

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA**

**HUSITSKÁ TEOLOGICKÁ FAKULTA**

**Usage of Biblical Stories in Philosophy for Children**

**Použití biblických příběhů ve filosofii pro děti**

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce:

Gerald Robert Ostdiek, BA, M.A., Ph.D.

Autor práce:

Veronika Miškejová

Praha 2017

## **Poděkování**

Moje upřímné poděkování patří všem, kteří mě podporovali během počátků mé práce. Především děkuji mému vedoucímu práce Gerald Robertu Ostdiekovi za jeho trpělivé a inspirující vedení. Nikdy bych nebyla schopna dokončit svou bakalářskou práci bez něj.

Také bych chtěla poděkovat všem členům mé rodiny za jejich nepodmíněnou podporu. Jsem obzvlášť vděčná svým rodičům, kteří byli vždy ochotni mi pomoci a naučili mě, jak jsou v dnešním světě děti a jejich výchova důležité.

## **Acknowledgement:**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who supported me during the genesis of this work. Especially, I wish to thank my thesis supervisor, Professor Gerald Robert Ostdiek, for his patient and inspiring guidance. I would never have been able to finish my bachelor's work without his advice.

I would also like to thank all members of my family for their unconditional support. My special gratitude belongs to my parents who were always willing to help and taught me how important are children and their education in today's world.

## **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou bakalářskou práci „Použití biblických příběhů ve filosofii pro děti“ vypracovala samostatně s použitím níže uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále prohlašuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 29. června 2017

Veronika Miškejová

---

## **Declaration**

I declare that I developed presented bachelor's work "Usage of Biblical Stories in Philosophy for Children" individually using the sources listed below. I also declare that this work was not used to obtain different or the same university title.

In Prague on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Veronika Miškejová

---

## **Annotation**

In this thesis I worked with the hypothesis that teachers can use biblical stories in Philosophy for children and those who teach biblical stories can use Philosophy for children in their lesson plans. In the start of my thesis I look back into history to different views of childhood and I ask ‘What is a child?’ throughout all of them. I add my own answer to that question. To talk about Philosophy for children I have to specify the kind of philosophy teachers use in their classrooms. When we understand what a child is and what I mean when talking about philosophy then I present the ideas behind Philosophy for children. In the chapter after I want to show the possibilities Bible stories hold and what connection is there between Bible and philosophy. Using biblical stories can be difficult but it has a great potential and that is at the end of my thesis. I end it with practical preparations and actual lesson. The last chapters of my thesis show how to use and work with biblical stories in Philosophy for children.

## **Anotace**

V této práci je pracováno s hypotézou, že biblické příběhy mohou učitelé používat ve Filosofii pro děti. Ti, kteří učí biblické příběhy, mohou aplikovat metody Filosofie pro děti ve svých učebních plánech. Na začátku práce se vracím do historie, uvádím různé pohledy na dětství a ptám se: „Co je to dítě?“ Abych mohla mluvit o Filosofii pro děti, musím nejdříve specifikovat druh filosofie, kterou používají učitelé ve svých hodinách. Když jsem vyjasnila, co je to dítě, a jaký přístup k filosofii musíme mít, je třeba představit ideje, které stojí za Filosofii pro děti. V další kapitole chci zdůraznit možnosti biblických příběhů – jaké je spojení mezi Biblií a filosofií. Použití biblických příběhů může být složité, ale mají dobrý potenciál. Tím svou práci zakončuji. Poslední kapitoly mojí práce poukazují na použití biblických příběhů ve Filosofii pro děti a jak s nimi pracovat.

## **Keywords**

Philosophy for children, Bible, Matthew Lipman, stories, questions, lesson plans, child, philosophy

## **Klíčová slova**

Filosofie pro děti, Bible, Matthew Lipman, příběhy, otázky, učební plány, dítě, filosofie

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. What is a Child? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Ancient view .....	8
1.2 Calvin’s view .....	9
1.3 Jean Piaget’s view .....	10
1.4 P4C’s view .....	11
1.5 My view .....	12
<b>2. What we want to teach our children through philosophy, and what kind of philosophy we are talking about .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Philosophy’s place in the curriculum .....	15
2.2 Philosophy of P4C .....	17
<b>3. Philosophy for children .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 John Dewey and P4C.....	20
3.2. Matthew Lipman and P4C.....	21
3.2 Other approaches to P4C .....	22
<b>4. Is there a connection between The Bible and Philosophy today? .....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Philosophical Bible.....	26
4.2 Different views on God .....	28
<b>5. Usage of biblical stories in P4C.....</b>	<b>31</b>
5.1 Choosing the right stories.....	31
5.2 Why use the Bible? .....	32
5.3 Problems with using the Bible.....	32
<b>6. Practical preparations .....</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1 The story .....	35
6.2 Basic questions.....	35
6.3 Deciding the theme and style of the lesson .....	36
6.4 More question – theme based .....	38
<b>7. Actual lesson .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>8. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Shrnutí.....</b>	<b>49</b>

## List of abbreviations

P4C	Philosophy for children
Ibid.	in the same place
e.g.	for example

## **Introduction**

When I first started thinking about what kind of theme or a problem I wanted to work on in my thesis I only knew I will write about children. Both of my brothers have children and I love to play with them. I would cross oceans for them. When I realized I'd like to write about children I went to lessons about Philosophy for children and right there the thought came to my mind. As a Christian and a student of Pedagogy I found my ultimate meeting point. All parts of my graduate study are in this thesis. I use my knowledge of Bible and my love of stories I heard as a little child to show those who will read this work that they can be used to educate children in more ways than just religion. I use my knowledge of Philosophy to argue that it can be used to educate children and to widen their horizons. I use my knowledge of Pedagogy and Psychology to argue that children are capable of thinking and questioning even from early age.

So I took all I've learned and applied it to biblical stories. The result is written here in the thesis. P4C is a educational tool and an approach to teaching children about philosophy and ethics. Normally it uses stories like fairy-tales and fables. I took the methodology of P4C and applied it to biblical stories. Usage of biblical stories has its limits and the story has to be carefully chosen. I answered questions that might be asked by the general public such as 'Can Bible be used for Philosophy for children?' 'Are biblical stories enough philosophical for us to use them?' 'What about the almighty and all-knowing God?' 'Isn't it just religious education?' 'Is this approach going to convert our children?' Answers to this and more I've written in this thesis.

In the Czech republic there is nothing such as this connection between Philosophy for children and Bible. And I haven't found anything about this theme in any other country either. It seems to me that people are very cautious around Bible and teaching about it and with it. But I think this is a way to be better at commination between believers and non-believers. Open discussion is at start of every good relationship.

I tried my hypothesis with a group of pre-school children and I can honestly say that Bible can be used for Philosophy for children and God is just another character in the story for those children. I want to continue and learn more about this connection between biblical stories and P4C.

# 1. What is a Child?

To write about Philosophy for children (P4C), I must first give a small amount of time to the question: what is a child. P4C has a view on this theme that is not set in the popular believes and therefore I have to define the child so we can at least understand the basics and therefore, in some way, each other. Our system of beliefs is rooted in stereotypes and depends on the era and the country in which we were raised. Children are our future. So let's look at our heritage in raising and educating them.

## 1.1 Ancient view

Aristotle writes:

The friendship of a king for those who live under his rule depends on his superior ability to do good. He confers benefits upon his subjects, since he is good and cares for them in order to promote their welfare, just as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Hence, Homer spoke of Agamemnon as “shepherd of the people.” The friendship of a father [for his children] is of the same kind, but it differs in the magnitude of benefits bestowed.

For he is the author of their being, which is regarded as the greatest good, and he is responsible for maintaining and educating them... Furthermore, it is by nature that a father rules over his children, ancestors over their descendants, and a king over his subjects. These kinds of friendship depend on superiority, and that is why we [do not only love but] also honor our parents. Accordingly, in those relationships the same thing is not just for both partners, but what is just depends on worth or merit, and the same is true for friendship.<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle sees children as extensions of their fathers. The child is only here to serve but honor by being. What is expected of the child is that he honors his parents as much as is possible (because honor is what he is capable of giving), never forgetting that they have given him his very being, without which none of the other things which he enjoys would even be possible. I would say: This would be okay if every parent was the perfect parent. But as we know some children need laws protecting them from their parents. If Aristotle

---

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Ethics*. VIII.11, 1161a11.



got his way in our time, there would be no ‘abuse,’ only because there would be no protection for children. For Aristotle, the child belongs to the father and that means the child *is merely part of* the father and therefore the father has the authority to do with the child as he pleases. Aristotle would work in a perfect world, but the world we live in is not even a good world.

This is how Aristotle deals with children. He just pushes the baggage onto the parent so he (or the state) has to deal with it. It is only a matter of a household.

