



Ball State Philosophy Outreach Project Lesson Plan

Topic: Virtue Ethics

Time: 45-60 min

Materials:

- [Virtue Ethics PowerPoint](#)
- Projector

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will interpret and analyze virtue ethics.
2. Students will explore virtue ethics as it pertains to their own lives.
3. Students will formulate and share their perspectives and opinions on virtue ethics.

Recommendations: this lesson plan best acts as a follow up to our "how to be ethical" lesson plan. Throughout this lesson plan teachers should act as facilitators and follow student paths of conversation.

Introduction 5-10 minutes

- **Slide 1:** Today we will be discussing Virtue Ethics. Has anyone ever heard of virtue ethics?
 - If so: where did you hear about it? What can you tell us about it?
 - If not: What is a virtue? What are ethics? What do we think it means?
- **Slide 2:** Let's see what TiKToC has to say...

Content 20-25 minutes

- **Slide 3:** Teacher will define virtues for the class and facilitate a discussion on Aristotle's concept of virtues.
 - According to Aristotle, a virtue is a character trait that lies at the mean between two extremes. How is that similar to or different from the definitions we offered a moment ago?
 - Courage is one example. Can you come up with others? What is the excess or deficiency of this virtue?
 - How do you see the excess and deficiency manifest in yourself or the people around you?

- **Slide 4:** Aristotle's approach is different from consequentialism (the right thing depends on the outcome) and deontology (the right thing depends on the motive). Instead, he is focused on what makes a good person a good person. Aristotle says that a morally good person has a stable state of character, meaning they will choose to avoid excess and deficiency most of the time. This means almost always doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, to the right degree, to the right people makes an individual moral.
 - This is context sensitive, like consequentialism, but the virtue stays the same.
 - For example: a student being courageous might be more impressive than a firefighter being courageous, but both are still demonstrating courage.
- **Slide 5:** Teacher will define habituation for the class and facilitate a discussion on becoming and being virtuous.
 - Is there a difference between being courageous and doing courageous things?
 - If yes, what is it? How do you know this?
 - Think of virtues as life skills and as habitual. If you are in the habit of doing something, then it becomes second nature, almost a part of your being.
 - In order for something to be habitual, the individual must first find the action exemplar (the person who is doing it well), imitate the action repetitively and thoughtfully engage while participating in the habit,
 - Can you think of a time that you habituated yourself into a practice or a virtue? How did it go?
 - In order to be virtuous, an individual must practice virtues.
 - Can you think of a virtue that you would like to have?
 - Who would your exemplar be?
 - Why?
 - What would you have to do to develop this virtue?

Final Discussion: 20-25 minutes

- **Slide 6:** teacher will facilitate a discussion with the following questions.
 - Do you think it's possible to alter your character through habituation? Are virtues part of a person's identity?
 - Why do you believe this?
 - If so, then how?

- What about when virtues contradict each other? Are some virtues more important than others?
- Are virtues integrated with each other? Can you separate them from each other?
- Does this theory align with how you make moral decisions in your own life?
 - Do you believe this theory could be beneficial to implement as you make moral decisions?
 - Why or why not?
 - Would you ever implement this into your own life?
 - Why or why not?