Interested in being involved with CSUB P4C?

If you are a college student interested in training to facilitate discussions, from a local elementary school interested in bringing P4C into your classrooms, or have any other interests in the program, please contact:

Dr. Senem Saner, Lecturer in the Philosophy Department, CSUB
ssaner@csub.edu
www.facebook.com/CSUBP4C

Want to do P4C at home?

Free resources:
www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org
dep.ts.washington.edu/nwcenter
www.philosophy-foundation.org

Text resources:
The If Machine by Peter Worley
Big Ideas for Little Kids by Thomas Wartenberg

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California State University, Bakersfield
Arts & Humanities
9001 Stockdale Hwy
Bakersfield, CA 93311
“The Ring of Gyges”
This sample P4C lesson uses the story “The Ring of Gyges,” which is adapted from Plato’s *Republic* Book II. More detailed lessons on the same can be found in Peter Worley’s *The If Machine* and Jana Mohr Lone’s *The Philosophical Child*.

Imagine you find a ring, and when you place the ring on your finger, you discover it gives you the power of invisibility. What would you do if you had the ring? Would it be different if you knew nobody would find out? Do you think that would be the right thing to do?

This discussion gets children to think about why we do ‘good’ things and understand the logical direction between punishment and “bad” actions.

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**There are no barriers in our minds – we can think of anything.**

-THIRD GRADE STUDENT, John Muir Elementary School

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During sessions, children engage in philosophical dialogue by responding to an initial question and then responding to one another and asking their own questions. The facilitator might prompt the discussion by describing scenarios or thought experiments or posing questions that frequently arise but are often overlooked in children’s literature. Sessions can often be held as games.

Children use their imagination to assume a given scenario (e.g. finding a ring of invisibility – discussed on the left) or grant legitimacy to seemingly silly questions (e.g. can plants be happy? [Gareth Matthews, 1984]) and then discuss the implications (e.g. if plants can be happy- how? What would that look like?).

Children are great at using their imaginations and that allows for an easy and fun introduction to philosophical thinking. We can then build on their abilities to imagine in order to begin establishing logical connections.

The children are in control of the conversation and they get to decide what is important. They gain confidence in their own thoughts; the facilitator does not tell them what to think, but only asks questions to keep the conversation on task. They will often disagree about the answer to a question or what follows from an imagined scenario. They enter into constructive disagreement, and learn how to listen to each other and consider alternatives. They have to think of reasons why an idea might be right or wrong.

P4C discussions strengthen their creative and critical thinking and inquiry skills.