



EduTrend Contents

P4C · KINDNESS AND CARE · MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Child in the Pond

Do we have the same duty to help people far away as people nearby?

Ages 11–13

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

The Child in the Pond

Students hear an adapted thought experiment from the philosopher Peter Singer: on the way to school you see a small child struggling in a shallow pond. You could wade in, but your new shoes would be ruined. Almost everyone says you should help. Then students ask: if a small donation could help a child far away, is that the same? The class enquires into distance, cost and duty.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse a famous thought experiment;
- identify morally relevant differences;
- reason about duties to strangers;
- consider objections.

KEY WORDS

duty · stranger · distance · cost ·
charity · thought experiment

CURRICULUM LINKS

Geography: global inequality.
Citizenship: charity and aid. RE:
helping others.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to
think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose
a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree,
add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Thought experiment card
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Avoid pressure to donate. The aim is reasoning,
not fundraising.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Present the pond thought experiment.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Do we have the same duty to help people far away as people nearby?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Decide whether the pond and the far-away case are the same and defend your answer.

ACTIVITY 03 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Peter Singer's 1972 essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" used a drowning child example to argue we should help distant strangers.

Critics argue that distance, relationships and responsibility can make a moral difference.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Distance never matters." Some argue it does.
- "Helping is optional kindness." Some argue it is a duty.
- "Small help makes no difference." It can.

Adapting the activity

Support

Offer a list of differences to consider.

Stretch

Construct the strongest objection to Singer's argument.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Same or different?

Compare.

Same or different?

Feature	The pond	Far away
Distance		
Cost to me		
Certainty of helping		
Others who could help		

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

**How much should we give up to help others? Before the enquiry I thought...
Now I think... because...**

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards • E = expected • G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

The Child in the Pond is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Kindness and Care programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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