

Week 2 Class Outline (Social Philosophy: Friendship/Love)

Breathing: To begin class, sit in a circle with the children and have everyone introduce themselves. Then, move into a breathing exercise.

- One breathing exercise can be an owl breath. Have the kids inhale and bring their arms to their side like wings, when they exhale they can release their wings.
- (Optionally: give the children a choice between an animal breath and or a regular one)

Rules: Next, go over the class rules. They are:

- Only one person can speak at a time
- Listen when others are speaking
- Think before you speak
- Give reasons for your answers

Briefly go over this, especially if a lot of the kids attended the previous meeting. Ask them to remind you of why these rules are important.

What is friendship?: Set the tone for class by asking the children, what is friendship? Write this question on the board and let them share some ideas of what they think it is. Write down their different ideas around the word. Answers can range from someone you are nice to, to activities they enjoy to do with their friends.

Draw Friendship: After this, have the kids draw what they think friendship is without words. Then, have everyone share what they drew and why they decided to draw it.

Maisie the Lamb Activity: Next, to illuminate what friendship is, discuss Maisie the Lamb. At farmer Taylor's barn, all of the sheep are the same besides Maisie. One day, Maisie was eating grass by herself. All of the other sheep were rushing to farmer Taylor as he was handing out turnips. "I'm going to eat much more than all of them," Maisie thought. Later, when Maisie was playing with the other sheep using a bat and a ball, Maisie was the only one who could hit the ball. "I like to be the only one to be able to do something," Maisie thought to herself. Later, Maisie danced all around by herself in the field. "Sheep don't dance," the others told her, but she was having fun and didn't want to stop.

Ask the kids if it's always, sometimes, or never good to be different?

If they think it's always good to be different because it's nice to be yourself and different from everyone else, ask them if you're still different, even if it's only sometimes.

If the kids think it's never good to be different, point out how Maisie was the only one who could hit the ball in the story. Is it good then? Would things be boring if we were all the same?

If the kids think it's sometimes good to be different ask them why it might be bad or good. An example of when it's good can be when you are doing something special, like Maisie hitting the

ball. An example of when it's bad can be when you are misbehaving or hurting others. One boy told me that you don't always need to be different. Sometimes the popular thing is the right thing!

After, continue the story saying the next day Maisie was eating grass alone because she was yelling at the others that they couldn't eat it. Then say, when they were playing, Maisie purposely tried to hit the other sheep with the ball. When the sheep tell Maisie that sheep don't dance, she was really trying to kick them.

After this part of the story, ask if it's still good for Maisie to be different? After this part, most of the kids say that it is bad to be different if it hurts other people.

bell hooks: Next, for a discussion about a philosopher who talks about friendship, talk about bell hooks. You can begin by saying bell hooks was a woman who wrote about many different topics, but an important one to her was love and friendship. An interesting note to bring up is also that bell hooks never capitalized her name. She wanted the attention on her message, not on her. Ask the kids what they think about this. Many replied to me that it was interesting, but in the long run, the capitalization didn't really mean anything. They thought this change was somewhat surface level and respected that's how she wanted her name, but didn't see the point of it. A really interesting conversation!

bell hooks said that love is important to friendship. Ask the children why they think this is? Also discuss that she said you have to take care of yourself to be a good friend. Allow them to share what they think of this as well. One 8-year-old girl told me that sometimes when she doesn't sleep well she's cranky and that means she's not a good friend at the moment. A perfect example! Then, say that bell hooks thinks you must be able to forgive to have friendship. Allow the children to give examples and personal stories for this. Say that bell hooks saw forgiveness as powerful. You choose to do it and it allows you to continue to love. bell hooks also said that love in our society is on the decline. Ask the kids what they think may have replaced love? bell hooks said it was a chase for monetary items rather than relationships. Many kids replied things like tv, games, or even books that take us from reality.

Poetry: To move onto the next activity, ask the kids if they know what poetry is. Brainstorm together about what distinguishes it from other writing. Mention certain elements like its style, rhythm, and use of lines. If they need help, show them the example of the poem, "My Heart Leaps Up" by Wordsworth. Ask them what sticks out about this poem to them?

After this, have two volunteers read, "House Crickets" together. It is a poem meant for two people to read together because certain lines match up to be read simultaneously. The "cricket" noise is especially fun for the kids to read. After, ask the kids how this poem relates to what we

have been discussing and what they think of it. The kids had many great answers about collaboration, and thought it was fun to read this complex work together.

Then, in their philosophy journals, have the kids partner off and write their own poem about friendship that can be read together. Share out loud and then discuss how it was to write a poem together. Two kids wrote a funny one about a boy and his best friend, a rubber ducky. Or, if the kids don't want to write a poem, have them draw what they think friendship is.

Conclusion: Finally, give the children their evaluation sheet. Have them respond with a smile, frown, or medium face for each question and prompt them to write a response for the last question.