## 1.2 Calvin’s view

John Calvin writes:

the children which we ought to wish for, are not such as may violently oppress the wretched and suffering, or overreach others by craft and deceit, or accumulate great riches by unlawful means, or acquire for themselves tyrannical authority, but such as will practice uprightness, and be willing to live in obedience to the laws, and prepared to render an account of their life. Farther, although fathers ought diligently to form their children under a system of holy discipline, yet let them remember that they will never succeed in attaining the object aimed at, save by the pure and special grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

Calvin consistently stressed the parental obligation to fulfill God’s commands and diligently instruct children in the family. Calvin takes all authority – parental and otherwise – with the utmost seriousness. But where parents lead their children to violate God’s law, “children should regard them not as parents but as strangers”.<sup>3</sup>

Like Augustine, Calvin assumes a graduated guilt as one moves with age to greater accountability for acts of wrongdoing. However, he does not dwell on evidences of corruption in small children, as does Augustine. Though young children are corrupted by original sin, when compared to older children and adults, they demonstrate a lack of malice that their elders ought to emulate. Calvin, the theologian of “total depravity,” is more

---

<sup>2</sup> Calvin, *Comm. Psalms V*, 112.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Pitkin, “‘The Heritage of the Lord’: Children in the Theology of John Calvin” in *The Child in Christian Thought* (ed. Marcia JoAnn Bunge; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 173.

appreciative of the positive character of children, dwelling less on their sinfulness than some of his forebears (such as Augustine) or successors (such as Jonathan Edwards).<sup>4</sup>

The view that children are born with sin sometimes made people believe they should beat it out of them and they found sentences in the Bible that would support their violent behavior. The bigger problem with this is that Calvin thought children would be influenced by evil if they would have time to think for themselves so he liked to put children to work. Because the evil is in them, it would only grow if they would play, fantasize, think. Calvin argues that adults need to *make* them good. But now, through sciences such as psychology, we know that children are neither born evil nor good (as many Romantics thought – e.g., Jean-Jacques Rousseau). And thinking does not make them evil.

### 1.3 Jean Piaget's view

The last view I want show you is that of Jean Piaget. According to Piaget's theory, children cannot grasp certain concepts until they reached the appropriate stage of cognitive development. This is perfectly fine statement but it starts to be a problem when we misjudge the cognitive development and assume that children are simply 'lower' in their developmental capacity. Piaget argued that children cannot do philosophy because they cannot think like adults and haven't reached the right level of cognitive development. Most researchers agree that children possess many cognitive abilities at an earlier age than Piaget suspected. Recent theory of mind research has found that 4- and 5-year-old children have a rather sophisticated understanding of their own mental processes as well as those of other people. For example, children of this age have some ability to take the perspective of another person, meaning they are far less egocentric than Piaget believed.<sup>5</sup>

And here we are in 21<sup>st</sup> century and we still have problems with teaching our children and raising them. We need to educate ourselves. Discover what is a child.

I believe that the child is somewhere in the middle of this. I think we need to treat children as partners and teach them; otherwise they won't be successful in their lives. Their brains are much faster than ours and they can figure things out sometimes better than we can. Today's psychology knows we cannot ever truly transmit our knowledge to our

---

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Pitkin, "'The Heritage of the Lord': Children in the Theology of John Calvin" in *The Child in Christian Thought* (ed. Marcia JoAnn Bunge; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 165.

<sup>5</sup> Santrock, John W. (2008). *A topical approach to life-span development* (4 ed.). New York City: McGraw-Hill.

children, but we can help them think, and we can have children that think for themselves and understand the world in their own experiences. Time is everywhere and every child becomes an adult if her life is not ended before she reaches adulthood. So by being good parents and good teachers we are making other people. By inserting ourselves into their lives we influence their notion of the world; but to do that well, we need to respect them and their experiences. J.K. Rowling writes: “Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young...”<sup>6</sup>

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a child is “an unborn or recently born person” or “a young person especially between infancy and youth” or “a son or daughter of human parents”.<sup>7</sup>

Even though our world is to changing, we still raise our children with sentences like: “This is a job for the boys,” or “Children should be seen and not heard,” or “Girls don’t talk like that”. This is what we as a society teach our children. Children are our future. The only thing that we leave when we die are our descendants. Nelson Mandela said: “Our children are our future and one of the basic responsibilities is to care for them in the best and most compassionate manner possible.”<sup>8</sup>

## 1.4 P4C’s view

P4C is an approach to learning and teaching, now a recognized worldwide movement and practice, that was founded by Professor Matthew Lipman. P4C has developed over 35 years, and is practiced in approximately 60 countries.

In P4C, children are taught how to create their own philosophical questions. They then choose one question that is the focus of a philosophical enquiry, or dialogue. For example, the question might be 'is it ever ok to steal?'

The teacher, as facilitator, supports the children in their thinking, reasoning and questioning, as well as the way the children speak and listen to each other in the dialogue. After the enquiry the children and facilitator reflect on the quality of the

---

<sup>6</sup> ROWLING, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003. ISBN 0747551006.

<sup>7</sup> "Child." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Accessed March 29, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/child>.

<sup>8</sup> Address by Nelson Mandela at opening of Walter Sisulu Paediatric Cardiac Centre for Africa, Johannesburg. *Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela* [online]. Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2013 [cit. 2017-06-23]. Accessed: [http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela\\_speeches/2003/031107\\_cardiac.htm](http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela_speeches/2003/031107_cardiac.htm)

thinking, reasoning and participation, and suggest how they could improve, both as individuals and as a group (community).

P4C is intended to be a regular activity so that the children develop their skills and understanding over time. The role of the facilitator is crucial to ensuring quality dialogue and progress, as well as integration with the curriculum.

It is well documented that P4C has an impact on children's cognitive, social and emotional development.<sup>9</sup> P4C is about getting children to think and communicate well; to think better for themselves.

P4C is a thorough pedagogy with considerable academic pedigree. Influenced by educationalists and philosophers such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey as well as the tradition of Socratic dialogue, Professor Matthew Lipman, was frustrated by his student's lack of engagement with learning and thinking. Lipman believed that young children possess the tools needed to think rationally, and through his method of reading philosophically stimulating narratives, he believed that children could be encouraged to respond philosophically.

## 1.5 My view

From my experience we don't encourage children to think. They are not partners in our lives. We give them enough reasons to think. Sometimes we hold them hostages in our little families, we use them to feel better, to hug. Sometimes we let them know what kind of mistakes they are. Sometimes we don't see them as another human beings. In her book *All about Love*, Bell Hooks writes: "We learn about love in childhood. Whether our home are happy or troubled, our family functional or dysfunctional, it's the original school of love. To my child's mind love was the good feeling you got when your family treated you like you mattered and treated them like they mattered. Love was always and only about good feeling."<sup>10</sup> She then continues to write about punishment and how terribly confusing punishments are to children. Why do parents say 'I love you' and then beat or punish those same children they proclaim to love? "Unlike women who can organize to protest sexist domination, demanding both equal rights and justice, children can only rely on well-meaning adults to assist them if they are being exploited and oppressed in the home. Love

---

<sup>9</sup> P4C Research. *Sapere: Philosophy for Children, Colleges, Communities* [online]. Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Sapere, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-25]. Accessed: <http://www.sapere.org.uk/AboutP4C/P4CImpact/P4CResearch.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> *All about love: new visions*. New York: Perennial, 2001. ISBN 00-609-5947-9.

is as love does, and it is our responsibility to give children love. Without justice there can be no love.”<sup>11</sup>

Children need to learn about things like love, family, ethics. And they learn from us. As they learn about love from us, they learn from our treatment about everything else. If you as an adult will talk about school as if it is the biggest evil in the world, children will mirror your opinion and soon they will hate school.<sup>12</sup> If we use questions, we teach them critical thinking rather than simply presenting them with ‘finished’ truths; and we will then have children that will be better at navigating the world.

P4C has to take into account all the differences that come with different ages of children. It is not true that you can take just any story, tell it to kids and then ask about the ethics of the story or some other philosophical questions. If we should work with children of preschool age we need to think about their development. They are egocentric – so it’s important to have some sort of character that could be them; they are only in the present time – they don’t understand time as adults do so we can’t have story with changing times or long periods between acts in the story; they are understanding their world through magic and anthropomorphism. Their world is intimate – the story should be interesting for them and in helping them understand we shouldn’t be afraid of a little magic here and there; they are also absolutistic – because children in this age think in absolute rights and wrongs we cannot simply tell them that everything is relative (that is not the point of P4C) we have to just give them the opportunity to think, and little by little chip away at their absolutes. But we also need to be careful not to stress children by showing them too big problems.<sup>13</sup> This is why doing P4C is not easy; but many people went before us and we can be more confident in our doing. Also, we can see that it doesn’t take that much time to do such activities with children.

I did a small survey among my friends and I asked them What is a child. These are the answers they told me:

What is a child?

- a human being, learning and growing faster than we are
- a love-needer – the basic need is to be loved
- a dreamer and imaginator
- a descendant

---

<sup>11</sup> *All about love: new visions*. New York: Perennial, 2001. ISBN 00-609-5947-9.

<sup>12</sup> KOPŘIVA, Pavel. *Respektovat a být respektován*. Kroměříž: Spirála, 2005. ISBN 80-901873-6-6.

<sup>13</sup> VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie I.: dětství a dospívání*. Praha: Karolinum, 2005. ISBN 80-246-0956-8.

- a creature that is naturally selfish and needy and its basic need is love and care
- a human being, younger than 18 years old, that has its own value and dignity
- a living creature that needs nurturing physical and mental
- God's miracle

## **2. What we want to teach our children through philosophy, and what kind of philosophy we are talking about**

Through my unending struggle with philosophy, I learned that there are many different views on what philosophy is. Many people in the field take it as a personal integrity, and they won't let philosophy be viewed differently than their own opinions and beliefs. Then, when you want to talk about philosophy for children some of those people will say that philosophy can be done only by adults or young adults and that to do philosophy for and with children would be wasting of their and everybody's time.

