

PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN
BOOK GUIDE
BY: MANSIE BENNETT



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DEVELOPING PHILOSOPHICAL SENSITIVITY



WHEN APPROACHING CHILDRENS LEARNING MANY PARENTS AND TEACHERS TEND TO OVERLOOK PHILOSOPHY IN CHILDREN'S INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, THROUGH DEVELOPING A SENSITIVITY TO PHILOSOPHY, CHILDREN'S NATURAL CURIOSITY IS ENCOURAGED. THIS ALLOWS THEM TO ASK DEEPER QUESTIONS ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND HOW THEY FUNCTION IN IT.

THERE IS PHILOSOPHICAL CONTENT TO BE FOUND IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE, ESPECIALLY IN BOOKS. THIS BOOK GUIDE IS A RESOURCE THAT CAN BE USED BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO NURTURE A PHILOSOPHICALLY SENSITIVE DISPOSITION IN THEIR CHILDREN AND ENRICH THEIR LEARNING AND NATURAL CURIOSITY.



AESTHETICS



AESTHETICS IS A BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY THAT AIMS TO DEFINE AND UNDERSTAND BEAUTY, ART, AND TASTE.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS ABOUT AESTHETICS:

1. WHAT MAKES SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL?
2. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS "GOOD ART" OR "BAD ART"?
3. CAN SOMEONE BE A "GOOD ARTIST" OR "BAD ARTIST"?

BOOK COVERED IN THIS SECTION:

- 'ISH' BY PETER H. REYNOLDS

ISH

BY PETER H. REYNOLDS

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT A BOY NAMED RAMON WHO LIKES TO DRAW. HOWEVER, AFTER HIS OLDER BROTHER LEON MAKES A NEGATIVE COMMENT ABOUT HIS ART, RAMON BECOMES DISSATISFIED WITH ALL OF HIS DRAWINGS BECAUSE THEY DON'T "LOOK RIGHT". HIS MIND IS CHANGED HOWEVER AFTER HE DISCOVERS HIS SISTER HAS BEEN COLLECTING HIS DRAWINGS COMMENTING THAT THEY LOOK "ISH". RAMON LEARNS THAT ART IS NOT ABOUT BEING PERFECT OR "LOOKING RIGHT" BUT ABOUT HAVING FUN.



LESSON

OBJECTIVE: CHALLENGE THE CHILD'S UNDERSTANDING OF BEAUTY AND WHAT CONSTITUTES "GOOD ART". THE CHILD SHOULD LEARN THAT MISTAKES ARE INEVITABLE AND DO NOT NECESSARILY NEGATE AESTHETIC VALUE. ADDITIONALLY, THE CHILD SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT BEAUTY OR "GOOD ART" ISN'T OBJECTIVE AND IS DEPENDENT ON THE VIEWER.

ACTIVITIES:

- HAVE THE CHILDREN EXAMINE DIFFERENT ART PIECES ACROSS MEDIUMS; DISCUSS WHETHER THEY THINK THEY ARE "GOOD/BEAUTIFUL" OR NOT
- OR
- GIVE THE CHILDREN PIECES OF PAPER WITH "MISTAKES" (RIPS, TEARS, HOLES, ETC.) AND HAVE THEM CREATE ART WITH THEM

DISCUSSION

1. WHAT DOES RAMON MEAN WHEN HE SAYS "LOOK RIGHT"?
2. DOES ART HAVE TO "LOOK RIGHT" TO BE GOOD?
3. CAN ART BE BEAUTIFUL TO ONE PERSON BUT UGLY TO A DIFFERENT PERSON?
4. IF ONE PERSON THINKS A PIECE OF ART IS UGLY DOES THAT MEAN THAT THE ART IS UGLY?
5. HOW DID YOU TURN THE "MISTAKES" ON YOUR PAPER INTO ART?

