



Philosophers in the Schools

So far this fall our [Philosophers in the Schools](#) program involves over 35 philosophy classes in Seattle public school classrooms in seven elementary schools, as well as several philosophy classes in the [UW's Robinson Center Saturday Program](#), led by faculty, graduate students, and volunteers involved in this effort, and also involving a number of undergraduate students enrolled in our fall UW classes. We are also grateful for the continued support for this program from the [UW's Pipeline Project](#).

We are in the sixth year of the philosopher-in-residence program at [John Muir Elementary School](#), and very fortunate to have Karen Emmerman (Ph.D. philosophy, 2012) continuing to serve in this role. We greatly appreciate the support of the [Squire Family Foundation](#), which has funded this position for six years. Philosophy is now one of the programs highlighted by the school and most teachers have some philosophy in their classrooms. We see many students finishing fifth grade who have had philosophy every year since kindergarten.

Placing philosophers-in-residence in schools fosters strong and sustainable philosophy programs by providing ongoing models for teachers of philosophical engagement, regular support and training, and outreach to the school's parents and community. Rather than occasional philosophy sessions in classrooms, these projects cultivate a philosophical spirit throughout schools and empower teachers to think about ways to teach all of the subjects more philosophically.

We are thrilled that this year we will have a second philosopher-in-residence program at [Thurgood Marshall Elementary School](#), thanks to the support of a donor who has made a three-year commitment to this new program. Thurgood Marshall, like John Muir, is a racially and ethnically diverse Title I school in south Seattle, and the two schools feed into the same middle school. We have been leading philosophy sessions at the school with fourth and fifth grade students for the past three years, and we are very excited to build on this effort. The Center has now entered into formal memoranda of understanding with both John Muir and Thurgood Marshall to formalize and further develop the philosophy programs at these schools.

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For Parents

We will hold our first family event of the school year on **Sunday, December 2, from 2-4 pm**, at Whittier Elementary School in Ballard.

Join us for a presentation about ways to encourage children's philosophical questioning and critical thinking!

Why be good? What is important? Are imaginary friends real?

This interactive discussion will consider how adults can help children examine the big questions on their minds, and why this matters.

We will explore ways to inspire philosophical conversations with children.

All are welcome, especially children attending with parents. Complimentary appetizers will be served. Please RSVP to kgoldyn@uw.edu to secure your space.

Thank you to Whittier Elementary School's PTA for sponsoring this event!



Monthly Professional Learning Community

For the second year this year the Center is hosting a monthly workshop on philosophical inquiry in classrooms at the University of Washington. The workshop is approved for up to 13.5 clock hours and includes teachers and others interested in exploring how introducing philosophy can enrich student learning. We held our first session in October, with about 25 participants exploring issues such as whether our identity depends on comparisons with others and the nature of the self.



Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the workshop is free, including materials and refreshments.

From the Director



The ongoing growth and vitality of the Center, and the enthusiasm of everyone who works with us, is a constant source of inspiration for me. Although it is still the case that when I tell people that I do philosophy with children, I am most often met with quizzical looks and a degree of bafflement, it is also true that more and more people are energized by the idea of taking children's deeper questions and ideas seriously and engaging with them in authentic conversations. When in September we held our opening meeting of philosophy instructors for the school year, I looked

around the table at the fifteen people assembled and thought about the days, not that long ago, when we would have been closer to three.

From a few classes in a couple of schools more than twenty years ago, we have grown into a robust organization with multiple programs, including our Philosophers in the Schools program, involving more than 35 classrooms and seven schools this fall; continuing education and workshops for teachers; parent education and family programs; the Washington State High School Ethics Bowl, which we founded and have hosted for the past six years; university courses for graduate and undergraduate students; Graduate Fellowships in Philosophy for Children; hosting and serving as a resource for international scholars; and now our new Certificate of Mastery in philosophy for children.

I am so grateful for the support and commitment of all my colleagues at the Center, the University of Washington's Department of Philosophy and College of Arts and Sciences, and our donors and board members. I feel very fortunate to be engaged in work I love and to have the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people, and I am especially indebted to all the teachers and students who share their time and ideas with us.

Certificate of Mastery

The Center is excited to announce that we have instituted a new [Certificate of Mastery](#), intended primarily for University of Washington graduate students interested in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully lead philosophy sessions in K-12 classrooms, but also open to teachers and interested others. Completion of the certificate involves coursework, 40 hours of experience facilitating philosophy sessions in classrooms, and a Capstone Experience.



