what makes things true, are science laws actually laws, and understanding the feelings of others.

A third branch of Philosophy is known as Metaphysics. This is the study of reality. According to historian Thomas Carlyle, “Metaphysics is the attempt of the mind to rise above the mind.” (White, 65). This branch is often considered the most challenging and deals with questions about chance, what is time, the Big Bang theory, and more.

Everyone thinks about things. It’s human nature. The part of Philosophy that deals with correct thinking is known as Logic. When studying logic, you need to look at the opinions of others, reasoning, and causes and effects.

According to Marietta McCarty, there are ten topics that if studied and discussed would lead to fulfilling lives. In her book, *How Philosophy Can Save Your Life*, she dedicated a chapter to each of the topics. They include: simplicity, communication, perspective, flexibility, empathy, individuality, belonging, serenity, possibility, and joy.

Simplicity is something many people say they want in their lives, but being able to multitask and handle many complicated issues simultaneously is seen as a positive attribute. These seem to contradict each other. In a world filled with technology, simplicity is an important topic to consider first. Things today have changed due to advances in technology so the study of simplicity must be looked at recently. Many people have different ideas of what simplicity looks like, but the overall ideas should be that material concerns should not come before other things. (McCarty, 4). The study of simplicity should include being able to determine needs versus wants. Some questions to help students understand simplicity might include:

- What is a simple life?
- What do you need for a simple life?
- Can simple lives be satisfying?

The next topic in McCarty’s book is Communication, which is essential for people of all ages. When people do not know how to communicate well, it can lead to major difficulties for them and misunderstandings. Karl Jaspers is a famous philosopher that focused his work on communication. (McCarty, 36). Jaspers believed that good communication skills can help people minimize their differences and can also help to deal with past issues. Some questions to help student understand communication might include:

- What would good communication look like in the classroom?

What are some ways to deliver bad news so that people stay calm?

Perspective is the ability to see the world as it is. (McCarty, 67). This can be a difficult concept for students to understand. Seeing things from other people's point of view can be a challenge for many people, especially for young people. Perspective is hard to comprehend for people with self-centered motives. They see other people as a way to reach their goals and often cannot see how other people are impacted by their actions. Some questions for classroom discussion include:

When your perspective widens, do you have more to offer the world?

What does losing your perspective mean?

According to McCarty, flexibility is the ongoing practice of moving with life. Accepting change can be extremely difficult for many people, age is not a factor. This is usually because life requires flexibility during some high stress times like job loss, money problems, divorce or relationship issues, or sometimes it is needed for simple things like having a visitor in the home or not being able to do something that you want to do. When people are not flexible, it takes up a lot of energy to keep fighting the change. Children need to be taught how to be flexible and go with the flow of life. It is a skill that should be modeled for them. Some questions that may help students have a deep conversation about flexibility might include:

What is flexibility?

Is flexibility also seen as a positive attribute?

McCarty also examines empathy and describes it as "the direct experience of another person's feelings, often to the extent that the very concept of another no longer exists." (134). The Dalai Lama examined three things that needed to be addressed in order to gain inner peace. They included selfishness, anger, and resentment. Some questions for student discussion include:

What does inner peace look like?

What is empathy?

Individuality and belonging are also important topics. People like to feel like they are individuals, but also need to feel a sense of belonging. When teaching individuality to students, it's important to address the issues that making generalizations about people may cause. Having a sense of belonging makes people feel at peace and rest assured. Feeling like you belong gives you a sense of connectedness. This is important for students to feel connected to their class community.

John Locke was a philosopher that often addressed what it meant to have an identity. He believed that one's identity is linked to consciousness of self. Aristotle believed that there were necessary and accidental properties of identity. Necessary properties were things required in order to be that thing and accidental properties are true but not required.

How would life be if everyone were the same?
Why do people make generalizations about others?
How can you help someone feel a sense of belonging?
What is more important, feeling like an individual or feeling like you belong?
Support your answer.

Serenity and joy also need to be addressed to find inner peace. According to McCarty, serenity is the possession of a steady spirit that has room for sadness and joy. Joy is hard to define because it means different things to different people. What brings one-person joy, may not bring another person joy.