TEACHER NOTES

- ALWAYS ENCOURAGE THE CHILDREN TO ARTICULATE WHY THEY RESPOND IN THE WAYS THEY DO. ESPECIALLY WHEN DISCUSSING SOMETHING AS NEBULOUS AS BEAUTY, PROMPTING THE CHILDREN TO FURTHER CONSIDER THEIR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT BEAUTY
- DEPENDING ON THE GROUP, THE CHILDREN MIGHT CHANGE THEIR RESPONSES DEPENDING ON WHAT OTHERS IN THEIR GROUP MAY THINK (OR BASED ON YOUR REACTIONS/PROMPTING). TO COMBAT THIS HAVE THE CHILDREN RESPOND INDIVIDUALLY IN A CIRCLE AND ALLOW THEM TO ANSWER WITH LITTLE PROMPTING
- IN PREVIOUS LESSON ABOUT AESTHETICS, THE CHILDREN MAY GIVE UNEXPECTED REASONING FOR FINDING A PAINTING BEAUTIFUL OR UGLY. TRY TO ANTICIPATE THAT THEY MAY NOT ANSWER HOW YOU MAY WANT THEM TO AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONING BEHIND THEIR RESPONSES RATHER THAN PROMPTING THEM OR REDIRECTING THE CONVERSATION
- MAKE SURE TO RELATE THE CONCEPTS OF BEAUTY FROM THE BOOK DIRECTLY TO THE ACTIVITIES THEY DO. YOU MAY NEED TO DO THIS MORE EXPLICITLY THAN YOU THINK!



ETHICS



ETHICS REFERS TO A BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY THAT EXAMINES HOW WE JUDGE RIGHT AND WRONG AND THE RULES THAT IMPLICITLY AND EXPLICITLY GOVERN HUMAN BEHAVIOR

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS ABOUT ETHICS:

1. WHAT THINGS ARE OKAY TO DO AND WHAT THINGS ARE NOT OKAY TO DO?
2. ARE RULES IMPORTANT?
3. ARE THERE RULES YOU LIKE OR DON'T LIKE?

BOOK COVERED IN THIS SECTION:

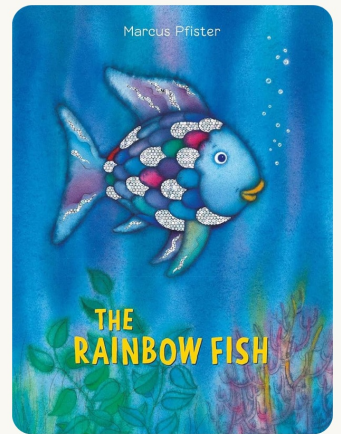
- 'RAINBOW FISH' BY MARCUS PFISTER



RAINBOW FISH

BY MARCUS PFISTER

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT A FISH WHO IS THE ONLY FISH THAT HAS BRIGHTLY COLORED SCALES. HE IS INITIALLY ASKED BY ANOTHER FISH TO SHARE ONE OF HIS SCALES BUT HE DOES NOT SHARE. HE BEGINS TO FEEL BAD BUT IN THE END FEELS BETTER AFTER SHARING HIS SCALES WITH ALL THE OTHER FISH



LESSON

OBJECTIVE: TO HAVE CHILDREN THINK ABOUT WHAT THINGS THEY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT DO SPECIFICALLY REGARDING SHARING. MOREOVER, THE CHILDREN SHOULD CONSIDER WHAT RULES GOVERN HOW WE ACT IN THE WORLD AND TOWARDS OTHERS. THEY SHOULD BE PUSHED TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY THINK IS OR IS NOT FAIR.

ACTIVITIES:

- GIVE THE CHILDREN DIFFERENT ITEMS THAT THEY FIND IMPORTANT, AND AS THE ACTIVITY PROGRESSES REDISTRIBUTE THEM AND HAVE THEM SHARE OR GIVE SOME AWAY

DISCUSSION

- SHOULD THE RAINBOW FISH HAVE TO SHARE HIS SCALES?
- IF YOU WERE THE RAINBOW FISH WOULD YOU SHARE YOUR SCALES? WHY OR WHY NOT?
- HOW DID GIVING AWAY YOUR IMPORTANT THINGS MAKE YOU FEEL? WHY?
- WOULD YOU FEEL THE SAME IF SOMEONE TOOK THEM WITHOUT ASKING? WHY OR WHY NOT?

