

Pre-college Philosophy lesson 4 - Ethical Relativism
Maddy, Addison, Sam

Goal: To better understand Moral Relativism and Absolutism

Ice Breaker and Ground Rules - 5 mins

- Everyone goes around and says their name and shares a time they've broken a rule.

First Activity: Is stealing always wrong? - 20 mins

- Split the group into two small groups - one on the "stealing is always wrong" side and one on the "stealing is always right" side (do we need a middle group of "stealing is sometimes wrong and sometimes right"?)
- Let them build an argument (approx 5 mins)
 - Stealing is wrong arguments:
 - It is someone else's stuff (private property)
 - It could hurt others in the long run
 - Punishable by law
 - Others use more noble means to acquire things
 - Harm to one's moral standing/ideologies
 - Stealing is right arguments:
 - Brings joy
 - No other means
 - Taking down establishments
 - There is no direct harm to my own self
 - Inherently right action
 - We all have an equal right to possess the objects (we all have equal right to purchase the object)
 - No such thing as private property, especially when put on display in public
 - Can get away with it
- Have them discuss
 - They might reach a middle-ground conclusion, but up to them to decide
- What's the difference between the two sides?
 - Is it organizational? Is it ideological? Is it a logical difference? Is it rhetorical? Personal?

Second Activity: Ethical norms - 10 mins

- Create a list to answer the question(s): Is there some difference that determines ethical beliefs? Does our past experiences/maturity determine our morality?
Where do ethical norms come from?
 - Are ethical norms subjectable to determinism (might have to explain this)?
Do they simply exist? (Kinda moral objectivity)
 - Historical and cultural as well as universal human morality
- How do our lists compare?
- Can we reach some consensus/agreement?

Overarching Questions:

- Are there rules we should all always be following?
- How does cultural background play into ethical beliefs?
- How do we arrange our concepts of good and bad?
- Can there be an objective good or bad?
- Is Relativism Paradoxical by nature (Having to accept absolutism as being in some way correct)? How does a relativist deal with absolutism?
- Is good merely a belief?