What is serenity and what things stop you from achieving serenity?

How can we keep calmness and peace in our lives?

What gives you joy?

How often do you feel joy?

Possibility is the last topic covered by McCarty in the book “How Philosophy Can Save Your Life”. Possibility is an exciting topic because young people dream big. Anything is possible in their futures. Ask a fifth grader what they want to be when they grow up, and you may hear an actress or basketball player. No matter how small the chance, students are open to the possibility. Possibility and positivity go hand in hand. Some possible discussion questions for students might include:

Are our possibilities limited by anything? If so, what?

Can all our possibilities be reached?

Philosophy can be introduced to elementary and middle school students through the current curriculum. Since students usually enjoy working together and sharing their own experiences, philosophy can be added to classrooms in fun and engaging ways, especially through literature and even social studies.

There are so many resources available online and in print on how to introduce philosophical ideas into the current curriculum for young children. I also found many organizations that work with schools to help students deepen their critical thinking skills and encourage them to become positive role models in their community.

One organization that I found extremely helpful is the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia. They have a young heroes program that allows students to learn about everyday heroes that are their age and then gives students the opportunity to get involved in researching a community service project idea. They then provide students with five hundred dollars to help implement their ideas. I have worked with this program in the past and have worked with my fifth grade students to raise over one thousand dollars to donate to a homeless shelter in Philadelphia.

As a reading teacher, literature is a part of our classroom every day. Many of the books already used in the classroom have philosophical issues that students are interested in. In order to prepare to write this unit, I researched books that I was already using in my classroom and then researched ideas on how to incorporate more critical thinking skills into the lessons. Philosophy provides students with opportunities to work with each other, allows them to present their opinions on the topic, and helps them to see a topic from another person's perspective.

In order to introduce philosophy into a classroom, students should help establish some ground rules and be given some background information. It's important that students feel like they are part of the classroom community so they feel safe to share their opinions during the lessons. Students should be encouraged to participate as much as possible and to lead the class with some teacher assistance. Since there are no right and wrong answers, students should feel like there are no right or wrong answers. It can be helpful to give them options to pass. They could say things like, "please come back to me, I'm still thinking, or I'm not sure"

Some lessons included in the unit will focus on friendship. This is an important topic to cover, especially with students in middle school. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher spent time describing types of friendship.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Philosophy

During this lesson, the teacher will introduce what philosophy is and have students discuss the trolley problem and morality.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

Computer with internet access and projector or Smart Board

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg16u_bzjPE

Objective

Students will be able to understand what Philosophy is and experience and discuss the process of moral decision making.

Strategies

Students will participate in a turn and talk discussion with a partner after watching a video.

Procedures

- Define Philosophy as the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. It is the most basic beliefs, concepts, and attitudes of an individual or group. The word philosophy is a Greek word that means “love of wisdom”. (write on the board)
- Explain to students that they will watch a video known as the “trolley problem”. It was invented by Philippa Foot, an English philosopher in 1967. The trolley problem was further developed by Judith Jarvis Thomson, a philosopher who teaches at M.I.T.
- Play video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg16u_bzjPE
- Have students discuss the following questions with a partner and then share whole group:
 - Do you think you should pull the lever or not?
 - Why did you choose what you did?
 - A large percent of people thought it was ok to pull the lever? Did you agree with the majority?

Lesson 2: Ethical Intuition and Making Moral Judgments

During this lesson, the teacher will review the book Fantastic Mr. Fox and participate in a gallery walk to answer moral questions.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

4 pieces of large poster size chart paper

Markers

Book: Fantastic Mr. Fox (or movie)

Objective

Students will be able to discuss what motivates us in making moral judgments.

Strategies

Students will participate in a gallery walk to answer questions related to moral judgment.

Procedures

- Students will read the book Fantastic Mr. Fox in small groups or watch the movie.
- Teacher will summarize the book with students: Mr. Fox is a story of a father that need to keep his family feed and safe and will do anything for his family, including stealing. He takes chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys from three

farmers, Boggis, Bunce, and Bean. The farmers are mean and they decide to fill Mr. Fox.