### **2.1 Philosophy's place in the curriculum**

It is true that, in the Czech Republic and elsewhere, philosophy is taught at the pre-university level. But because it is part of subjects such as Social studies or Civics, the teacher can cover only the ancient saga with Socrates and Plato or the modern saga of Descartes and Kant. And the lessons end at the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century – if you are a lucky teacher or student.<sup>14</sup> And what about actual philosophizing? What they are being taught is just the history of philosophy. It should be in History lessons, because we are now past people like Descartes and Kant. And philosophy is not its history just as biology now is not the biology Darwin talked about. P4C argues that children can and should do philosophy before they step into universities.

If we want to teach our children to think critically to change opinions and to be responsible for their opinions, then philosophy is important. Through debates and non-stop thinking about your own arguments, a child has to think. Philosophy starts with questions and good philosophy starts with questions that cannot be answered with a simple affirmative or negative, but still remakes the world through our perception of it. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” (Margaret Mead). But also: “Science is what you know. Philosophy is what you don't know” (Bertrand Russell).

---

<sup>14</sup>Školní vzdělávací program pro gymnaziální vzdělávání a pro nižší stupeň osmiletého studia se všeobecným zaměřením - denní vzdělávání: Vzděláním ke schopnosti porozumět druhým. Praha: Gymnázium Elišky Krásnohorské, 2016. Accessed May 29, 2017: <http://www.gekom.cz/o-nas/dokumenty.html>.

In writing about how an individual settles into a new opinion, William James argues that:

- The process is always the same.
- The individual has a stock of old opinions already.
- The individual meets a *new experience* that puts some of these old opinions to a strain.
- Somebody contradicts them.
- In a reflective moment, the individual discovers that they contradict each other.
- The individual hears of facts with which they are incompatible.
- Desires arise in the individual which the old opinions fail to satisfy.<sup>15</sup>

And isn't this what children do the best? They have to change their opinions so quickly. Children learn everyday something new. And all this happens before they go to school. And then they are taught how we write and count and everything there is to know. Children are curious. They have two asking periods before they go to school. The first is asking *What, Where* and *Who*, and the second is most known for its relentless asking of *Why*. Children are curious from the time they can speak.<sup>16</sup> And we can fairly argue that they are already little philosophers from the moment they ask: *Why is he acting this way? Why are we going to see grandma? Why do they kiss? Why do they love each other?* Because we cannot find a simple answer for these questions. Isn't this what makes a great philosophical problem?

Children are fast thinkers. They change their opinions quickly. And we do need to help them learn how to operate with their experiences and their opinions. Because the older they get harder it will be to change what they think. William James continues:

The individual seeks to escape from this inward trouble by modifying the old opinions.

- The individual saves as many of the old opinions as is possible (for in this matter we are all extreme conservatives).
- Old opinions resist change very variously.
- The individual tries to change this and then that.

Finally, some new opinion comes up which the individual can graft upon the ancient stock of old opinions with a minimum of disturbance to the others.

- The new opinion mediates between the stock and the new experience.

---

<sup>15</sup> JAMES, William. *Pragmatism*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. ISBN 04-862-8270-8.

Summarized by Emory University at: <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/opinion.html> .

<sup>16</sup> VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie I: dětství a dospívání*. Praha: Karolinum, 2005. ISBN 80-246-0956-8.



- The new opinion runs the stock and the new experience into one another most felicitously and expediently.

New truth is always a go-between, a smoother-over of transitions. The point I now urge you to observe particularly is the part played by the older truths. Their influence is absolutely controlling. Loyalty to them is the first principle...<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 Philosophy of P4C

It is logical that we should teach our children about thinking and meaning and making sense out of their experiences. This led Matthew Lipman to found this new kind of philosophy; and seeing this led Gareth Matthews to join this new philosophical movement – Philosophy for children. Matthews was one of Lipman’s first and most important fellows and much of what has been written about P4C comes from him.

Matthews (1980) presents evidence that young children often make comments, ask questions, and even engage in reasoning that professional philosophers can recognize as philosophical. Here are some of his examples:

TIM (about six years), while busily engaged in licking a pot, asked, “papa, how can we be sure that everything is not a dream?” Somewhat abashed, Tim's father said that he didn't know and asked how Tim thought that we could tell? After a few more licks of the pot, Tim answered, “Well, I don't think everything is a dream, ‘cause in a dream people wouldn't go around asking if it was a dream.” (23)

URSULA [three years, four months], “I have a pain in my tummy.” Mother, “You lie down and go to sleep and your pain will go away.” Ursula, “Where will it go?” (17)

SOME QUESTION of fact arose between James and his father, and James said, “I know it is!” His father replied, “But perhaps you might be wrong!” Denis [four years, seven months] then joined in, saying, “But if he knows, he can't be wrong! Thinking's sometimes wrong, but knowing's always right!” (27)

IAN (six years) found to his chagrin that the three children of his parents' friends monopolized the television; they kept him from watching his favorite program.

---

<sup>17</sup> JAMES, William. *Pragmatism*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. ISBN 04-862-8270-8. Summarized by Emory University at: <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/opinion.html>.

“Mother,” he asked in frustration, “why is it better for three people to be selfish than for one?” (28)

A LITTLE GIRL of nine asked: “Daddy, is there really a God?” The father answered that it wasn't very certain, to which the child retorted: “There must be really, because he has a name!” (30)

MICHAEL (seven): “I don't like to [think] about the universe without an end. It gives me a funny feeling in my stomach. If the universe goes on forever, there is no place for God to live, who made it.” (34)

These and other anecdotes provide substantial evidence that at least some children quite naturally engage in thinking that is genuinely philosophical. But are children capable of philosophical dialogue? Are they capable of developing a philosophical position in response to challenges? Examples such as these suggest that the answer is ‘Yes’. Moreover, children often have a freshness, an openness, and a creativity in philosophical thinking, as in painting and drawing, that is missing in most adults.<sup>18</sup>

To answer the theme of this chapter – We want to teach our children critical thinking and this is the base of all philosophy. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, philosophy is:

all learning exclusive of technical precepts and practical arts; a discipline comprising as its core logic, aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology; pursuit of wisdom; a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means; the most basic beliefs, concepts, and attitudes of an individual or group; a theory underlying or regarding a sphere of activity or thought.<sup>19</sup>

P4C works with nearly all of these definitions. Although the noted developmental psychologist Jean Piaget was of the impression that children were not capable of critical thinking (understood as *thinking about thinking*) until age 11 or 12, the experience of many philosophers and teachers with young children gives reason to believe that children benefit from philosophical inquiry even in early primary school. Furthermore, there is empirical

---

<sup>18</sup> Matthews, Gareth and Mullin, Amy, "The Philosophy of Childhood", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/childhood/>>.

<sup>19</sup> "Philosophy." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Accessed May 29, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/philosophy>.

evidence that teaching children reasoning skills early in life greatly improves other cognitive and academic skills and greatly assists learning in general.<sup>20</sup>

Dewey knows how important thinking is to humans and to our children and he states how thinking starts – with confusion, doubt; arguing:

We may recapitulate by saying that the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt. Thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on 'general principles' There is some thing specific which occasions and evokes it General appeals to a child (or to a grown-up) to think, irrespective of the existence in his own experience of some difficulty that troubles him and disturbs his equilibrium, are as futile as advice to lift himself by his boot-straps.<sup>21</sup>

According to E.H. Erikson people go through 8 stages of life aims and problems that occur in those stages. Basic trust versus basic distrust – from birth to one year; autonomy versus shyness – 1 year to 3 years and so on and on.<sup>22</sup> Children and adults meet with problems (questions) to which we need solutions (answers). Philosophy is the same. This is why I think philosophy is very close to psychology and it is mainly about us and about us in the system. This is the philosophy I talk about. It is not just about the mechanics of thinking (psychology), but about the why and the wonder of using those mechanics to be better and wiser.

---

<sup>20</sup> K.J. Topping and S. Trickey (2007) "Collaborative Philosophical Inquiry for School Children", *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Dec 77(4).

<sup>21</sup> DEWEY, John. *How we think*. Dover Publications, 1997. ISBN 978-0486298955.

<sup>22</sup> VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie I: dětství a dospívání*. Praha: Karolinum, 2005. ISBN 80-246-0956-8.

### 3. Philosophy for children

In this chapter we will look through all the aspects of philosophy for children. Philosophy For Children (P4C) does not refer to teaching children traditional philosophy; rather, it is a pedagogic approach developed by Matthew Lipman that centers on teaching thinking skills and the ability to question and reason. It is a student-led, enquiry-based approach to learning.

#### 3.1 John Dewey and P4C

I want to start with John Dewey. Dewey argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place. In addition, he believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact *with* the curriculum, and not simply have it ‘transmitted’ *at* them. And he believed that all students should have the opportunity to take part in their own learning. This is the base of P4C. How can we experience Philosophy? We can do that only through Enquiry.

In *My Pedagogic Creed*, John Dewey writes:

With the advent of democracy and modern industrial conditions, it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now. Hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions. To prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities; that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command, that his judgment may be capable of grasping the conditions under which it has to work, and the executive forces be trained to act economically and efficiently... I believe that the image is the great instrument of instruction. What a child gets out of any subject presented to him is simply the images which he himself forms with regard to it...<sup>23</sup>

Dewey’s revolution changed many minds about schools, and now, nearly a hundred years later, we can know the value of his ‘beliefs’ – expressed in *My Pedagogic Creed*, as well as his dozens of books and scores of articles.

