

Introduction to:
Philosophy
for Children

Lessons Book
For Exploring Big Questions



by Caroline Mazaro

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Ages 6-9

Materials Checklist

(Prepare Before Starting the Book)

Required for All Lessons

- ☐ Book *Sophie's World* – Jostein Gaarder
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Erasers
- ☐ Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- ☐ Blank paper or sketchbook
- ☐ Quiet space for reading and discussion

Lesson 1 – What Is Philosophy?

- ☐ Wooden geometric solids (Montessori-style)
- ☐ Small mat or cloth

Lesson 2 – Who Are You?

- ☐ Mirror
- ☐ Suitcase (real or toy)
- ☐ Small objects for suitcase (toy, stone, key, heart, leaf, etc.)

Lesson 3 – Where Does the World Come From?

- ☐ Access to nature (garden, park, yard, or window view)
- ☐ Natural objects (leaves, stones, sticks, seeds, flowers)
- ☐ Modeling clay
- ☐ Work mat or tray

Lesson 4 – The Greek Philosophers

- ☐ Modeling clay or drawing materials
- ☐ Flashlight, lamp, or phone light
- ☐ Small objects or toys (for shadows)
- ☐ Blank wall or large sheet of paper

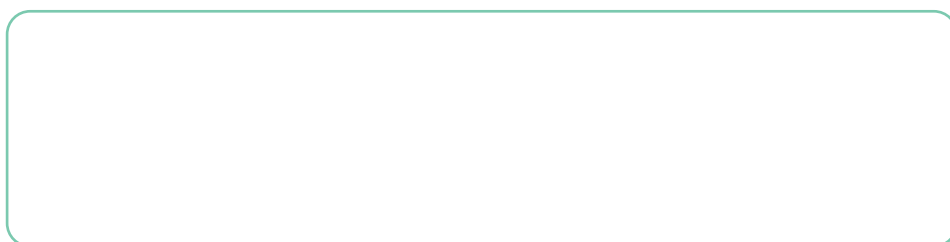
Lesson 5 – Believing and Thinking

- ☐ Everyday objects for observation
- ☐ Quiet space for conversation

Optional (Helpful Throughout the Book)

- ☐ Folder or binder for completed pages
- ☐ Rug or cushions for reading
- ☐ Soft background music

This book belongs to:



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Summary

Lesson 1 What Is Philosophy? **Page 2**

Lesson 2 Who are You? **Page 10**

Lesson 3 Where Does the
World Come From? **Page 18**

Lesson 4 The Greek
Philosophers **Page 26**

Lesson 5 Thinking About
Philosophy and Religion **Page 35**

Before beginning Lesson 1, please read the first chapter of the book *Sophie's World*, "The Garden of Eden," with the child. This can be done right before the lesson or the day before, at a calm moment.

Lesson 1

What Is Philosophy?

A Mysterious Letter

One afternoon, when everything felt ordinary, a letter appeared.

There was no stamp.

There was no return address.

It was simply waiting.

Inside, the paper was small and quiet, as if it wanted you to read slowly.

It said:

Who are you?

That was all. No explanation. No answer.

The question stayed in the air, like a whisper that did not want to leave. And something strange happened.

The moment you read it, your mind woke up.

You started thinking about yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, and the world around you.

That is how philosophy begins.

Not with answers, but with a question that follows you, gently asking you to look closer.

Lesson 1

Today we begin something very special. It is called philosophy.
Philosophy means learning to ask big questions, the kind that make life **more interesting**.

1 - Read the excerpt from the book "Sophie's World"

*"She found a plain white envelope. Inside was a small piece of paper. On it, in big letters, was written just one question:
'Who are you?'"*

2 - How would you feel if you received a mysterious letter like this?