- Discuss the following questions with students:
 - Is it wrong for Mr. Fox to steal, even though he needs to feed his family? Why or why not?
 - Is there another way the Mr. Fox could have fed his family?
- Students will participate in a gallery walk. They will work in groups and move around the classroom answering questions as a group posted on chart paper. Each group will have a different color marker. Once each group has answered the question on a poster, they will move to the next poster. At the end of the lesson, groups will share their responses.
- The 4 questions on the chart paper are:
 - Poster 1: The farmers destroyed the entire hill when going after Mr. Fox. How did this harm others? Did the farmers mean to harm others?
 - Poster 2: Is it wrong for the farmers to kill Mr. Fox? How about his family?
 - Poster 3: Why does Badger have doubts? Why does he think he might be doing something wrong?
 - Poster 4: Was the feast a good thing? Why or why not?

Evaluation

Students will complete anchor charts to answer various questions related to the story.

Lesson 3: Justice

During this lesson, the teacher will read the book *Strega Nona* by Tomie DePaola and have students discuss the importance of justice

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola

Index cards with pre-written questions (see lesson below) or use Justice worksheet questions

Objective

Students will be able to discuss how equality plays a role in society and specifically in regards to justice.

Strategies

Students will be able to work with classmates to determine whether consistency is a requirement of justice.

Procedures

- Teacher will explain that justice involves fairness and equality. Explain to the class that today we will learn about justice through reading *Strega Nona* and then completing a group activity.
- Teacher will read the following statement: “Before we read the story, I wanted to announce that all the girls in the class completed all their work last week so this week girls in this class will receive extra recess every day and will not have homework.” After student calm down, ask student to work with a partner and decide whether this is fair? Why or why not?
- Some questions for discussion:
 - Is it necessary to know the rules beforehand for something to be fair? Is it fair that I did not tell you that if you finished your work you would earn a prize?
 - Should students be involved in making the rules for it to be fair? Why or why not?
 - How can we tell is a rule is fair?
- Teacher will read aloud the book *Strega Nona*.
 - Summary for teacher: *Strega Nona* is a witch that hires Big Anthony to help with her chores. He finds out that she has a magic pasta pot that makes lots of pasta. *Strega Nona* goes on a trip and Big Anthony uses the pot without permission. He makes so much pasta that it overflows the town. For his punishment, *Strega Nona* makes Big Anthony to eat all the pasta.
 - After reading the book, the class will discuss the following questions:
 - Why did Big Anthony get punished? Is it important for people to get punished?
 - What good things come from punishment?
 - Is punishment ever unfair? Give an example.
 - After discussing the whole group questions, students will work in groups to answer the following questions (pre-written on index cards). Each group will have a different question and they one person will share their groups answer with the entire class.
 - *Strega Nona* trusted Big Anthony? Was it wrong for her to trust him? Who are some people that you should trust?
 - Why was *Strega Nona* the one to decide on how to punish Big Anthony? Why did he listen to her? What would happen if he didn't listen to her?
 - Who should decide a punishment? What should happen if people don't accept their punishment? (give an example)

- When is a punishment unfair?

Evaluation

Students will complete the Justice worksheet.

Lesson 4: Truth / Justice

During this lesson, the teacher will review the previous lesson on justice and also introduce the topic of truth, using the book *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka

Venn Diagram

News Report Worksheet

Objective

Students will be able to explain what a truth is discuss how the truth can be determined since individual experiences influence each person's thoughts and feelings.

Strategies

Students will use a turn and talk strategy to discuss the questions below and then write in response to the story.

Procedures

- Teacher will tell students: Today we are going to read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. This story is told from the point of view of the wolf, Alexander T. Wolf.
- Make sure students are familiar with the original story of the Three Little Pigs and then read the book, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.
- Explain to students that some philosophers argue that due to discrepancies in stories, it may be hard to know for certain what the actual truth is. Because our background and experiences influence us, different people usually remember the same story in a different way.
- Discussion questions:
 - How are the stories alike and different? Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the stories.
 - Which version of the story do you think is true? Use text evidence to support your answer.