---

<sup>23</sup> DEWEY, John. *My Pedagogic Creed*. Univ of Michigan Library, 2011. ISBN 14-585-0141-8.

### **3.2. Matthew Lipman and P4C**

Matthew Lipman, at the time a professor of philosophy, developed P4C out of Dewey's philosophy. He was concerned with the Deweyan notion of creating an education for a healthy democracy – an education that would develop a citizenry capable of both critical thinking and respect and empathy for others in the community.

While P4C does include a whole curriculum developed by Lipman and his associates, it is at essence a strict yet simple model of learning – the 'Community of Enquiry' that can be used in any subject – from arts, ethics to math or science. In this model, a group of children are given a stimulus, such as a story or scientific problem – and they are asked to jointly generate from it questions about anything problematic, puzzling or interesting, thus deciding the framework of the 'Enquiry'. The group then reasons together out loud – putting forward ideas, responding to and building on the ideas of others and generating further questions until they are satisfied with how they have dealt with the problem. They are asked to reflect on the answers that arise and their learning. The content of the discussion is considered to be less important than the quality of the reasoning, and the role of the teacher is to develop higher level of reasoning, through use of guiding questions, questions that encourage the use of examples, reasons, and sound criteria. Basically, the teacher helps the children figure it themselves. This whole system is based on teaching as an interaction between students and teacher, and opposes the traditional way of teaching (centered in front with minimal interaction) as transmission of 'facts'.

Lipman calls this model 'Community of Enquiry', and the community or 'groupwork' aspect is considered of equal importance to the philosophical enquiry. Through vocalizing their thinking together and using the language of enquiry, students learn how to think 'reasonably'. In Lipman's view – reasoning is a discursive, a group activity. Critically, students also engage in important social and co-operative experiences that develop listening skills, empathy, respect, friendship and the ability to truly work and think co-operatively. In fact, Lipman talks of the 4C's of P4C – the development of thinking skills that are Critical, Creative, Co-operative and Caring.

To get an idea of how the Community of Enquiry model works, see transcripts of the model being used, accompanied by a discussion of the transcripts and how to use the model by Lipman, in the article *Simple Gifts*.<sup>24</sup>

Research has clearly shown that P4C improves the cognitive abilities of its participants, develops general thinking and reasoning skills that lead to higher levels of attainment across the curriculum. Furthermore, P4C has been found to have great success in improving motivation by improving levels of understanding, confidence and student ownership of learning. A further asset of the P4C approach is that it develops learning-to-learn skills – through its ‘thinking out loud’ approach and emphasis on questioning and reflection (e.g., *Radical Encouragement* <sup>25</sup>).

### 3.2 Other approaches to P4C

Every story, every preparation and every class is different. As a teacher you must be prepared and always see children as children. Don’t expect them to make assumptions as adults. In *Year Long Story: Curriculum-Enquiry from the Wizard of Oz*, Sara Stanley writes about her plan for three and four year-olds about the world of The Wizard of Oz.<sup>26</sup> Her plan involves role-play, story-context and enquiry. The enquiry starts with a piece from the story; the teacher then works with the piece and expands on the idea of nothing. The dialogue you can read online in her article. It is important to be ready and to know what your aim is, but also be ready to change your aim. This is basic for any Philosophy for children classwork. Why? Well the obvious answer is because you work with children and abstract ideas. When you open a discussion you never know where you’ll end up. But you can steer the ship. Teacher must be the one to always know where the ‘ship’ is going. Through well placed questions teacher must steer the discussion in the wanted way.

---

<sup>24</sup> Article Simple Gifts by Robert Fisher and Julie Winyard. Philosophy For Children. *TeachingTimes* [online]. Birmingham: Imaginative Minds, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-29]. Accessed: <http://www.teachingtimes.com/kb/53/philosophy-for-children.htm> .

<sup>25</sup> Philosophy For Children. *TeachingTimes* [online]. Birmingham: Imaginative Minds, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-29]. Accessed: <http://www.teachingtimes.com/kb/53/philosophy-for-children.htm> .

<sup>26</sup> Year Long Story Curriculum-Enquiry from The Wizard of Oz. *Sara Stanley: Creating philosophical worlds in the classroom* [online]. Cambridge: Sara Stanley, 2013 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://sarastanley.co.uk/year-long-story-curriculum-enquiry-from-the-wizard-of-oz/> .

Another way to work with P4C is detailed by Garreth Matthews.<sup>27</sup> The teacher picks out a story (In the case cited, *Frog and Toad Together*, by Arnold Lobel) and dissects the themes in the story. In preparation, the teacher works on pre-reading activities and discussions, during-reading discussion questions (questions that the teacher may pose while reading the story), and post-reading discussion questions and activities, as well as a charting of the entire process. This cannot include only discussion but also involves guided playtime. Children are inquisitive, but they also love to play. Every story can lead to play part with some sort of play or game; and P4C intentionally unites storytime, playtime, and philosophical inquiry. Also, the teacher has to count in all the different challenges posed by the fast changing attention of children, while simultaneously narrowing the theme to a single, graspable point.

Yet another way can be seen in the work of Per Jespersen – e.g., *Talking Philosophy with Small Children*. His key concept is wondering. Children even in stages when they cannot talk wonder. Later when language comes they can express their wonderings and you can have a philosophical dialogue. According to Jespersen we can't give children answers, they have to figure things out themselves. Children are egoistic as I've written before they will talk and talk for hours if they would have listeners. "Philosophy for children is not a science or anything like that - it is Life as beautiful as the smell of the nectar on a flowering meadow."<sup>28</sup>

Whatever the specifics of the approach, a P4C lesson plan will include all or most of the following discussions:

Ask the pupils what they need to have a good discussion. Record and display the rules agreed by the class. They might include: Don't talk when someone else is talking, look at the person talking and listen until they finish, don't laugh at other people's ideas... Encourage the pupils to take a minute of silent thinking time before volunteering questions in response to the stimulus. The pupils can put their hands up to volunteer the teacher writes on the whiteboard. Another way to generate questions is to ask pairs to share their ideas, and agree on a question they feel will lead to an interesting enquiry. The next step is to ask whether any questions link together. This

---

<sup>27</sup> Guidelines for Philosophical Discussion of Dragons and Giants: By Gareth B. Matthews, revised by Marissa Saltzman. *Teaching Children Philosophy* [online]. 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/DragonsAndGiantsFromFrogAndToadTogether>.

<sup>28</sup> Talking Philosophy With Small Children: by Per Jespersen. *Children and Youth Philosophers: Norwegian centre for philosophy* [online]. Oslo, 2016 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://www.buf.no/en/read/txt/?page=pj-enkl-en>

encourages pupils to practice the conceptual skills of connecting ideas. Finally, the teacher asks the pupils to choose a question, usually by majority vote. A good way to begin is to invite the pupil who asked the question to say a little bit more on what they were thinking about. As others begin to contribute, the teacher keeps track of the developing strands of enquiry, asking speakers to clarify points that seem unclear and encouraging them to link their contributions with what others have said. Asking if they agree or disagree with previous speakers, and probing for examples or reasons, are good ways of helping pupils sharpen their capacity to think critically and build on each other's thoughts.<sup>29</sup>

And again I return to Per Jespersen:

So talking philosophy with small children means to get closer to the intention of the nature of being. That is exactly what most children ponder about: Why am I here? What is the intention of my being? Whose intention is it?

Again: questions. Thousands of them. And the teacher does not have the answer, and it is my firm belief (and experience), that the questions from the kids do not demand answers. The children want to share their questions with each other in order to know, that they are not alone with these sometimes strange thoughts.<sup>30</sup>

Teacher has his/her work cut out for them. Because when you open up the lesson to questions you never know what will happen therefore even if you prepare as I described you really can't prepare for these discussions.

P4C can help children learn in a fun way without forcing the curriculum on them. Many schools where they do P4C have great results, and you can see the results in monthly and yearly basis. Schools make space for discussions and kids love it. At Waikiki Elementary School, for example, they started working with P4C to help children become better thinkers and creating a safe place for children to be okay with talking about anything and listen to each other with care.<sup>31</sup> Children like it very much and it is all in their hands, including who will talk (they are passing a ball) or what theme they will talk about. The

---

<sup>29</sup> Free resources from The Stapleford Centre: Supporting the teaching of Christianity in Religious Education. *The Stapleford Centre* [online]. Surrey: Waverley Abbey House, 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources>.

<sup>30</sup> Talking Philosophy With Small Children: by Per Jespersen. *Children and Youth Philosophers: Norwegian centre for philosophy* [online]. Oslo, 2016 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://www.buf.no/en/read/txt/?page=pj-enkl-en>

<sup>31</sup> Waikiki Elementary and Philosophy For Children – Accessed: June 13, 2017 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v7OeYwluYY>.



results are not only that kids are better thinkers but also that they are better at communication and they create better friendships.

The results can be seen at every school that implemented P4C and works with it. It is not as if we would have to wait decades to see if it works. We know it works. Children that have a habit of good habits of communication and open discussion are the better future that I hope for.

