

Stephen Lawrence Day Philosophy Session: All age groups “Live Our Best Life”

<p>Key Stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Key Stages (tailored appropriately to be age-appropriate) <p>Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live our best life: self-actualisation <p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To think about the extents and limits of living a good life to one’s full potential <p>Curriculum links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSHE, spiritual and moral development, Citizenship 	<p>SLD Assembly Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Living Your Best Life” <p>Core aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating pupils to consider practical aspects and obstacles to living a good life. <p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils will be enabled to distinguish between two concepts of ‘<i>The</i>’ best and ‘<i>Your</i>’ best life.
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Philosophy for Children and Young People

Philosophy for children and young people is designed to explore central concepts and ideas around a topic or theme (usually through a question) and to encourage the children/young people, where possible, to critically engage with each other by inviting them to respond to each other, as well as the question.

A useful basic mechanism for philosophy is to:

- a) find out what pupils think (usually in answer to the question) and why they think it (“opening up”); and
- b) find out what they think about what each other have said (e.g. do they agree or disagree?), and why they think that (“opening up”).

From here, teachers are encouraged to “open up”, firstly, the pupil’s answers (e.g. “can you say why you think it is X?”), and then to develop the conversation more broadly to engage pupils in further thinking and talking, clarifying and articulating reasons for their views.

(See “opening up strategies” in Teacher Facilitation Pack for how to do this).

Further preparation:

- Teacher Facilitation Pack available [here](#), which describes how to facilitate enquiries and how to use Task Questions and Nested Questions
- Use the “Kokey Hokey” method as described in the Teacher Facilitation Pack

Class set up

- Have the class seated in a talk circle (or “horseshoe”) so that they can all see and talk to each other.
- Write the starter question: “What is a ‘best life?’” up and allow them a minute or two of talk time in pairs or small groups.
- Hold up a talk ball (or similar object) to indicate that a whole group discussion will commence.
- Be aware of the nested questions (see below) as you work through the lesson plan and use them to help guide your facilitation (also see Teacher Facilitation Pack). Don’t feel the need to ask these questions explicitly to the class; certainly, don’t ask them one after the other.

The Session

Starter Question:

- “What is a ‘best life’?”

Dilemma:

- “One of my friends, K, says that I have to ‘do my best’; another friend, P, says that I have to ‘be the best’.”

Task Question:

- Who should he or she listen to, K or P?

Nested Questions:

- Should you live your best life?
- If you should live your best life, how can you live your best life?
- What does “best” mean? What does “best life” mean?
- What does “life” mean?
- What’s the difference between “the best” and “your best”?
- Can everyone be “the best”? Can everyone be “your best”? Can everyone be “their best”?
- If there is a “best life”, does that mean there is a “worst life”? If so, what would that be?
- Are we in control of everything that makes for a best life?
- If not, then what sort of things are we/are we not in control of?

Extension activity:

- Draw a big outline of a person on large sugar paper (or several bits stuck together).
- Write above the drawing, “The Best Kind of Person”.
- Invite the class to write words on small pieces of paper that describe the best kind of person they can think of, e.g. “fast”, “kind”, “fighting” etc.
- Stick the words inside the drawing.
- Invite critical discussion about whether the words are right for the best kind of person.

Optional further history-of-philosophy questions (for KS3 upwards):

- The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates said, “The unexamined (unconsidered) life is not worth living”.
 - What do you think he might have meant by this?
 - Do you agree with him?
- The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle thought that happiness was the thing that we are all ultimately aiming for; the summum bonum (“the greatest good”).
 - Do you agree? If happiness is the greatest good, then what does the best life look like?
- The ‘enlightenment’ German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, thought that the best life was a life lived according to rational duties: doing the right thing whether it brought happiness or not.
 - Was he right?
- Later existentialist philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Simone De Beauvoir and Friedrich Nietzsche thought that the best life was self-created, not imposed by society’s norms.
 - Do you agree?

Ending the Session

- Philosophy sessions should have an openness or continuing-ness about them.
- Say something positive about the fact that pupils/ students have shared their ideas and comments, but, ideally, the discussions in philosophy should be left as “live” discussions; something they may continue to think about after the session.
- Concluding may signal that the thinking should end with the end of the session.

Further philosophy for children resources: www.philosophy-foundation.org