

Introductory note for parents and carers

Welcome to Primary Ethics Bites! This **Bite** takes around 15 minutes to complete, but you may find the ideas within are revisited in conversations for weeks to come.

This **Bite** is available in both audio and printed (PDF) format. The same content is covered in each, so choose the option that best suits your student's learning environment. There's no need to download the PDF to use as a worksheet if you chose to listen to the audio.

Bites for years 3 – 6 are designed for students to tackle individually or with their siblings or peers. An adult may like to participate by helping to read the stories and questions, by modelling genuine curiosity and by supporting the student to think for themselves.

Aim to be neutral when listening to the ideas expressed by your student and ask them to give the reasons behind their opinion rather than try to do the thinking and reasoning for them. Encourage the student to talk through their ideas by using expressions like "Ok", "Hmmm, I wonder..." and "That's an interesting thought!".

There is often not a single right answer when it comes to exploring an ethical dilemma. In that way, ethics is different to other lessons like maths. Instead, what ethical inquiry helps us do is to look at a situation or idea from different points of view, and to think about the reasons *behind* those points of view. When we do this, we think more deeply about our own views, discover new ideas, and build a deeper understanding of the considerations in each dilemma. We develop our skills in critical thinking and ethical reasoning and our ability to make well- thought-out decisions in a range of circumstances.

Can a belief be dangerous?

Objectives/ethical concepts explored

- A considered view of the conditions under which we ought to tolerate beliefs or opinions with which we disagree
- A view on the conditions under which it is reasonable and/or obligatory to respect the beliefs/opinions of others
- A considered view of the limits (if any) that should be imposed on freedom of speech.

Skills developed

- giving reasons
- considering consequences
- reflecting on own beliefs

Essential questions

- Is everyone entitled to their own opinion?
- Should we tolerate beliefs with which we disagree - what might it depend on?
- Should we respect opinions with which we disagree - what might it depend on?
- When is it reasonable to try to change the opinions of others?
- Should we have the right to stop people expressing their opinions publicly, if those opinions could lead to harm?

In this **Bite**, students are encouraged to think for themselves about whether (and in what sense) people are entitled to hold a point of view that lacks evidence or runs counter to (scientific) fact or is dangerous. A key message here is that we can disagree respectfully with someone while still trying to change their mind.

Bites are based on Primary Ethics lessons developed for use by trained adult volunteer facilitators in NSW public schools. Our lessons are based on philosophical ethics and use a 'community of inquiry' approach – the *asking power* of the group – to work together in discussion. The community of inquiry approach provides students with the opportunity to reflect on and form their own responses and consider the ideas of others in a safe and supportive environment.

You can read more about the community of inquiry approach here: <https://primaryethics.com.au/about-ethics-classes/what-happens-in-an-ethics-class/> And watch this video for a great explanation of philosophical ethics: <https://vimeo.com/199903>