TEACHER NOTES

- THIS BOOK CONTAINS ASPECTS THAT PROMOTE AESTHETIC BEAUTY WHICH CAN BE TROUBLESOME WHEN DISCUSSING ETHICS. IF THE IDEA OF AESTHETICS OR BEAUTY DOES ARISE, TRY TO REDIRECT THE CONVERSATION MORE TOWARD THE SHARING AND ETHICS
- ALTHOUGH UNLIKELY, CONSIDER THAT SOME CHILDREN MAY BECOME ATTACHED TO THEIR ITEMS AND NOT WANT TO SHARE BE PREPARED TO MEDIATE JUST IN CASE!





EPISTEMOLOGY

EPISTEMOLOGY IS THE BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY THAT QUESTIONS HOW WE KNOW WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS ABOUT EPISTEMOLOGY:

1. WHAT IS ONE THING YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE?
2. HOW DO YOU KNOW IT IS TRUE?
3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW SOMETHING?

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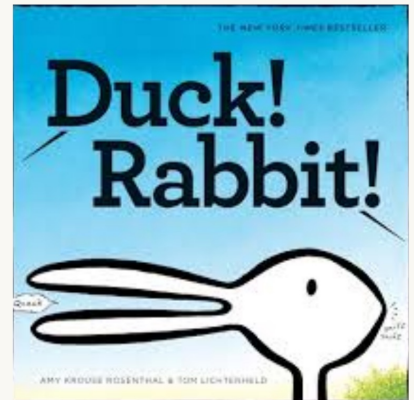
- 'DUCK! RABBIT!' BY AMY KROUSE ROSENTHAL AND TOM LICHTENHELD



DUCK! RABBIT!

BY AMY KROUSE ROSENTHAL
AND TOM LICHTENHELD

THIS BOOK EXAMINES THE POPULAR DUCK-RABBIT OPTICAL ILLUSION IN WHICH IT IS UNCLEAR WHICH ANIMAL IS BEING REPRESENTED. THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE DUCK-RABBIT ARE EXAMINED AS PROOF THAT ONE ANIMAL IS BEING SHOWN OVER THE OTHER. IN THE END, NO ANSWER IS REACHED AND A SECOND ILLUSION IS BRIEFLY EXAMINED



LESSON

OBJECTIVE: HAVE CHILDREN THINK ABOUT HOW THEY FORM KNOWLEDGE AND HOW PERCEPTION CAN INFLUENCE WHAT WE BELIEVE WE KNOW OR DON'T KNOW. IT WILL ALSO HAVE THEM CONSIDER HOW THEY USE SENSE DATA TO SOURCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE

ACTIVITIES:

- PRESENT THE CHILDREN WITH OTHER OPTICAL ILLUSIONS AND SEE WHETHER THEY CAN AGREE ON WHAT THE IMAGE IS SHOWING.

DISCUSSION

- WHAT DOES EACH ILLUSION SHOW? DO YOU KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE?
- IF YOU CAN ONLY SEE ONE VERSION OF THE IMAGE DOES THE OTHER NOT EXIST?
- HOW CAN YOU PROVE WHAT YOU KNOW IS TRUE?
- SHOULD WE RELY ON OUR EYES OR OUR MINDS TO FOR KNOWLEDGE?



TEACHER NOTES

- IF ALL OF THE CHILDREN AGREE ON ONE PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER OPTICAL ILLUSIONS OR ONLY SEE A DUCK OR ONLY A RABBIT, CONTEST THEIR PERCEPTION BY ADVOCATING FOR A DIFFERENT OR OPPOSING POSITION!
- MAKE SURE TO ASK THE CHILDREN TO JUSTIFY WHY THEY SEE ONE PERCEPTION OF THE OPTICAL ILLUSION OR ANOTHER. SEE HOW IT IS DONE IN THE BOOK FOR REFERENCE.