- Have you ever disagreed with someone about how something happened? Where you able to figure out what actually happened? (did one person realize they made a mistake?)
- Should Al (or anyone) get in trouble for something they did by accident? Why or why not? Do people in real life get in trouble for things they didn't mean to do?
- Does it make sense to punish Al by putting him in jail? Is this the only punishment that makes sense or is there something they could do instead of putting him in jail?
- Writing extension activity: The Wolf's story is in The Daily Wolf but other reports are in The Daily Pig. Today students will pretend like they are news reporters for The Lamberton Daily. They should write an article and explain what happened the day the wolf went to visit the pigs for some sugar. (see Appendix)

Evaluation

Students will complete a Venn diagram and the article (optional)

Lesson 5: Epistemology- the theory of knowledge

During this lesson, the teacher will read Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss and discuss the questions about the theory of knowledge.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

Horton Hears a Who

Cardboard box

Tape

Objective

Students will be able to explain how sometimes people know something to be true and how others know it to be false.

Strategies

Students will work collaboratively, like the characters in the book, to determine how they know certain things to be true.

Procedures

- Bring in a large box, sealed (empty or with something in it)

- Ask students to work with a partner to list some ways they can find out what is in the box (without touching it). Students should also list ways to find out what is not in the box.
- Teacher will then tell students there is a \$20 bill in the box. Students should be encouraged to discuss whether the teacher is a reliable and trusted source.
- Teacher will tell students that they will be reading about Horton, an elephant that hears a noise and without being able to see who is making it, he trusts that there is someone that needs help. No one believes Horton, but he still is determined to help.
- Read Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss.
- Discussion questions:
 - Why doesn't the kangaroo believe Horton? Why does she believe there cannot be a person on the speck?
 - Why do the Wickersham brothers think that Horton is being foolish?
 - When you think you know something, does that mean everyone else has to agree? Have you ever thought you knew something and then found out you were wrong?

Lesson 6: Friendship

During this lesson, the teacher will provide a definition of friendship and allow students to create a list of attributes essential for a good friendship

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

Friendship worksheet (appendix)

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes

Chart paper

Markers (different colors)

Objective

Students will be able to identify the characteristics that are essential in good friendships.

Strategies

Students will turn and talk to discuss the book and then work collaboratively to complete the friendship worksheet.

Procedures

- Tell students that they will be reading a book about 2 friends, Chester and Wilson. These friends are very similar and then they meet Lily who is very different.

They eventually become good friends and today we are going to talk about what makes a good friend.

- Read *Chester's Way* by Kevin Henkes
- Explain to students that a friend is a person attached to someone else by feelings of affection and then have students complete the friendship worksheet independently. After they have had time to work alone, have them work with a partner to share their responses and add more as needed. (some possible answers might include: trust, understanding, similar interest, respect, fun, support for each other, etc.)
- Once students have had a chance to work with a partner, they will share their answers with the class and the teacher will write the answers on the chart paper.
- Students will then discuss the following questions:
 - Out of all the qualities needed for a good friendship, which one is most important and why?
 - Which quality is least important?
 - Did you miss any quality that your partner had and you decided to add to your list?
 - Which qualities are related to each other? (or depend on each other) Circle the related qualities in the same color marker.
 - Does everyone agree on which is the most and least important quality? Why or why not?
- Writing extension: Answer one of the following questions in 1-2 paragraphs. Provide reasons for your opinion.
 - Do friends with similar qualities or different qualities make better friends? Why do you think?
 - Which quality do you think is one of your strengths and which quality do you think is a weakness for you? How can you improve on your weaknesses?

Evaluation

Friendship worksheet and optional writing extension

Lesson 7: Individuality/ Bullying

During this lesson, the teacher will address being different and the issue of bullying by reading *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi and *A Bad Case of Stripes* by David Shannon

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

Posters/Chart Paper

Markers

The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi
A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon

Objective

Students will be able to create a resource to explain how students should respond to bullying in their school. (skit, song, dance, poster/advertisement, animation, etc.)

Strategies

Students will create their own resource with a partner and participate in a carousel walk to answer questions related to individuality and bullying.