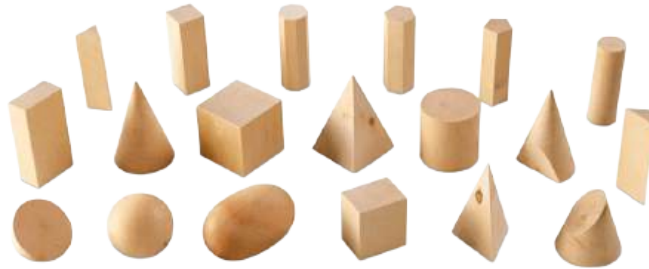
Draw or write your answer here:

3 - Activity: Holding an Idea

Prepare

Spread a small mat on the table or floor. Place the wooden solids.

These shapes are like ideas. Ideas are invisible, but today we will make them 'touchable' so we can think better.



Select a shape

Choose a shape that represents *Who am I?*

Ask and discuss

3.1 - Why do you think this shape matches your idea?

3.2 - In your own words, what is a question?

3.3 - Why do philosophers ask so many questions?

Philosophers ask so many questions because they really like to think and wonder.

A philosopher looks at the world and says:

"Wait... why is this like this?"

"What does this really mean?"

"Could it be different?"

They ask questions because:

- Questions wake up the mind.

When you ask a question, your brain starts exploring.

- They are curious.

Philosophers want to understand people, nature, and life better.

- They don't stop at the first answer.

They ask again to see if there is something deeper.

- Questions help us know ourselves.

Some questions are about the world, and some are about who we are inside.

- Thinking can be playful.

Asking questions is like opening a door to a new idea.

So a philosopher is someone who says:

"I don't know everything, and that's exciting."

4 - Storytelling

Long ago, before people had books or schools, a young girl sat near a stream. She looked at the water and wondered, 'Who am I in this big world?' The wind did not answer, the water did not answer. But her thinking answered. It said, 'I am someone who asks questions.' And that was the beginning of her journey.

What is the girl thinking? Can you write or tell a small story about her thoughts?



*Philosophy begins
with questions*

5 - Coloring

Later today, you can come back to this page and color the drawing below with your own favorite colors.



6 - Let's Reflect

What was your favorite part of today?

Talk about your answer with others.

What big question do you want to explore next time?

Write your answer on the cards below.

This is the end of Lesson 1

7 - Playing time!

Nature extension:

Go to the window or outside.

Ask: "What in nature makes you wonder?"

Art extension:

Soft crayon drawing: "A question floating in the sky."

Montessori extension:

Let her arrange the geometric solids from "most mysterious" to "least mysterious," explaining her reasoning.

Summary of What We Learned Today

- A philosopher is someone who asks questions.
- "Who am I?" is a philosophical question.
- Ideas can be represented with physical objects.
- Stories help us explore inner life.
- Narration strengthens independent thinking.

Before beginning Lesson 2, please read the second chapter of the book *Sophie's World*, "The Top Hat," with the child. This can be done right before the lesson or the day before, at a calm moment.

Lesson 2

Who Are You?

After learning that philosophy begins with questions, a new question appears.

Not a question about the world,
but a question about you.

One day, a girl stopped and looked at herself.
She did not just see her face or her body.
She wondered about the person inside.

She asked herself:

Who am I in this big world?

Am I just my name?

Am I my body?

Am I my thoughts, my feelings, my memories?



Some people live their whole lives without asking this question.

But philosophers are different.

They stop.

They think.

They look inside.

When you ask "Who am I?", something special happens.

You begin to notice that you are more than what others see.

You are someone who thinks, feels, wonders, and changes.

This question does not need a quick answer.

It is a question you can carry with you,

a question that grows as you grow.

And that is why philosophers ask it.

Lesson 2

1 - Read the excerpt from the book "Sophie's World"

*"Sophie starts to notice that her thoughts belong to her in a special way.
No one else can think her thoughts for her.
She also notices her feelings, how they change, how they sometimes surprise her.
She understands that she is not exactly the same person she was when she was
younger, and yet she is still herself.
This makes her wonder what stays the same when everything else changes."*

2 - Mirror Activity

What You Need

- A mirror (hand mirror or wall mirror)
- A quiet space
- A few minutes of calm

Look at yourself in the mirror.