## **4. Is there a connection between The Bible and Philosophy today?**

For years and years Philosophy and Bible have been enemies. Just as Religion and Science. Both sides commonly claim the other is wrong while they are right. But for me, for my religion to be true and helpful, it can't fight these battles with fictional adversaries. Science and philosophy must likewise avoid this straw-man fallacy. Maybe in ancient times the problem was bigger, but if Paul could be a Greek to the Greeks and a Jew to the Jews then I can connect Bible and Philosophy.

### **4.1 Philosophical Bible**

Many Christian communities are afraid of philosophy, but I don't think they are really afraid of philosophy; rather, they fear what kind of questions it opens. Pierre-Marc-Gaston, duc de Lévis said: "Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers."<sup>32</sup> As adults, with adult presumptions of experience, we often stop asking philosophical question in our daily lives. By again asking about the problems and the unsure state of our minds will appear to haunt us. Nobody likes to be haunted - especially by our own thoughts. This is true not only for Christianity but for all walks of life. We like certainty – even if it is passing or simply untrue, and we look for the sure things in our lives. And sometimes there is a very high cost to discovering that there are no certainties in life. If we think we will find some sort of 100% truth or assurance for our lives, we will be very discouraged at the end of life to see there is none. Philosophy teaches us to look for, to see and ask questions. Why? Well, the Greeks believed it all started with a question. The Hindus believe it all started with the Atman (The pure knowing) becoming aware of itself (as a knower, separate from the known). More, you are aware if you doubt – therefore you ask questions. It is as James and Dewey argued, thinking happens in the solving of problems, not in rote-response of memorized answers. And finally, all religions are based on stories. So why not use this thousands years old story that is deeply entrenched within our culture, why not use the Bible to teach our children about life and all the questions discoverable therein – as well as the stories of other religions and ethics.

---

<sup>32</sup> DUC DE LÉVIS, Pierre-Marc-Gaston. *Maximes Et Réflexions Sur Différents Sujets De Morale Et De Politique*. Nabu Press, 2012. ISBN 978-1279897539.

The Bible is one continuous story, from the story of creation to the story of Jesus' future return at the end of time. And yet there are smaller, pivotal stories that make up the basic structure of the one big story. There is a series of 52 talks that walk you through the main stories of the Bible, 26 in the Old Testament (the time leading up to Jesus) and 26 in the New Testament (the time of Jesus and beyond). If you look into the Bible you will find a nearly never-ending well of stories.

In *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Yoram Hazony observes that on any fair reading, the charges leveled against the Hebrew Bible (it shouldn't be read as philosophical text) apply also to ancient Greek texts that are taken seriously as philosophical sources.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Moses records that "the Lord said" is enough to rule Moses out as a serious thinker; the reference to divine speech makes it easy to categorize the Pentateuch as revelation rather than reason. Hazony quotes several passages from Parmenides, in which the philosopher claims to receive messages from a goddess, whom he visits by riding a chariot into the sky accompanied by "daughters of the sun". Socrates too claims to have a prophetic power and a divine voice within. Yet this doesn't keep Bertrand Russell from devoting:

... a short chapter each on Parmenides, Empedocles, and Heraclitus without so much as mentioning the role of the gods in producing their philosophies. He does draw attention to the fact that Socrates believed he was guided by a divine voice, oracles, and dreams. But nothing is said to follow from this.<sup>34</sup>

As with other modern philosophers, Russell takes "the fact that some philosophers present their works as divine revelation in stride, either ignoring it entirely or mentioning it in passing without drawing any weighty conclusions from it". This is what philosophers are supposed to identify as a logical fallacy, specifically, the fallacy of special pleading. Within a paradigm grounded axiomatically in reason v. revelation, one would expect the Bible to be full of mythical creatures, journeys through the underworld, divine secrets disclosed to the elect. And there are miracles and strange happenings in the Bible, but Hazony is right; a great deal of it covers:

---

<sup>33</sup> LEITHART, Peter J. Philosophical Bible. *First Things* [online]. The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 2016, , 1 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2016/06/philosophical-bible> .

<sup>34</sup> RUSSELL, Bertrand. *History of Western philosophy and its connection with political and social circumstances from the earliest times to the present day*. New York: Simon, 1945. ISBN 978-067-1201-586.

many of the same kinds of things that are found in the works of reason: histories of ancient peoples and attempts to draw political lessons from them; explorations of how best to conduct the life of the nation and of the individual; the writings of individuals who struggled with personal persecution and failure and their speculations concerning human nature and the search for the true and the good; attempts to get beyond the sphere of the here and now and reach a more general understanding of the nature of reality, of man's place in it, and of his relationship with that which is beyond his control.<sup>35</sup>

## 4.2 Different views on God

But these days, philosophy has many different views on religion and Christianity. One of these is the view of Panentheism. In 1828, the German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) seeking to reconcile monotheism and pantheism, coined the term panentheism (from the Ancient Greek expression, *pān en theó*, literally “all in god”). This conception of God influenced New England transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson. The term was popularized by Charles Hartshorne in his development of process theology and has also been closely identified with the New Thought. The formalization of this term in the West in the 19th century was not new; philosophical treatises had been written on it in the context of Hinduism for millennia.<sup>36</sup>

In his seminal work *Process and Reality*, Alfred North Whitehead wrote:

It [panentheism] does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operates by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present.”<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> LEITHART, Peter J. Philosophical Bible. *First Things* [online]. The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 2016, , 1 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed:

<https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2016/06/philosophical-bible> .

<sup>36</sup> Panentheism. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panentheism> .

<sup>37</sup> ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD. *Process and reality; an essay in cosmology*. Corr. ed. New York [u.a.]: Free Pr, 1978. ISBN 9780029345702.

Love is not God but God is love. Love in my eyes is a paradox. But as I see it, everything worthwhile is a paradox. In love we can be stronger, but also we become very vulnerable and our loved ones can easily break us. God can make us stronger, but also weaker. In the wisdom of Bible and the heritage we can gather from it, we can be as smart as any man. The Bible is made out of the stories and experiences of people that lived thousands of years before us but it seems world problems don't change much. Bible still has something to say. God is not a ruler that gives rules. He is "the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality"<sup>38</sup> - pulling the entities in the universe toward as-yet unrealized possibilities.

There was a short length of time when, here in the West, theology and philosophy were the same. And from that experience, a few people rose and did religion and philosophy well. From these few, we can learn to use their well-doing in our systems, in our own religion and philosophy. In this, we see many characteristics of process new thought, including:

As the new many new units of reality are created, they are added to God's awareness (prehension, inclusion), resulting in God's endless growth. Process New Thought takes care not to commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness (mistaking the abstract for the concrete). The concrete, actual is found in occasions of experience, rather than the aggregates (collections) of them that constitute physical things and ourselves as existing more than a moment. We have serial selfhood. Instead of being things that have experiences, we are the experiences that, considered together make up the things. We are successions of occasions of experience. While we exist one experience at a time, our bodies exist many experiences at a time. Ultimate power is the lure of God's persuasive (rather than coercive) love-beauty. The self-conscious, rational, value personality of God is the mind of the universe.<sup>39</sup>

The Bible is based on storytelling as many other religious texts. Of course it isn't only stories but also laws and poems, though these too can be used in Philosophy. When it comes to Philosophy for children, we need to be careful about the stories we choose to discuss. It is better to stay away from the blood and killings. It always depends on who is

---

<sup>38</sup> ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD. *Process and reality; an essay in cosmology*. Corr. ed. New York [u.a.]: Free Pr, 1978. ISBN 9780029345702.

<sup>39</sup> Process Philosophy and the New Thought Movement: The most outstanding 20th-century development in philosophy--now recognized as an indispensable resource for New Thought. *New Thought Movement* [online]. Alan Anderson, 2002 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://ppquimby.com/alan/process.htm>.

looking and for what is he looking. It is possible to think of the Bible is as a Rorschach test, and thinking of it in this way can raise some very good questions for adults and for children. Philosophy and the Bible can be put together, and they can work together; the only thing that stands between them is the people on both sides who fail to look past their doctrines and traditions.

## 5. Usage of biblical stories in P4C

There is a reason why we call pedagogy after Greek "slaves who escort boys to school and generally supervises them"<sup>40</sup>, pedagogue should lead children to knowledge, maybe point the way. But pedagogues do not choose for the children where they going to go. Teachers have the job of changing minds and it is not an easy job, they have to challenge the students to think differently. I always saw mathematics as a terrible subject and I didn't like it at all. One day in my 7<sup>th</sup> year in school, we got a new teacher who told us about how amazing math is and how we can use it in so many ways. She made us ask questions, and we had to work together and write on the blackboard. Her teaching changed my whole view on mathematics and more; thanks to this teacher I can now think and work more logically. My whole class did the final exams from mathematics and we all passed. Teachers who want to use P4C must do this in even bigger ways. Helping others change their opinions is hard but not impossible.

### 5.1 Choosing the right stories

As I already written, it is important to choose the right stories. Especially in choosing non-biblical stories for P4C, we must be careful more so when it comes to Bible because it is not primarily a book for children. After all, for many people around the globe the Bible is Holy Scripture, and therefore to be treated with some respect. What this means for usage is that we need to take these stories with respect to the society in which we live.

In The Czech Republic, people don't trust religions - this is true for reasons that go beyond the scope of this thesis, I am sure there are written tens of books about it – but for whatever reason, the people here like to make jokes out of religions – mainly Christianity. Children at school are not taught about Bible; and if they are, then only as a silly book that only crazy people believe. The Bible has no real place in the curriculum of the Czech school system. I think it's a problem, because when we don't understand it we are more likely to fear it. They need to understand for themselves and not copy other people's opinions. Through interactions, children can make their own opinions and through discussion we can be open about them. The same goes for love and relationships, tests etc.