Procedures

- Define bullying and write the definition on the board for students to see. Explain that bullying is any unwanted and aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time.
- Ask students to turn and talk with a partner and come up with an example and non-example of bullying. Create a t-chart on the board or have them write it on the worksheet provided. (see appendix)
- Read *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi (Summary: A young girl named Unhei moves to America and is embarrassed about her name and her classmates try to find a new name, an American name.)
- Ask the following discussion questions:
 - Why do the students react to Unhei on the bus the way they do? How does this make her feel? How can you tell?
 - What should we do when we have trouble pronouncing someone's name?
 - How does Unhei's class respond compared to the students on the bus?
 - Why does the class create the name jar?
- Read *A Bad Case of Stripes* by David Shannon. (Summary: A girl named Camilla Cream wakes up for school covered in stripes and then breaks out in a checkerboard pattern. The lesson is to be comfortable with yourself.)
- Ask the following discussion questions:
 - Is it important to worry about what others think of you?
 - Is there ever a time you should worry about what someone thinks of you?
 - Camilla is teased by her classmates. How does this hurt her?
- Write the following questions on chart paper and have students work in groups to go to each chart and answer the question. Once they answer the question, they will move with their group to the next chart.
 - Is it okay to treat someone differently because they have stripes?
 - When the reporter talks about Camilla on TV, is that bullying?
 - Is it wrong to report some things on the news or is everything ok to report? Give examples.

- How does bullying hurt a person? Can it hurt the person doing the bullying?

Lesson 8: Leadership qualities

During this lesson, the teacher will work with students to identify qualities of good leaders.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

T-chart worksheet

Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio

Boxes of straws

Tape for each group

Index cards

Objective

Students will be able to identify some conditions under which leadership is appropriate and what qualities make a good leader.

Strategies

Students will work with partners to identify characteristic of good leaders and create a straw tower.

Procedures

1. Teacher will discuss the importance of leaders in various positions. (discuss different leadership styles, what makes a good/bad leader)
2. Students will work with a partner to complete the worksheet t-chart on leadership
3. Read Grace for President and have students revisit their worksheet and add more characteristics as needed.
4. Put students into groups of 4-6 and have them each select an index card with the following written on it:
 - Work without a leader
 - Vote on a leader
 - Randomly select a leader by drawing a name
5. Tell students to make the tallest standing straw tower that can stand without any support. If groups have a leader, the leader will decide how to build the structure.
6. Pass out supplies and let students begin building.
7. After 15 minutes, see which can stand alone for 5 seconds so they can be measured.
8. Have a class/group discussion;

- How did your team work with or without a leader? Did it make it easy or harder for your group?
- What worked well in your group? What could have been better?
- Did voting make it better than randomly picking? Why or why not?
- What made a good leader in this situation?

Lesson 9: Communication

During this lesson, the teacher will define communication and provide activities to help students explain what good communication looks like in the classroom.

Timeline

One 45 minute period

Materials

My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook

Paper for writing prompt

“When” worksheet

Objective

Students will be able to define what good communication is IOT describe what communication looks like in the classroom?

Strategies

Students will work collaboratively with others to explain what good communication looks like and give examples of what bad communication might look like.

Procedures

1. Explain that communication is the process of sending and receiving messages. It is important to communicate in an effective manner in order to foster healthy relationships in your life and avoid unnecessary conflicts or misunderstandings.
2. Ask students to turn and talk with a partner to list ways that people communicate. (Possible answers: verbal communication, facial expressions, body language, text or written words)
3. Read My Mouth is A Volcano by Julia Cook.
Discussion questions: What are some mistakes people make when communicating/ (facial expressions, not paying attention, interrupting, not thinking before they speak, etc.)
4. Have students sit next to each other and play whisper down the lane. Have one person whisper a sentence to the person sitting next to them and continue passing the message until the last student says it out loud. Discuss whether the message changed and why it

may have changed. Ask students how this could be a problem is the message was important.

5. Discuss how people communicate with themselves. Sometimes people have negative self-talk and how this can affect our attitudes. Have students think about a time that they got a bad grade on a test. Ask them to think about things they may have said to themselves? Discuss if they were negative or positive things? (ex: I am horrible at math. I am a bad student, At least I tried, Maybe I should ask the teacher for help, etc.)

6. Have students think of some positive things they could say to themselves in certain situations and complete the “When” worksheet. Have students share out some answers.