You can see your face, your eyes, your body.
But there is also a part of you that the mirror cannot show

Reflect & discuss together

- What do you notice about yourself today?
- How do you feel right now?
- What is something you like about yourself?
- What do you think makes you *you*?
- Do you think you will be the same person when you grow older? Why?



3 - Coloring

Later today, you can come back to this page and color the drawing below with your own favorite colors.



4 - Writing

You are not only what others can see.
You are your thoughts, your feelings,
your questions, and your dreams.
And learning who you are is something
you can do your whole life.

Finish the sentence:

"I am someone who..."

I am someone who

5 - What Is Inside Me Today?

(For this activity, use a real suitcase, or a toy suitcase)

Look at the suitcase

Each object can stand for something inside you:

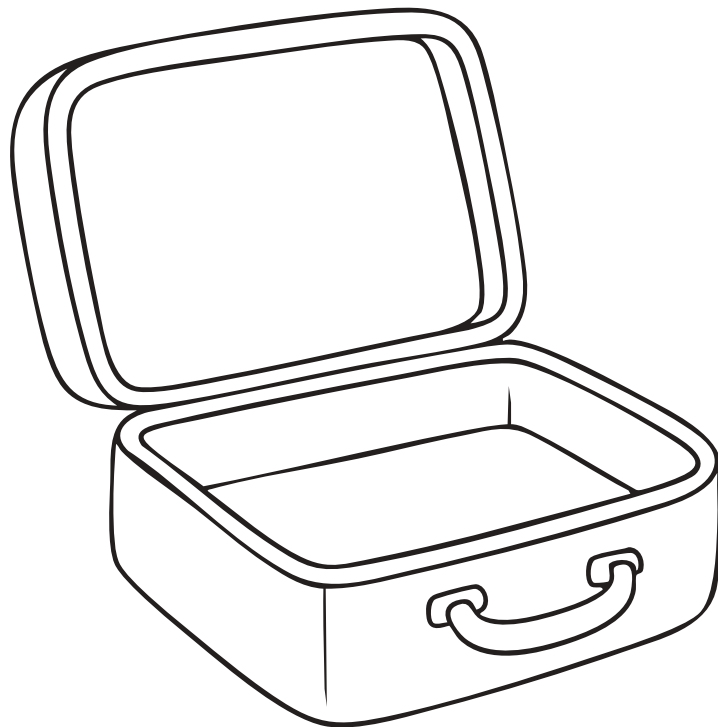
- A feeling
- A thought
- Something you like
- Something that matters to you today



Now do this

Choose one object that feels important to you right now.

Draw the object you chose inside the suitcase



What do you think the suitcase means?
Can one object explain who you are completely?
Why did you choose this?

6 - Coloring

Later today, you can come back to this page and color the drawing below with your own favorite colors.



*Sometimes, knowing who you are
does not mean finding one big
answer.*

*It means noticing what you are
carrying inside you today.*

*Feelings change.
Thoughts change.
But they are all part of who you are.*

A Letter from Sophie

Hello little Philosopher,

My name is Sophie.

I am writing to you because you are asking a very important question.

Who am I?

When I first asked this question, I thought the answer would be easy.
I thought I was my name, my body, and the way I look.

But then I noticed something.

Sometimes I feel happy.
Sometimes I feel sad.
Sometimes I feel brave.
Sometimes I feel quiet.

And I am still me.

I learned that who I am can change, just like the day changes from morning to night.
That does not mean I disappear.
It means I grow.

I also learned that my feelings are part of me, but they are not all of me.
Feelings come and go, like visitors.
I can notice them without getting lost inside them.