---

<sup>40</sup> Pedagogue. *ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY*. [online]. © 2001-2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Available at: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedagogue>.

The Bible is more than just a book full of stories; but also, it is a book full of stories. Most religions have some sort of book of stories that became Holy Scripture. I think the Bible is the best because of its extensive cultural heritage and many translations. No other book has been translated as often; and starting with the Reformation, everybody could read it and interpret it. So we have many books written about Bible stories and hundreds of years of teaching material have been developed.

## **5.2 Why use the Bible?**

Even though the Bible was written in the past, its message is timeless. God-inspired reports of the origin and meaning of human life have not lost their momentum over time, and information about what is good and what is evil goes through all ages, cultures and civilizations. And all of it is open for discussion because it is still relevant. God and his Word, love and hatred, evil and good, truth and lie, sin and the way of salvation – none of this has changed with time; Only the "backdrop" is transformed, that is, the environment in which these attributes are manifested.

The Bible as a word means the Bible as library, and I think children can see it as library, and not as some set of rules or otherwise irrelevant book, but as a book that has “walked” through the ages and survived. Not many other books can say that. Teachers can thereby take the Bible as a source of timeless stories and not as something causing division and wars around the world. After all and above all else, the Bible teaches love, though some would like to point to it or some other religious Scripture while claiming that evil is the fault of religion. But it is not the fault of either religion or scripture. Evil is always the fault of people, and it doesn’t depend on what kind of religious book they’re reading. Anything can be interpreted in a way that is destructive and uncompromising but we need not throw out the Bible because some persons act without thinking. I believe that P4C can help us think before we act, and the Bible can serve P4C in this.

## **5.3 Problems with using the Bible**

There is always one problem with biblical stories, and this is their base – some theological truth or some connection to God. You can’t run from it, the Bible was written for those who believe in it: maybe not believe in its truthfulness (as history) but certainly



for those who believe it is pointing to the truth of God. But if we take the historical existence of God out of the picture, if we make him into a character of this book as we discuss the stories with kids, we might find a whole different point of view. We don't have to be overtly religious to use the Bible as a base for P4C. The Bible can be used as anything; it depends on our interpretation.

Interpretation is not just about the object or the sign. When we interpret the Bible it is us who interpret it and not the people who wrote it or the one who read it 1500 years ago. Our interpretation changes us in a manner identical to how P4C changes children. By thinking about things, about the ideas and thoughts as we interpret them, we change. The famous semiotician C.S. Peirce says: "I define a sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the later is thereby mediately determined by the former."<sup>41</sup> In this definition, he makes the argument for a third party in the sign/object thesis. Interpretation is the base of reading signs – and therefore of understanding. When we read the Bible, or anything else, we interpret those signs and bring their effect into our lives; and as long as we are so doing, why not use one the oldest texts in the world?

Even with this fact of interpretation, the Bible can be problematic. Atheists may well point to all the awful stories of rape, slavery and murder, but I would tell them not to use those stories for children; and if they will continue to refuse to use Bible then I would tell them that evil is part of our lives and children will have to learn at appropriate age about death and slavery and racism and it won't do them any good to put your children in a bubble. And even fairytales can go 'dark'. Cinderella's step-sisters cutting off their feet, Red Riding Hood being eaten by a wolf, parents dying etc. Again, the Bible was not written for children. Some parts of the Bible are forbidden for Jewish children to read until a certain age. And as it stands on the teacher to choose, then I would leave it on them.

Some conservatives might be opposed because they would like the Bible to be taught the same way we teach science – as statements of facts about the world. But we can't do that. The Bible is not a science book, but a religious book based on storytelling. Conservatives must come to realize Bible is not theirs or true word for word. The Bible was written by people in their time with a certain purpose. (Theologians now find some

---

<sup>41</sup> Atkin, Albert, "Peirce's Theory of Signs", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/peirce-semiotics/>>.

verses and some parts of verses may have been written at later dates.<sup>42</sup>) We can use Bible to tell the story in it, but the story changes with the person reading it.

For many years now there has been Sunday schools for children and Sabbath kindergartens and they use similar systems as in normal schools and I think they could profit from P4C as much as normal schools. In trying to teach children about God they could teach them to figure things by themselves. Teachers have the difficult job of rewiring children' brain. Philosophy just as the real playing has no rules. New experiences, play, thinking rewires our brains and the fastest brains are in children. The older we get, the slower we get.<sup>43</sup> The key to play is that play does not go for the perfect answer play goes for the most useful answer. It is like with maps, you don't need the perfect map, you just need the right one to get you where you need. And more importantly you have to be able to read the map to get somewhere. P4C is about teaching our children to read their own maps, to teach them how to ask questions and how to look for answer. I like Jesus's quote: I am the way and the truth and the life.<sup>44</sup> And for me they are all the same. I see truth as a way and my life as I am walking on my way with truth pointing the way. This could be a good discussion point for teenagers or kids in their late teens.

---

<sup>42</sup> TIMPSON, Trevor. What did St. Paul say about women? *BBC News* [online]. BBC, 2014, **2014**(11), 1 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29513427> .

<sup>43</sup> Mundkur N. Neuroplasticity in children. *Indian J Pediatr.* 2005; 72 (10):855–857. [[PubMed](#)]

<sup>44</sup> John 14,6a. *The Holy Bible: new international version : containing the Old Testament and the New Testament.* Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, c1984.

## 6. Practical preparations

### 6.1 The story

Using the story of the Tower of Babel

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.<sup>45</sup>

Themes: language, difference between people of different language, building things

### 6.2 Basic questions

Pre-reading activity:

Have you ever read about Noah and his sons?

What is a language? What is language? Are these the same questions. Why or why not?)

Do you know people with different languages?

How many other languages do you know?

Questions to discuss during reading:

Why did these people decided to build a city with a tall tower?

---

<sup>45</sup> Genesis 11,1-9. *The Holy Bible: new international version : containing the Old Testament and the New Testament*. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, c1984.

Did you ever wanted to do something like that?

What would you use to build something?

Why is language important when you are doing something?

Post reading questions:

Do you think about what game you're going to play before you play it? When you are playing with your Legos, do you know what are you going to build before you build it?

Do you think the people of Babel were scared of another flood? What do you do when you are afraid of something? Do you hide? Can you hide in tall tower?

Why do you think people build towers these days?

### **6.3 Deciding the theme and style of the lesson**

In this story I would like to highlight the difference that comes with languages. All our lives we meet people, if we don't travel then we meet mostly people that speak our own language, but time-to-time we meet a person who speaks a different language. At schools we have to learn more languages. Are they all equally valued or is the language some sort of border that tells us who is the best cook or who is selfish. National stereotypes come and go; and children don't see them by nature, but they can pick them up really quickly. Children look around them for people to imitate and learn from. Somehow parents are put in situations where they have to explain. Children are fast thinkers and they turn to their parents and family to answer questions they can't find answer for. They have so many questions and for some of them we don't have any good answer.

Prejudice is common and children sooner or later will see it. Some might already know about it and their experience could enrich the other kids. This is why I want to discuss these questions.

Language is important in relationships. Kids might not see it at all, but it might help them if we ask them questions that point them towards understanding why communication is important and how language and literature helps people to be better and to live good lives. But, P4C argues, it is better to not offer them finished answer and let the teacher be surprised what children come up with. What is the most important thing – always talk with them openly (the more open the discussion, the more the kids are going to think).

Maybe some kids have been witnesses to their parents fighting and we can talk about understanding each other and how it is important to understand each other and how

easy it is to misunderstand. Try it out; show them. Language can be tricky, even if it is just the one language. Many children are shy and don't talk at all, then maybe it would be good to teach them how to communicate without words. Or why communication is vital for every human being. Moreover, make it a game. Kids can also learn about animals and how they communicate – and communicate with each other as cats or dogs (with 'words' restricted to 'meow' and 'huff'). Discussion could be led to why and how animals communicate, how people began to use language in the first place, why they communicate now. It is not important to find answers but to show children all the possibilities and why there are so many of them. Kids don't need definitive answers, they need someone to listen to their answers and questions and to answer their questions with questions, and their answers with answers. Children need to know that someone values them as thinkers, and not just as containers of other people's thoughts. And this is very crucial. The end of inquiry is seldom one single statement – but many or none. Don't be discouraged by lessons that bring even more question or non-logical answers. You are teaching children. They live in non-logical worlds and more questions can be a better ending to a lesson than finding an answer. As a teacher you can point out the logical mistakes and show them where and how reality matches – or fails to match, their own.

The group might also discuss why language is important to learning, and why even flowers communicate with nature (in spring everything blooms, in autumn everything is getting ready for winter even though the temperature is the same). And does 'nature' have language? Do non-humans have language – in reality, not just fairy tales? And more, so many more questions to share.