High School Ethics Bowl

The 2018 Washington State High School Ethics Bowl will be held on February 2, 2019, at the University of Washington School of Law. The Ethics Bowl is a collaborative yet competitive event in which teams analyze a series of wide-ranging ethical dilemmas. Over 100 high school students and teachers and 40 judges, lawyers, UW faculty and other educators participated last year, and we expect as many or more participants for the 2019 event.



Unlike debate, Ethics Bowls do not involve teams forced to take adversarial positions or hold fast to assigned perspectives. Instead, students have a forum in which to engage in dialogue, and they are judged on the quality of their analysis – how well they reason through the issues, organize and present arguments, analyze a case's morally relevant features, and respond to commentary and questions – and the degree to which they engage in a thoughtful, civil exchange.

We invite all Washington State high schools to participate.

High school teams typically include three to five students (and can also include a couple of alternates) and a coach (ideally, a high school teacher). We will assign a graduate or undergraduate philosophy student as a resource for each interested school. **Each school may enter up to two teams in the competition.** [Schools can register here](#). The deadline for registration is **December 15, 2018**.

From The Blog

In the book I'm currently writing, I have been working on a chapter about children's particular strengths. Our society generally has such a deficit view of childhood, but children also exhibit abilities that adults often strive to recapture. To point out a few examples, children tend to have a strong sense of wonder, vibrant imaginative capacities, a heightened awareness of the world around us, and an ease with vulnerability. As adults, we work to cultivate these childlike qualities, to keep alive our wondering, questioning selves, nurture our imaginative capacities, pay more focused attention in our daily lives, and to be more open to genuine encounters with others. Yet we don't seem to recognize that children are sources of wisdom for revitalizing these aspects of ourselves.



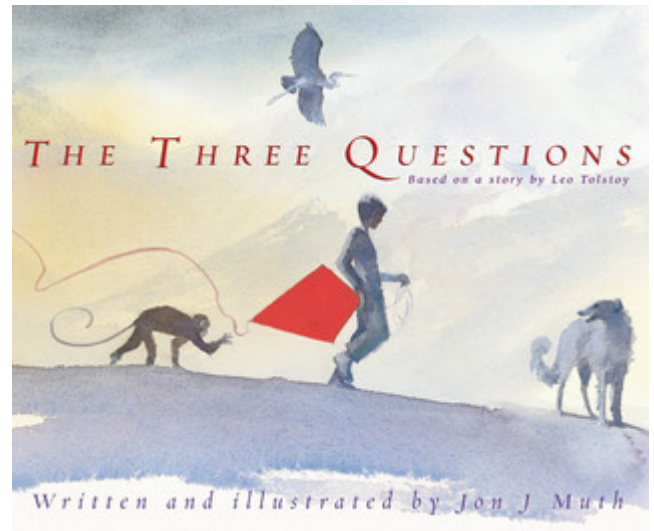
Read more : <http://philosophyforchildren.blogspot.com/2018/10/children-and-wonder.html>

Focus on the Classroom

Back to School, Meeting New Students, and Asking Questions in Philosophy Class

by Janice Moskalik

Jon J. Muth's *The Three Questions*, based on a story by Leo Tolstoy, features a young boy pondering what he takes to be some of life's biggest questions. As the boy discusses his questions with others, he gets thoughtful but different answers from different friends, seemingly because the perspective from which each considers the question is a different one. I like to read this book with students to explore the power of philosophical questions to prompt and guide our thinking, and because the story also models how our perspective may influence our approach to philosophical questions, highlighting the value of collaborative thinking for complex questions. I sometimes bring this book with me to sessions early in the school year, and recently I brought it to some of my first sessions with new students.



In keeping with the theme of the book, at this first session my students and I asked (and answered) three questions each as a way to for us to get to know each other – which also served to help us begin thinking about the different kinds of questions we might ask. Small groups of students each contributed a question to a list of questions, knowing they were to be asked as a way to get to know the one answering. Then each of us introduced ourselves to the group by answering two questions from the list, plus the required question, “What is your name?”; students also agreed that everyone would have the option to share one more tidbit of information about themselves. Through this exercise of answering the students' creative questions, we got to know a bit about one another, including details like our favorite foods, colors, and what we'd call our boat if we had one. We generally agreed that in answering these sorts of questions each of us could be confident we knew the answer. For example, only the person answering knows for sure what her favorite color is, or if, say, she has two favorite colors rather than only one.