Optional writing prompt: How do you communicate most often? If you couldn’t communicate in that manner anymore, what other ways could you communicate? Are there any forms of communication that are frequently misunderstood?

Evaluation

“When” worksheet

Lesson 10: Altruism

During this lesson, the teacher will discuss what altruism is and provide opportunities for students to get involved with the National Liberty Museum and Project Home to participate in a supply drive for a local homeless shelter.

Timeline

One 45 minute class period for the book and activity

The supply drive will last one month and students will visit the homeless shelter after school for 2 hours.

Materials

The Three Questions by Jon J Muth

Boxes

Posters

Markers

Objective

Students will be able to practice altruism by participating in a supply drive for a local homeless shelter.

Strategies

Students will work organize a supply drive in the school and collect items to be donated to a local homeless shelter.

Procedures

1. Define altruism on the board: Altruism is when we are selfless or put the well-being of others before our own.
2. Read *The Three Questions* by Jon J Muth. (Summary: A boy named Nikolai tries to find out answers to some important questions but while seeking answers he rescues a panda and cub. He finds out “the most important time is now, the most important one is the one you are with, and the most important this is to do good for the one who is standing at your side”)
3. Discussion questions:
When people say “live in the moment” what does that mean? Does this mean not thinking about the future?
Would you give up \$5 today if I promised you \$10 next week? Why or why not?
Did Nikolai get anything for helping the Panda and her cub? Why did he help them?
If you feel good from helping someone else, does this making helping them less of a good thing?

Bibliography

White, David A., Ph.D, *Philosophy for Kids: 40 Fun Questions That Help You Wonder About Everything*. Pruprock Press, New York. (2001)

This book is written by the same author of *Little Big Minds*. It includes ten chapters to explain the ten ideas that if people understood, they would live fulfilling lives. It is written to be used with several people in order to discuss the topics.

McCarty, Marietta. *How Philosophy Can Save Your Life: 10 Ideas that Matter Most*

This book provides educators with philosophy programs that can be delivered to students in elementary and middle schools. This book includes 40 of the most asked questions in philosophy and includes activities to go with each question.

Dynarski, Susan. *Why American Schools Are Even More Unequal Than we thought*. Retrieved from the web February 18, 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/14/upshot/why-american-schools-are-even-more-unequal-than-we-thought.html>

The eligibility for subsidized lunches has become a standard measurement tool in school. It measures student's economic status and is used to determine which schools receive funds. This New York Times article looks at the relationship between students eligible for a free or reduced cost lunch and academic achievement.

<https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org>

This website provides lesson plan ideas for many well known pieces of children's literature.

<http://whatsthebigideaprogram.com>

This site was recommended through the website Teaching Children Philosophy. The purpose of this website is to use films to introduce philosophy to middle school students.

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/ClassActivities#Anchor4>

This website is a resource to teach about bullying and how to respond to bullying. It includes various resources and activities to help students understand what bullying is and how they can prevent it or stand up to it.

<http://www.brighthubeducation.com/lesson-plans-grades-3-5/61331-philosophy-for-kids-through-little-big-minds/>

This website is a collection of lesson plans for teachers. It also includes articles on many different topics including classroom management, child development, and teaching strategies.

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/would-you-sacrifice-one-person-to-save-five-eleanor-nelsen>

This Ted talk video presents the trolley problem.

<https://theodepot.wordpress.com/2014/05/21/basic-epistemology-lessons-fun-with-a-cardboard-box/>

A resource website for teaching theology. The website is designed to provide resources for introductory college level courses. This website is designed to easily search for topics using specific criteria in the categories menu.

<http://www.sdcda.org/office/girlsonlytoolkit/toolkit/got-05-communication.pdf>

A lesson plan on communication. Participants practice effective communication skills. This lesson provides lessons on ways to communicate, conflict resolution, online communication, internet safety, human know, and forgiveness.