Also, the group can talk about building. Why do people build things? Children build things; when they play, they build. Then what would a child say to people who want to build the tallest building? Children often play with cubes and they build high towers that crumble down very suddenly. The discussion is important because it is basic reasoning. Why do we do the things we do? Do we have reasons or are we impulsive? Why we act the way we do? What kind of buildings are we building now? Can we compare skyscrapers to tall towers? Many children can live in families that want to build their house or can see a lot of buildings being built in the town. These children need to – and will – question why we build these buildings. If the discussion allows it, we can talk about how some buildings can help the environment and how some are very dangerous to it; and also, how some are historical and why and if all of this is important. It's not so much about telling children, but about asking them – with the expectation that they can figure it out. Question everything

and be prepared to have some arguments; be ready for tough question from the children in return. You have to choose and frame your questions in ways you know the children can find an answer. You must take them as partners for discussion and make it a good discussion for their age and personal dispositions.

## **6.4 More question – theme based**

Language as cultural heritage:

Is Czech language important? Is it important to you?

Do you think we should care for our language? If yes - then how? What do you do to care about language? If no - then why not? What happens when people don't care about language?

Would you be happier if all the people talked the same language?

Is (insert your native language) important to you? Why or why not?

Are some languages more important than others? Why? Why not?

Communication:

Is it important to communicate? Why? Why not?

Do you communicate only with language?

Do gestures make communication?

Do gestures make a language?

Do people have to talk to communicate?

What about people who can't speak?

What happens when we can't talk? (Maybe try it out, try to do something without talking.

Make it a game – try telling something without any words.)

Is it possible to misunderstand each other even when we speak the same language? (Talk about different situations, experiences)

What can we do to understand each other?

What happened when God confused their languages?

Different language = different people (same language = same people)

Are we different than other people? If so, how so? If not, how not?

Are girls different from boys? If so, how so? If not, how not?

Are people with different skin color different? Are there differences between people with the same skin color? In what way and why?

Is there difference between Americans and British even if they speak same language?

What is the difference between you and me or you and a girl from Kenya or you and a boy from Tokyo?

Are all the boys same? Are all the girls same? Do they speak the same language?

Do all Czechs speak the same?

Do some people think they are better because they speak a different language?

What would you do if you met somebody from far away and he or she spoke different language? How would you communicate?

Was there a difference between the people of the tower?

Building:

Where do you live? How do think it was build? Why it was build?

What kinds of buildings are around in your town?

Why do people build things? Can just anybody build a house or a bridge?

Do people plan it, why?

Is there a difference between people who do something without planning and with planning? What is the difference?

Are there rules we must follow when we try to build something?

Why there are rules?

Are there rules for tearing something down?

What is the difference between your house and a castle?

Can a house be part of a forest? (Maybe a tree house?)

How did people live hundreds of years ago?

Should we be part of nature or should we have “concrete” cages where only we would be?

## 7. Actual lesson

Transcription of what actually happened

The story of Jesus's last moments – the prayer, the arrest, the court, the funeral, and the empty tomb:

This transcription was collected on Saturday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of April at the Seventh Day Adventist church at Londýnská Street. There was teacher and three children around the age of 6.

Teacher: Ok kids, last time we talked about Jesus's parables. Today we will talk about the end of his life. Why are we talking about him?

Kid 1: Because he was a magician!

Kid 2: No, because he saved us all.

Teacher: Ok. Is it important that we talk about him?

Kid 3: Yes because we can learn from him.

Teacher: Really? How and what?

Kid 1: We can all be magicians!

Teacher: How can you be a magician?

Kid 1: Well he healed people and he helped them and that is what magicians do.

Teacher: Ok. We read about Judas, somebody who was close to Jesus and then he betrayed him. Do you have some good friends?

Kid 2: Yes, I have a best friend at my kindergarten.

Teacher: So what if you told your friend a secret and he or she would tell it to somebody else.

Kid 2: My friend would never do that! But it happened to my other friend Bara.

Teacher: Wow and how did Bara feel?

Kid 2: I don't know I wasn't there.

Teacher: Ok, what about you lot. Can you imagine somebody did that to you?

All the kids: No!

Teacher: Fine, you all must have great friends. But Jesus didn't have all good friends around him. And then he got arrested.

Kid 2: With handcuffs?

Teacher: They probably did not have handcuffs, but if it happened today they would surely give him handcuffs. Have you ever been punished for something you didn't do?

All kids: Yes! (then they start talking all over about their personal stories)



Teacher: Ok, ok! We can't talk over each other. Let me tell you the story here and you will decide, ok? Jesus was innocent. The people that said he did something bad had witnesses, but they were paid to say this. So what would you do?

Kid 2: I would help him!

Teacher: But nobody could help Jesus. And sometimes we can't help ourselves when others are against us, but we know how it ended with Jesus.

Kid 3: He is alive!!

Teacher: Yes, so it ended quite well for him. But we should always be careful when we judge, when we decide something about our friends.

Kid 1: I will be careful.

Teacher: Ok, good.

This was just an example of how the usage of biblical stories in P4C could work. There were mistakes and one of them is the conclusion. It is natural for the teacher to end the lesson with some sort of summary and that is good, but we must be careful about not pushing our own ideas on children, but letting them discover them. So, from the view of P4C, a better summary would be just to sum up the discussion and what they talked about, or to let the children make the summary.

The lesson had a short timeframe, so some discussions had to be ended even though they could have gone for much longer, as it did at the start when the children discussed magic. Sometimes we are on a tight schedule and the teacher has to make choices. It is very important to make plans and know where you need to end up in the story. From every lesson you can take pointers on how to make the next one better. Not one of us is perfect. Here too P4C and Christianity agree.

## 8. Conclusion

Here in The Czech Republic, people are very cautious about Christianity.<sup>46</sup> I think this might be because nearly everybody knows some Christian and, as is fairly well known, Christians are often not good advertisements for Christianity. But I don't have any proof of this or a better argument. But from my own experience I just know some people see it this way. Some scholars have looked to the past, identifying a pattern of Czech distaste for the pressures emanating from religious and secular authorities. This goes back as far as 1415, when followers of Jan Hus, a priest in Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic), separated from the Roman Catholic Church after Hus was burned at the stake for heresy. Some historians argue that the repression of the period of time after the Thirty Years' War (1618 to 1648) reverberates to the present day in the collective Czech memory, casting the Catholic Church as an overly privileged partner of foreign occupiers. But this is only one theory and I don't want to stray from my topic. These facts – or others not stated, do not alter the usefulness of Biblical stories in P4C. More, using Biblical stories in this way may help to alleviate this situation.

In my thesis I wanted to provide a different viewpoint with which we can see a new possibility. In this, we may be able to use the unending well of stories we call The Bible, not merely to transmit religious instruction, but as philosophical text for children. There is a tradition of teaching children in Sunday schools; but this commonly uses a traditional pedagogy: just as in normal schools we seem only to ever tell them the stories, without ever questioning them or discussing them.

As adult we start to question too late. We go to seminars about communication and pay for it, because we find how bad we are at trusting others. We ask ourselves what is Love and we sing about how love is all you need<sup>47</sup>. But then, if you don't really know what it is, how can you ever get it? I think we are missing a few steps in this thinking. We need to start with less difficult questions and go from there to questions such as: What is love. It is very important for children to learn the art of critical thinking. Maybe not the critical thinking academics use in their theories, but it could be thoughts that later translate into it. "The questions we ask can be extremely revelatory. They can demonstrate what

---

<sup>46</sup> PEW RESEARCH CENTER. *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* [online]. Washington D.C., 2017 [cit. 2017-06-13]. Accessed: <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>.

<sup>47</sup> All You Need Is Love. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-13]. Accessed: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All\\_You\\_Need\\_Is\\_Love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_You_Need_Is_Love).

information we find valuable, how well we pay attention, and what we don't know. Maybe this is all why we're so terrified to ask them.<sup>48</sup>

I began this thesis by writing that children are our future. They are the ones who will inherit after us this planet and all the knowledge we have collected. We have to educate them in a way that will teach them by example or by the question. I like the idea of Millennium Prize Problems<sup>49</sup>. You get the question and you try to answer it. You don't inherit all the different ways all the others have failed before you. You get a clean sheet. Our future can get a clean sheet. We can give them philosophy without all the 'baggage' of the past history. Taking what you need and let the rest be in the past. Philosophy is a pursuit of wisdom and a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means. I would like Philosophy to be practical, so I could use it in my daily life just like the math I learned in school and I would like children to use philosophy for themselves.

Philosophy for children does that. Children can ask questions – just as they are asked, and in a group or by themselves try to find answers. Those of us who meet children in our daily lives know they like to play just as they like examples, or something they can work with. Stories are one of the best ways to help them explore philosophy, ethics and moral points. And not just show them but help them understand, make their own discoveries. We can write new stories, we can use fairytales, or we can use storybooks that were written before the Letterpress printing was invented. And I would say - work with what you have to do the best job can. The most important thing is to ,trick' the student into revealing their belief system, then challenge it – drag it into the open, and force the student to recognize their beliefs (so as to not simply follow them but actively re-shape them in the light of new information). Because of my upbringing, I love to use Bible stories to challenge my beliefs and the beliefs of others. And because it has done me a good service I think it could do as much good for others. Also, it could help erase this stigma the Bible and other Scriptures often have – that they are out of date, and good for nothing more than conserving the conservatives.

If we want children only to memorize things, if the child's only job is to 'upload' all the knowledge we have decided they should know, then traditional pedagogy is the

---

<sup>48</sup> Why Don't We Ask Questions?: by Kate Bussey. *Odyssey* [online]. New York: Odyssey Media Group, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/why-dont-we-ask-questions>.

