

Philosophy for Children
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Epistemology Lesson Plan

Total Time: 39 minutes

Ages: 4-5 years old

Materials:

- “Horton Hears a Who!” by Dr. Seuss

Goal: Our goal for this lesson is to remind children what philosophy is and how to participate in a philosophical discussion by emphasizing the structure for response covered during our last visit. We will introduce epistemology to them and discuss the difference between “belief” and “knowledge.” Through reading the book “Horton Hears a Who,” we will discuss the importance of evidence and trusting others.

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Facilitators re-introduce themselves and give have students introduce themselves again..
 - Everyone stands up, go around the group and say name and something you know about an animal, sit down once you speak
 - Ex. “My name is Amy and I know that cats say meow” or “My name is Eden and I know that sea otters have tiny pockets under their armpits”

Reminder of “What is Philosophy?” (10 minutes):

- Does anyone remember what philosophy is?
 - Philosophy is asking big questions like “what is time?” and “what is color?”
 - Today we will be studying epistemology, have students say “epistemology”
 - Epistemology is the study of knowledge
 - Who here knows what knowledge is?
 - Ask students “what is something you believe in?” and “what is something you know?”
 - Ex. I believe my cat is taking nap. vs. I know my cat is at home.
- Remind them how to participate in philosophical discussion.
 - Encourage students to explain their answers in the following way:
 - “I agree with ____ because...”
 - “I disagree with ____ because...”

Read and Discuss “Horton Hears a Who!” (24 min):

- **Part I: Horton Hears the Who (8 min)**

- Why does Horton pick up the speck of dust?
 - How does he know if he can't see?
 - Can we always trust our hearing?
- Why does Horton believe that there is a person on the speck of dust?
 - Does Horton *believe* or does he *know*?
- Why doesn't the kangaroo believe Horton?
 - Do you believe Horton? Why?

-Movement Activity: Act like a Kangaroo and an Elephant.

- **Part II: Horton Finds the Who (8 min)**

- How does Horton know the Whos are on the flower he picks up?
- Do all the flowers have Whos on them? How do we know?
- How can the Whos prove that they are there?
 - What is proof?

-Breathing Activity: Smell the flowers, blow out the candles.

- **Part III: Horton Helps the Who (8 min)**

- Why can Horton hear better than the other animals?
 - Do some animals have skills that other animals don't have?
 - Do people have different skills? Like what?
 - Some people are doctors and some people are teachers, do they know the same things?
- Should the other animals have believed Horton?
 - Why should they trust him?
- When should we trust others to teach us things?
- If you know something is true, how can you prove it to other people?