Following our introductions to one another by answering three questions, I invited students to share one big question that they think is interesting and important, but hard to answer because it's not the kind of question they can simply rely on friends, parents or teachers to help them find the “right” answer – and that, despite this difficulty in finding the answer, they keep thinking about it anyway. Students had no problem thinking of one or more questions of this sort; many expressed how some of these questions have been on their minds for years, and some were excited to note that their classmates – and sometimes their teacher – shared some of their questions. Many expressed that they were looking forward to having philosophy because they wanted to talk about these questions at school!

In each of my sessions with new students last week, we had so much fun talking about the different kinds of questions we could ask, and the kinds of questions we were hoping to discuss in philosophy class, that we ran out of time before reading *The Three Questions*. But I am very much looking forward to our next meetings, to reading *The Three Questions* with them, and to see where their questions will take us.

Graduate Fellows

This year the Center has four graduate fellows, one from the Department of Philosophy and three from the College of Education. We are very grateful to alum and Center board member Dan Gerler (BA, Philosophy and Psychology, 1983) for his generous support of our fellowship program!



Natalie Janson is a graduate student in the Social & Cultural Foundations of Education program in the College of Education. She is a certified K-8 teacher, with experience in third grade where she facilitated philosophical discussions with her students. She loves seeing students think critically and creatively about real world issues, and hopes that doing so will allow them to live their best lives.



Nic Jones is a first year Philosophy Ph.D. student. They are currently working as a TA in an introductory philosophy of science course, and before attending UW, they spent four years teaching as an SI leader at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in a variety of subjects including psychology, sociology, economics, and statistics. Nic's greatest joy when teaching is seeing students break out of rote memorization and start to think critically about whatever topic is at hand.



Jordan Sherry-Wagner is a Ph.D. student in the College of Education and co-supervising director of a local early learning center. Broadly, his research aims at generating axiological change how we think about childhood development and education toward increased recognition and resources for the field. To him, there are few things as important and fulfilling as working with young learners to develop critical thinking skills, humanistic values, and philosophical dispositions. He is currently working on several intertwined projects that collectively work toward decolonizing human-nature relations in public science education, creating a modern instantiation of progressive early education through his early learning center, and studying the impact of increasingly complex technologies on culture, learning, and development.



Christina Zaccagnino is a Master's student in Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, where she specializes in science education. Before attending UW, she spent three years teaching middle school science and building a STEM program at a private school in Brooklyn, NY. She was the director of a STEM summer camp for grades K-6. Her undergraduate degree is in Teaching Chemistry. Christina appreciates when the "why" questions show up in the science classroom and enjoys openly exploring them with students. She looks forward to her involvement with the Philosophy for Children program.

Supporting the Center

Philosophy in schools makes space for children and youth to explore together some of the foundational questions in life that matter most to them. Students often observe that this is one of the few places in school that they feel empowered to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, building their confidence in their own perspectives and ideas.

We need your help!

The Center's work is almost completely self-funded. Our programs rely 100% on donations and grants.

Please consider supporting the Center's work with a gift this year! We will make sure your investment is put to good use.

Donations pay for instructors leading regular classroom philosophy sessions; support and continuing education for teachers; books for philosophy classes; supplies, transportation costs, and fees for the High School Ethics Bowl; and much more.

Due to the generosity of three of our supporters, all gifts and pledges to the Center for Philosophy for Children will be matched 100%, up to a maximum of \$100,000!

Reaching this goal would provide the Center with \$200,000, allowing us to expand significantly the number of students with access to our programs.

You can make a donation outright and/or a pledge that can be paid over a period of up to five years.

You can make your donation and/or pledge [here](#).

You can also send a check to:
Center for Philosophy for Children
University of Washington Box 353350
Seattle, WA 98195-3350

Your gifts make all the difference - thank you!



Board of Directors

Thank you to our board of directors for their steadfast support and enthusiasm!

Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at University of Washington
Karen Emmerman, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy & Comparative History of Ideas Program at University of Washington and Philosopher-in-Residence, John Muir Elementary School, Seattle
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