



Philosophy in KS2

Year – all from ages 5 – 11 (Primary Age)

This plan is designed to begin a discussion and, as it becomes more complicated, become self-selective in terms of who carries on. Smaller children may be unable to follow you all the way through to the end but you'd be surprised!

Root them in the problem:

Start the lesson with a statement, picture or clip introducing the problem they need to solve:

All objects have a purpose/Everything has been made to do something.

Discuss what this might mean and pick some objects around the home or in the garden and examine them. Discuss the purpose of a fork, a leaf or a pebble.

Get them talking:

Pose some questions to the class/group, these should be simple but have the potential for many different answers:

There is no reason for a pebble to exist.

Discuss this idea. Children love to disprove statements like this, by stating this they will attempt to prove you wrong and will produce all sorts of reasons. Talk about rock in general and where it can be found. Why is it everywhere in the world?

Start the debate:

Pose a controversial solution to any problems arising in the previous section:

Trees are only useful because they make oxygen/air that we can breathe.

Discuss what trees do and what they are for. Look this up on Youtube using this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5I7u5FMQxHA>

Final Section:

Step outside the argument and look at it critically. Ask the class to summarise their points of view and ask if they are truly justified.

What is the purpose of the objects we find in the house? What is the purpose of objects we find outside?

Is it fair to talk about the purpose of a tree? Is it fair to talk about why a tree exists?

Is it the same as why is there a fork in the drawer?



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Separate objects into two columns. Which ones have a purpose? Write down the purpose for each object.

If you can't find a purpose for that object is it fair to say that there isn't one?

Teaching:

Link this to any in depth exploration of the subjects covered with some direct teaching. Look at the type of thought or school of thought you are exploring. What would a philosopher/theologian/believer/thinker say about the argument we've just explored?

You may want to look at the work of Aristotle and his idea of the purpose of things found in the world. See this video on Khan academy about the Ergon argument.

<https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/wiphi-history/wiphi-ancient/v/aristotle-on-the-purpose-of-life>

Explore the ideas found the video. Is it a good idea to see the world in terms of why they were created?

Are the living and non-living things found in the world created with a purpose or do they simply fit the world? Is the world created for the happiness of each object?

Is a tree growing in the garden with blossom on it flourishing and therefore happy?

When we aren't happy what is happening in our lives? What kinds of things make you happy? Is it fair to say that being happy is the ultimate purpose of life?

Note:

This discussion topic will open children up to the idea of the purpose of things. If they talk at all about any of the questions in this plan then this should be considered a success. The older children in your household may then want to explore the later questions found here. Remember to ask that golden question: Why? when they give you an answer. It can be incredibly annoying to do this kind of exploration so keep it light. Know that you are encouraging deeper thinking and asking them for justifications for the ideas they may take for granted.

Where Next?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh0fxJkvL44> Crash Course on Aristotle and Plato.