

# 20

## Philosophizing together

### Goal

*"Philosophizing with children" is popular in many West-European schools as a valuable approach for the development of language and thought. It invites children to follow questions that interest them, and for which there are mostly no definite answers. In terms of language, the children practice their competence for oral expression and absorbing and reflecting of information.*

1<sup>st</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

15–30 minutes



Bibliographic reference:  
see various links in the internet  
under the heading "Philosophizing  
with children".

### Hints:

- The themes can be suggested by the instructor, but should originate from the students, if at all possible. It is useful to previously compile a selection of ideas (Prompt: "Consider and write down topics and questions that you would like to discuss and learn more about. They can also be very difficult questions!"). From this pool of questions, some will be selected with the class for discussion over the next few months.
- Appropriate topics for philosophizing are also found in areas where adults do not have a quick answer. Example: "Where do I come from?", "What makes a good friend?", "Who invented language?", "What happens after death?", "Why does racism exist?", "What does foreigner really mean?"
- The introduction to the discussion can also be prompted by a picture, a story, a book, or an artifact.

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### Procedure:

- The preferred seating arrangement is a circle.
- The philosophizing discussion can be conducted with the entire class or just one or two group levels, as long as the other students are engaged in working productively and independently for themselves.
- The instructor can moderate the discussion, or the function can be assumed by practiced capable students (similarly to other assumed roles, see #14). The important thing is that the instructor purposely refrains from interfering as much as possible so as not to constrain the students.
- It can be useful to remind the students prior to the conversation once more about the discussion rules (see #9) and particularly emphasize the rule not to laugh at anyone, to seriously consider everyone's contribution, as well as the rule that there are neither right nor wrong answers in philosophizing. This has to be made clear to all participants once more before the discussion.
- Central to philosophizing is the free expression, not the correct use of language, and corrections and interventions should be avoided as much as possible.