Philosophy Explorers

People all around our village, our county, our country and our world have different views and ideas about the **big questions** of life. These activities are designed to help you explore some of the different ideas that people have about one of these big questions.

There are a combination of files to **read**, videos to **watch**, activities to **try** and (most importantly) questions to **think** and **talk** about.

It is great to think deeply about the world around us, to explore what we think and to be able to understand other people better. Lots of these questions don't have right and wrong answers – they are a chance to think and reflect!

Note for parents: This discussion topic will open children up to philosophical thinking. 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 more of the questions found here, although the youngest children are often the best philosophers of all. 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.

What is right, and how do I know?

You are in a room, no one can see you, there is a huge bowl of sweets in front you – your favourites. You know they aren't for you. You did not buy them or put them there. Could you just take one? Even if no one found out, would that be ok?

Almost all of us would agree that we should do 'the right thing', but what is 'right'? Who decides what right and wrong are? Is there the same 'right' for everyone, all of the time, or can 'right' change over time or in different circumstances?

Today's big question comes into the part of philosophy called **ethics**.

Some people believe that a God or gods teach them what is right and wrong, but they don't always follow these 'rules'. Some people don't believe in a god, but still do 'good' things. What drives you to be a 'good' person? Does there need to be a force, outside you that pushes you to be good? Maybe something that balances the universe – if you do bad things, bad things happen to you, for example, Karma?

This topic has suggestions for activities, things to read, questions to think about and videos to watch to help you to think about what 'right' really means. Take time to think about the questions—and you'll probably end up with more questions of your own at the end! Have fun exploring!

Exploring the question, **‘What is right, and how do I know?’**

These two BBC animations are a great introduction to the big idea:

* **What’s the big idea—Decisions**
* **Why should I be good?**

Key questions to think about today:

Who decides what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’? Can ‘right’ be different for different people, or different situations, or is it *absolute* (doesn’t change)?

Is it OK to do naughty things if you don’t get caught?

Should we always do the ‘right’ thing? What about if that ‘right thing’ doesn’t make you happy, or even hurts you in some way?

Watch this story book about conscience. Many Muslims believe that we all have two angels who record our bad and good deeds. Read more about it here.

If all of your deeds were recorded, would it make a difference to how you live? *Should* we be different when we are watched?

Does it sometimes feel as though you have a ‘good’ voice in your head and a ‘naughty’ one that tries to lead you astray? Perhaps you could draw what you imagine this to be like.

Join the Supermovers for a right and wrong **song and dance** routine!

Activity to do—The ‘Naughtyometer’

Write these things on 10 separate slips of paper:

Not doing any work in school for a day
Seeing someone hitting someone, and doing nothing
Hitting someone
Hitting someone back
Stealing food from the school canteen
Stealing someone’s lunch
Forgetting to throw away a banana skin and someone getting hurt slipping on it
Planning to make someone slip on a banana skin, but it not working
Calling another pupil a bad name
Calling a teacher a bad name

Now try to put them **in order** from the most to the least naughty—can you explain your choices to someone else? Add three more of your own ideas to the list at the beginning, middle and end.

You could find out about Robin Hood. He did ‘wrong’ things for the ‘right’ reasons— can breaking the law ever be OK?

You could also explore the idea of karma. Buddhists believe in karma, the law of cause and effect. It is like a boomerang. Every action and every thought we have, good or bad, will come back to us in the future. We have a choice to create new karma by what we say, do, and think. Intention is a major part of karma. If we accidentally step on an ant, we do not make negative karma. However, if we intend to kill the ant, negative karma is created. How can an understanding of Karma lead people to be good? This article explains more about the concept of karma (aimed at older children).