



Philosophical Enquiry for KS2

The Get-Away-With-it Ring

What would you do if none knew it was you?

<p>Philosophical Content</p>	<p>Possible Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETHICS: Right and Wrong, Good and Bad, Character and Conduct (<i>e.g. being a good person and/or performing a good action</i>), Actions and Omissions (<i>or non-actions</i>), Intrinsic Goods and Instrumental Goods (<i>e.g. good 'for their own sake' vs goods that produce some other good</i>) Rules, Expectations, Norms, Responsibility, Punishment, Reward, Praise, Blame, Consequences, Fairness, Freedom, Power, Guilt, Conscience, Integrity (<i>e.g. being 'true to yourself'</i>) <p>Example Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What <i>would</i> you do if you found the ring? Why? • What <i>should</i> you do? Why? • Is there a difference between your two answers? Why/ Why not? • If can get away with it, should you do whatever you like? • Are we only good because we're scared of being punished? • Are we only good because we want to be praised? • How would you feel if you acted badly without punishment? • How would you feel if you acted well without praise? • Are such feelings significant? Why/why not? • Why be good? • Why be good without punishment or praise? • What is a good person? • Is a good person someone who is never punished or always praised? • Is a good person someone who follows the rules? • Is a good person someone who does good acts? • Is a good person someone who has good thoughts? • What are good rules? What is a good act? What are good thoughts? • Are there different kinds of goods, e.g. those that lead to good outcomes, those good in themselves, and both? • Can you be a good person even if you do bad things? • Can you be bad person, even if you do good things?
<p>Philosophical Method</p>	<p>Participant Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PICTURE the scenario, imaging yourself in it, JUSTIFY your imagined actions, WEIGH UP their acceptability, look BACK on key disagreements, look AHEAD to further questions raised <p>Facilitator Strategies</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefact-led learning, Question Composition and Categorisation**
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ring (An old ring – a toy or a piece of costume jewellery will do) • Circle of chairs • Passing Pom-pom, flash cards, flip chart / white board, pens

PREPARATION

10 min

Introductions

Introductions, if necessary.

Ethos

Review your ground rules.

Flag something the group specifically needs to work on, for example exploring areas of disagreement.

Warm Up

In pairs ask: **What would you do, if you were invisible for the day?**

Feedback: You'll get a range of different responses to this question including some morally questionable ones like stealing and spying. Resist the temptation to comment on these. These examples will be useful for creating debate later.

STIMULUS

10 min

Presenting the Stimulus

Present the Ring

This is the 'Get-Away-With-It' Ring and this is how it works: When someone wears this ring – we imagine – they are completely invisible. They can go where they please, take what they want, listen to whom they like, observe whatever interests them ... and no one will know. Even if they do things that some would disapprove of, that are against the rules, unpopular, unfair or even harmful, they will get away with it.

Imagine you found the ring and you slipped it on to your finger to wear it, only for the day! What would you do next?

Thinking Time

A minute in silence. Focus question:

What should you do if you were invisible for one day? Why?

Sharing Time

Invite the children to tell a partner, then share with the group (facilitator scribe).

Highlight to the children that the question has changed from 'would' to 'should'. You might do this by asking: *"Does anyone notice anything important about this new question?"*

QUESTION(S)

10 min

Composing Questions

Ask the children: What philosophical questions do you have about our discussion so far?

Sharing Questions	They can compose questions in small groups of 3 or 4. Each group shares their question. Facilitator scribes.
Sharpening Questions	Identify themes, duplication and ambiguity. Redraft if necessary. If you need to apply some criteria for choosing, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual – about rich ideas, what they mean and how they are related • Contestable – concerned with matters that are not settled (about which there is reasonable disagreement) • Connected – related (or relevant to) our own lives and learning • Considerable – about interesting and important issues that are worthy of our time and effort
Selecting Questions	Blind vote: all children close their eyes; the facilitator reads out the group questions and the children put their hands up to pick one.

DIALOGUE	25 min
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First Words	Return to paired discussion first.
Collecting Ideas	Facilitate discussion, initially gathering a range of responses.
Getting Focused	Begin to identify and explore some key emergent idea(s) in depth. For example, for example, the relationship between doing good and avoiding punishment, or the significance of doing bad and feeling guilty,
Digging Deeper	Instigate a paired break-out discussion on one particularly challenging aspect of the emerging ideas. Questions that may help include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why be good? • Can you be good without punishment? • Can you be a good person even if you do bad things?
Final Words	Return to the original question or to an appropriate reformulation of the original question. Encourage the class to write their own final thoughts and then select some students who haven't yet spoken to share their work.

5. REFLECTION	5 min
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Reflection on Content	Look AHEAD: What questions might we have asked next?
Reflection on Method	Look BACK: What were the main areas of disagreement?

Further Research

The original story that inspired this session can be found in Book Two of Plato's Republic. In the story, a shepherd called Gyges enters a chasm opened by an earthquake. In it he finds, among other treasures, a corpse wearing nothing but a ring. Gyges takes the ring and soon discovers its magical properties; when he turns the setting inwards, he becomes invisible and when he turns it back outwards, he becomes visible once again.

In the story he uses this power to seduce the queen, kill the king and usurp him!

Your students will find plenty of child-appropriate versions of this story "The Ring of Gyges" in books and online. As an extension, they might independently research, summarise and illustrate the story.

Further Discussion

To further the discussion, you might then ask:

- What is the difference between the things you said you would do with invisibility, and those things Gyges did?
- Do you think Gyges would have done those things if he hadn't found the ring? Why / Why not?
- Did the ring make Gyges bad?
- Was he *always* bad?
- Do bad actions make bad people?
- Can people really be understood as 'bad' or 'good'?
- Would the ring make *you* do bad things?
- Would the ring make *you* a bad person?

* This is the metacognitive language of *Thinking Moves A-Z* by **Dialogue Works**. For more info see <https://dialogueworks.co.uk/thinking-moves/> or ask us about our accredited Thinking Moves Training.

** A list of this language for facilitation accompanies these resources.

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