<sup>49</sup> The Millennium Prize Problems. *Clay Mathematics Institute* [online]. Oxford, UK: Clay Mathematics Institute, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <http://www.claymath.org/millennium-problems/millennium-prize-problems>.

way. But as we can see ever more clearly, traditional pedagogy does not have the best results. Nearly all of the best and brightest people on the planet, at some point in their life, failed within traditional pedagogy. Or maybe the traditional pedagogy failed them; either way, I don't want that for children. The purpose of education is not memorizing but understanding. P4C can serve a religious education as well as it serves a secular one.

Churches learned how to use video and audio, but all of it as a part of traditional pedagogy with no place for discussion (maybe only to say how you are). But everybody can profit from P4C, including churches. The experiences and habits of thinking P4C offers can teach children empathy, altruism, and sympathy. Kids think in relatable ways. They get to know things in relation to them (this man is not a dad, he is my dad). Children are much more open to possibilities and teacher's job is not to close that door, and again, P4C offers the teacher help in this. Sharing philosophy with children can help them wonder - and even more, to help them open ever more possibilities. And that is what I would everybody do.

## Bibliography

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD. *Process and reality ; an essay in cosmology*. Corr. ed. New York [u.a.]: Free Pr, 1978. ISBN 9780029345702.

*All about love: new visions*. New York: Perennial, 2001. ISBN 00-609-5947-9.

All You Need Is Love. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-13]. Accessed: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All\\_You\\_Need\\_Is\\_Love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_You_Need_Is_Love) .

Aristotle, *Ethics*. VIII.11, 1161a11.

Atkin, Albert, "Peirce's Theory of Signs", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/peirce-semiotics/> .

Barbara Pitkin, "'The Heritage of the Lord': Children in the Theology of John Calvin' in *The Child in Christian Thought* (ed. Marcia JoAnn Bunge; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001)

Calvin, *Comm. Psalms V* , 112.

"Child." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Accessed March 29, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/child>.

DEWEY, John. *How we think*. Dover Publications, 1997. ISBN 978-0486298955.

DEWEY, John. *My Pedagogic Creed*. Univ of Michigan Library, 2011. ISBN 14-585-0141-8.

*Školní vzdělávací program pro gymnaziální vzdělávání a pro nižší stupeň osmiletého studia se všeobecným zaměřením - denní vzdělávání: Vzděláním ke schopnosti porozumět druhým*. Praha: Gymnázium Elišky Krásnohorské, 2016. Accessed May 29, 2017: <http://www.gekom.cz/o-nas/dokumenty.html> .

Free resources from The Stapleford Centre: Supporting the teaching of Christianity in Religious Education. *The Stapleford Centre* [online]. Surrey: Waverley Abbey House, 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources> .

Guidelines for Philosophical Discussion of Dragons and Giants: By Gareth B. Matthews, revised by Marissa Saltzman. *Teaching Children Philosophy* [online]. 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/DragonsAndGiantsFromFrogAndToadTogether> .

JAMES, William. *Pragmatism*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. ISBN 04-862-8270-8. Summarized by Emory University at: <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/opinion.html> .

K.J. Topping and S. Trickey (2007) "Collaborative Philosophical Inquiry for School Children", *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Dec 77(4).

KOPŘIVA, Pavel. *Respektovat a být respektován*. Kroměříž: Spirála, 2005. ISBN 80-901873-6-6.

LEITHART, Peter J. Philosophical Bible. *First Things* [online]. The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 2016, , 1 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2016/06/philosophical-bible> .

Matthews, Gareth and Mullin, Amy, "The Philosophy of Childhood", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/childhood/> .

Mundkur N. Neuroplasticity in children. *Indian J Pediatr*. 2005;72(10):855–857. [[PubMed](#)]

Panentheism. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panentheism> .

Pedagogue. *ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY*. [online]. © 2001-2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Available at: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedagogue> .

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* [online]. Washington D.C., 2017 [cit. 2017-06-13]. Accessed: <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/> .

"Philosophy." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Accessed May 29, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/philosophy>.

Philosophy For Children. *TeachingTimes* [online]. Birmingham: Imaginative Minds, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-29]. Accessed: <http://www.teachingtimes.com/kb/53/philosophy-for-children.htm> .

Process Philosophy and the New Thought Movement: The most outstanding 20th-century development in philosophy--now recognized as an indispensable resource for New Thought. *New Thought Movement* [online]. Alan Anderson, 2002 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://ppquimby.com/alan/process.htm> .

ROWLING, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003. ISBN 0747551006.

RUSSELL, Bertrand. *History of Western philosophy and its connection with political and social circumstances from the earliest times to the present day*. New York: Simon, 1945. ISBN 978-067-1201-586.

Santrock, John W. (2008). *A topical approach to life-span development* (4 ed.). New York City: McGraw-Hill.

Talking Philosophy With Small Children: by Per Jespersen. *Philosophy for Kids* [online]. 2017 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <https://sites.google.com/site/p4cp4c/philosophyforkids>.

*The Holy Bible: new international version : containing the Old Testament and the New Testament*. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, c1984.

The Millennium Prize Problems. *Clay Mathematics Institute* [online]. Oxford, UK: Clay Mathematics Institute, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <http://www.claymath.org/millennium-problems/millennium-prize-problems>.

TIMPSON, Trevor. What did St. Paul say about women? *BBC News* [online]. BBC, 2014, **2014**(11), 1 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29513427>.

VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie I.: dětství a dospívání*. Praha: Karolinum, 2005. ISBN 80-246-0956-8.

Waikiki Elementary and Philosophy For Children – Accessed: June 13, 2017 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v7OeYwluYY>.

Why Don't We Ask Questions?: by Kate Bussey. *Odyssey* [online]. New York: Odyssey Media Group, 2017 [cit. 2017-06-12]. Accessed: <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/why-dont-we-ask-questions>.

Year Long Story Curriculum-Enquiry from The Wizard of Oz. *Sara Stanley: Creating philosophical worlds in the classroom* [online]. Cambridge: Sara Stanley, 2013 [cit. 2017-05-29]. Accessed: <http://sarastanley.co.uk/year-long-story-curriculum-enquiry-from-the-wizard-of-oz/>.

## Summary

This thesis deals with the idea of connecting P4C and biblical stories.

In the first chapters I am explaining the different view on children, philosophy and Bible. Before we can start connecting P4C with biblical stories there needs to be an understanding in the terminology of my thesis. Children are thinking beings from the start of their brain functions and though many thinkers in the past thought that children are not capable of thinking about ideas like beauty, bravery, love, we know now that children can think for themselves. They are not adults and we never should work with them as adults, but we can do philosophy with them. P4C is based on asking questions in safe environment and building in children a sense of wonder, questioning and critical thinking. I present the view that P4C does not refer to teaching children traditional philosophy; rather, it is a pedagogic approach developed by Matthew Lipman that centers on teaching thinking skills and the ability to question and reason. It is a student-led, enquiry-based approach to learning.

In the second half of my thesis I am working through the problems and methods teachers can use. Bible can be as useful as any other fable or fairy-tale, but teacher must chose the stories wisely and work through the right process and the methods to use. I worked on an exemplary preparation and I did a test lesson with pre-school children. I am sure, that biblical stories can be used in P4C and that it can benefit everybody involved. It is time we asked the questions and question the morality, ethics and philosophy of Bible. In using biblical stories, we may be able to use The Bible, not merely to transmit religious instruction, but as philosophical text for children.



## Shrnutí

Tato práce se zabývá spojením Filosofie pro děti a biblických příběhů.

V prvních kapitolách vysvětluji různé pohledy na děti, filosofii a Bibli. Předtím, než můžeme začít spojovat P4C s biblickými příběhy, musíme si ujasnit termíny použité v mé práci. Děti jsou od počátku své mozkové činnosti myslící bytosti. Přestože v minulosti mnoho učenců usuzovalo, že děti nejsou schopny přemýšlet o kráse, statečnosti, lásce apod., dnes víme, že umí uvažovat i v této oblasti. Děti ale nejsou dospělí a jako s dospělými s nimi nemůžeme pracovat. Můžeme však s nimi vést filosofické rozhovory. Filosofie pro děti je založena na otázkách položených v bezpečném prostředí, na vytváření smyslu pro zvědavost, vyptávání se a možném kritickém myšlení. Představuji zde myšlenku, že P4C nechce učit děti tradiční filosofii, ale spíše je to pedagogický přístup, který začal Matthew Lipman. V centru všeho je naučit přemýšlení a schopnosti ptát se, usuzovat. Zakládá se na přístupu, který je iniciován žáky, jejich dotazováním se.

V druhé části práce rozebírám metody učitelů a navrhuji možnosti využití biblických příběhů při práci s dětmi, které by mohly pozitivně přispět ve výuce. Bible může být stejně užitečná jako pohádky a bajky. Učitelé ale musí příběhy vybírat opatrně a moudře. Metody i proces vyučování je třeba dobře propracovat. Vytvořila jsem návrh přípravy na hodinu pro učitele a zkušební hodinu s předškolními dětmi jsem sama vyzkoušela. Jsem přesvědčena, že biblické příběhy mohou být použity ve Filosofii pro děti a užitek budou mít všichni zúčastnění. Je na čase, abychom se naučili klást otázky, ptali se po morálce, etice a filosofii v Bibli. Při vyučování s aplikací biblických příběhů můžeme Bibli použít nejenom k předávání náboženských pokynů, ale jako filosofický text pro děti.