<http://www.teachhub.com/top-5-teaching-strategies>

This website is provided by the K-12 Teachers Alliance. It is a K-12 resource for news, lessons and other resources that are by teachers for teachers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Justice Worksheet

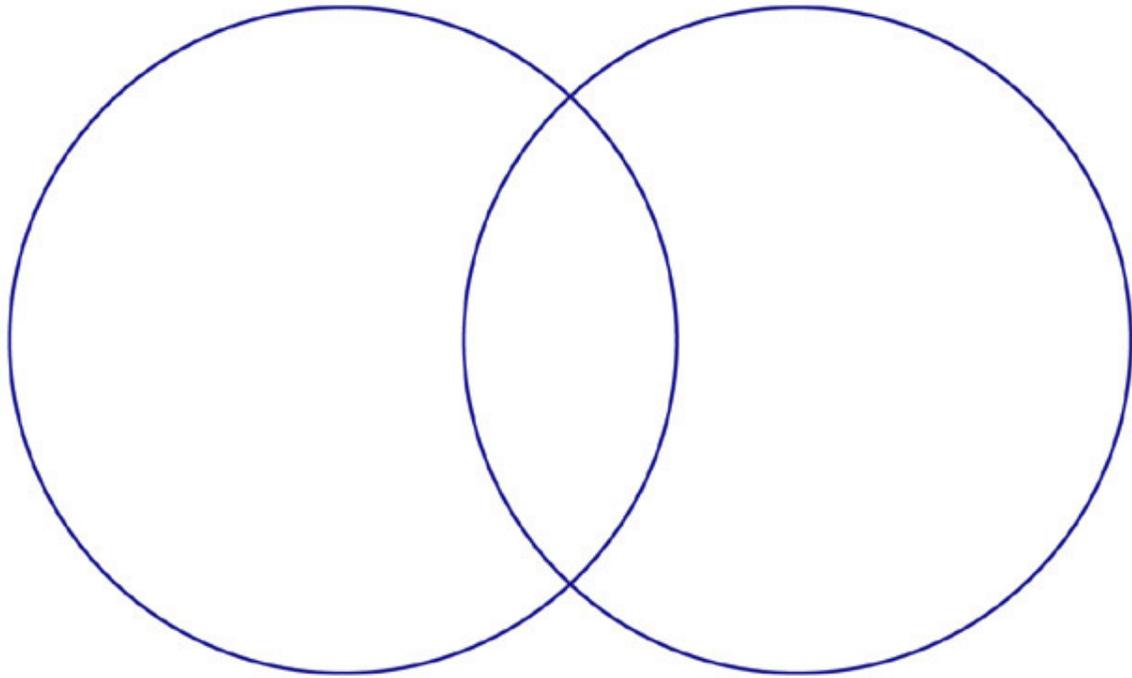
<p>Strega Nona trusted Big Anthony? Was it wrong for her to trust him? Who are some people that you should trust?</p>	<p>Why was Strega Nona the one to decide on how to punish Big Anthony? Why did he listen to her? What would happen if he didn't listen to her?</p>
<p>Who should decide a punishment? What should happen if people don't accept their punishment? (give an example)</p>	<p>When is a punishment unfair? (Give an example)</p>

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Three Little Pigs (original)
Little Pigs

The True Story of the Three



Name: _____

Date: _____

Friendship Worksheet

Make a list of qualities needed to be a good friend in the first column. Share your list with a partner and add any qualities you may have missed. In the second column, list the top 5 qualities needed, in order of importance.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD FRIEND	TOP 5 QUALITIES OF A GOOD FRIEND
	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

Writing extension: Answer one of the following questions in 1-2 paragraphs. Provide reasons for your opinion.

-Do friends with similar qualities or different qualities make better friends? Why do you think?

-Which quality do you think is one of your strengths and which quality do you think is a weakness for you? How can you improve on your weaknesses?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Bullying

Examples	Non-Examples

Name: _____

Date: _____

Qualities of a Leader	
GOOD QUALITIES	BAD QUALITIES

Think about a time when you were a leader, what helped you be a good leader? What come you have done differently?

Name: _____

Date: _____

WHEN I'm feeling...

When I am feeling a certain way, I can participate in positive self talk. In each box, write a positive statement you can tell yourself. For example, if you fail a test, you can say "at least I tried and maybe I can ask the teacher for help".

When I'm disappointed.....	When I'm feeling lonely...
When I feel like giving up...	When I feel embarrassed...
When I feel like someone doesn't like me...	When I feel nervous...
When I feel frustrated...	When I feel discouraged...