METAPHYSICS

METAPHYSICS IS THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF REALITY, THE WORLD, AND THE OBJECTS WITHIN IT. METAPHYSICS ADDITIONALLY AIMS TO UNDERSTAND EXISTENCE AND DEFINE THESE OBJECTS IN THE WORLD

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS ABOUT METAPHYSICS:

1. IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES DOES THE WORLD AND REAL LIFE KEEP GOING?
2. WHAT ABOUT IF YOU WERE DREAMING, WOULD REAL LIFE STILL BE HAPPENING ?
3. IF YO WERE DREAMING RIGHT NOW, WOULD YOU KNOW?

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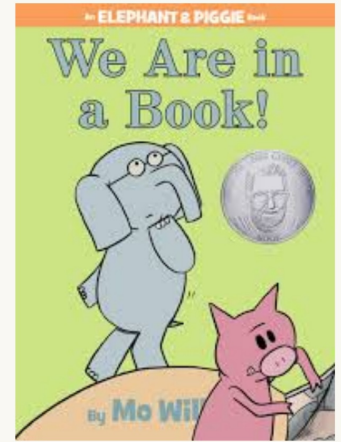


- 'WE ARE IN A BOOK' BY MO WILEMS

WE ARE IN A BOOK

BY MO WILLEMS

THIS BOOK FOLLOWS TWO CHARACTERS ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE WHO REALIZE THEY ARE IN A BOOK. AS THE BOOK PROGRESSES, ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE INTERACT WITH THE READER AND MAKE JOKES. AT THE END PIGGIE AND ELEPHANT ASK THE READER TO READ THEIR BOOK AGAIN IN THE FUTURE



LESSON

OBJECTIVE: TO HAVE THE CHILDREN CONSIDER THEIR REALITY THROUGH THE "DREAMING" THOUGHT EXPERIMENT. THE CHILDREN'S ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THEIR REALITY AND REALITY CAN BE DEFINED.

ACTIVITIES:

- HAVE EACH CHILD DRAW A DREAM THEY HAD THAT WAS HYPER-REALISTIC. IN THE DRAWING, THEY SHOULD INCLUDE ANYTHING IN THE DREAM THAT WAS THE SAME OR DIFFERENT FROM REAL LIFE

DISCUSSION

- HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN REAL LIFE AND NOT A BIG DREAM?
- HOW WOULD BEING IN A BOOK OR A DREAM BE THE SAME OR DIFFERENT FROM REAL LIFE?
- IF WE WERE IN A BOOK RIGHT NOW AND WE DIDN'T KNOW, COULD WE STILL SAY THAT WE ARE IN "REAL LIFE"?
- IF YOU WERE IN A BOOK OR A DREAM HOW WOULD YOU FIND OUT?

TEACHER NOTES

- DURING THIS EXERCISE, IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO CHECK IN WITH THE CHILDREN AND ASK THEM HOW THEY WOULD FEEL IF THEY WERE IN A DREAM OR A BOOK
- FOR THE DRAWING EXERCISE, GIVING A SET TIME WILL HELP THE CHILDREN STAY ON TRACK AND SPEND TOO MUCH TIME DRAWING. MAKE SURE THEY ARE CONSIDERING THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT OF THE ACTIVITY WHILE DRAWING AS WELL.
- IN THE CASE THAT A CHILD DOESN'T HAVE OR CANNOT REMEMBER A DREAM, HAVE THEM DRAW WHAT PARTS OF REALITY ARE THE SAME OR DIFFERENT FROM DREAMING OR BEING IN A BOOK

CLOSING



IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT EACH TEACHING EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE. EACH GROUP OF CHILDREN AND INDIVIDUAL CHILD IS DIFFERENT AND WILL THUS HAVE DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO THE PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES. TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO TAILOR THESE LESSONS TO THEM AND HOW THEY LEARN!

ADDITIONALLY, WHILE THIS LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE, THESE TOPICS AND SUBSEQUENT BOOKS WILL PROVIDE A RICH PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN TO BEGIN DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHICAL SENSITIVITY. MOREOVER, THROUGH THESE DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES, CHILDREN WILL HAVE AN OUTLET TO EXPRESS THEIR CURIOSITY ABOUT THE WORLD AND THEMSELVES.

THANK YOU!