One day, I started using objects to help me think.
A stone felt strong, like courage.
A heart felt warm, like love.
A key felt like a new idea.

I learned that objects can help us understand what is inside us, even when we do not have the right words yet.
That is called thinking with symbols.

And do you know something important?

You do not need to find one big answer to the question "Who am I?"
You can explore it slowly.
You can explore it through play.
You can explore it with drawings, objects, and imagination.

Thinking can be gentle.
Thinking can be safe.
Thinking can be fun.

If you are asking questions, you are already doing philosophy.

With curiosity,
Sophie

7 - Shake It Up!

Dancing Exercise

- Who we are can change,
- Feelings move through us,
- Our body is part of how we think.

Now it's time to let the body think too.

How to Begin

Stand up and find a little space around you.

Take a moment and listen:

- Your thoughts live in your mind.
- Your feelings live in your heart.
- Your body helps you understand both.

Now, let's move.

Part 1: Feelings in Motion

Now move your body to show how you feel today.

You can try moving like you feel:

- happy
- calm
- strong
- curious

You may listen to soft music if you like.

Part 2: Shake it UP!

Now shake your whole body!

- Shake your arms.
- Shake your legs.
- Shake your shoulders.
- Shake out the feelings that are ready to go.
- Shake in new energy.



How does your body feel now?

Summary of What We Learned Today

- I can ask the question “Who am I?”
- Who I am can change as I grow.
- Feelings are part of me, but not all of me.
- Objects and play can help me understand myself.
- My body and movement help me think and feel.

Before beginning Lesson 3, please read the third chapter of the book *Sophie's World*, "The Myths," with the child. This can be done right before the lesson or the day before, at a calm moment.

Lesson 3

Where Does the World Come From?

Look at the sky.
Look at the trees.
Look at yourself.



Long ago, people told stories to explain the world.
They said gods lifted the sky, painted the sun, and made the trees grow.
These stories were full of magic and imagination.

Then, some people began to wonder in a new way.
They looked at water, rocks, plants, and stars and asked questions.

They asked:
"Where did this come from?"
"Why does it change?"
"Is there something the same in everything?"

Instead of only telling stories, they started to watch, listen, and look for patterns in nature.

That was the beginning of philosophy.
It is not about having all the answers,
but about being curious and asking brave questions about the world.

And you can do that too.

Lesson 3

1 - Looking for Patterns in Nature

Today, you are going to explore the world like a philosopher.

Step 1: Go Outside (or Look Near a Window)

Go to a garden, a park, a backyard, or even a sidewalk.

(If you cannot go outside, look carefully at plants, stones, or natural objects near you)

Find 3 to 5 natural objects, such as:

a leaf

a small stone

a flower or petal

a stick

a seed

a shell

Step 2: Look Closely and Find Patterns

Now look at each object very carefully.

What shape is it?

Is it smooth or rough?

Does it have lines, dots, or curves?

Is it light or heavy?

Put your objects next to each other.

Ask:

Do some of them look similar?

Do some have the same shapes?

Do you see repeating lines or colors?

What feels the same? What feels different?

You are looking for patterns.

Patterns are things that repeat or belong together.

Step 3: Draw the pattern you found

Use the space below to draw the pattern that appeared most often in the items you collected.



Step 4: Reflection

Circle one sentence that feels true to you:

The world feels
mysterious.

The world feels full of
surprises.

The world feels
connected.

The world makes me
curious.

2 - Working with clay

The Story of Prometheus and the Clay People

Long ago, before there were people walking on the Earth, the world was quiet.

Prometheus was a kind and curious being who loved the Earth.
He noticed the soil, the clay, and the shapes nature could make.

One day, Prometheus took clay from the ground and began to shape it with his hands.
He shaped arms and legs, hands and feet.
Slowly, the clay began to look like people.

But something was missing.

The clay shapes did not move.
They did not breathe.
They did not feel.

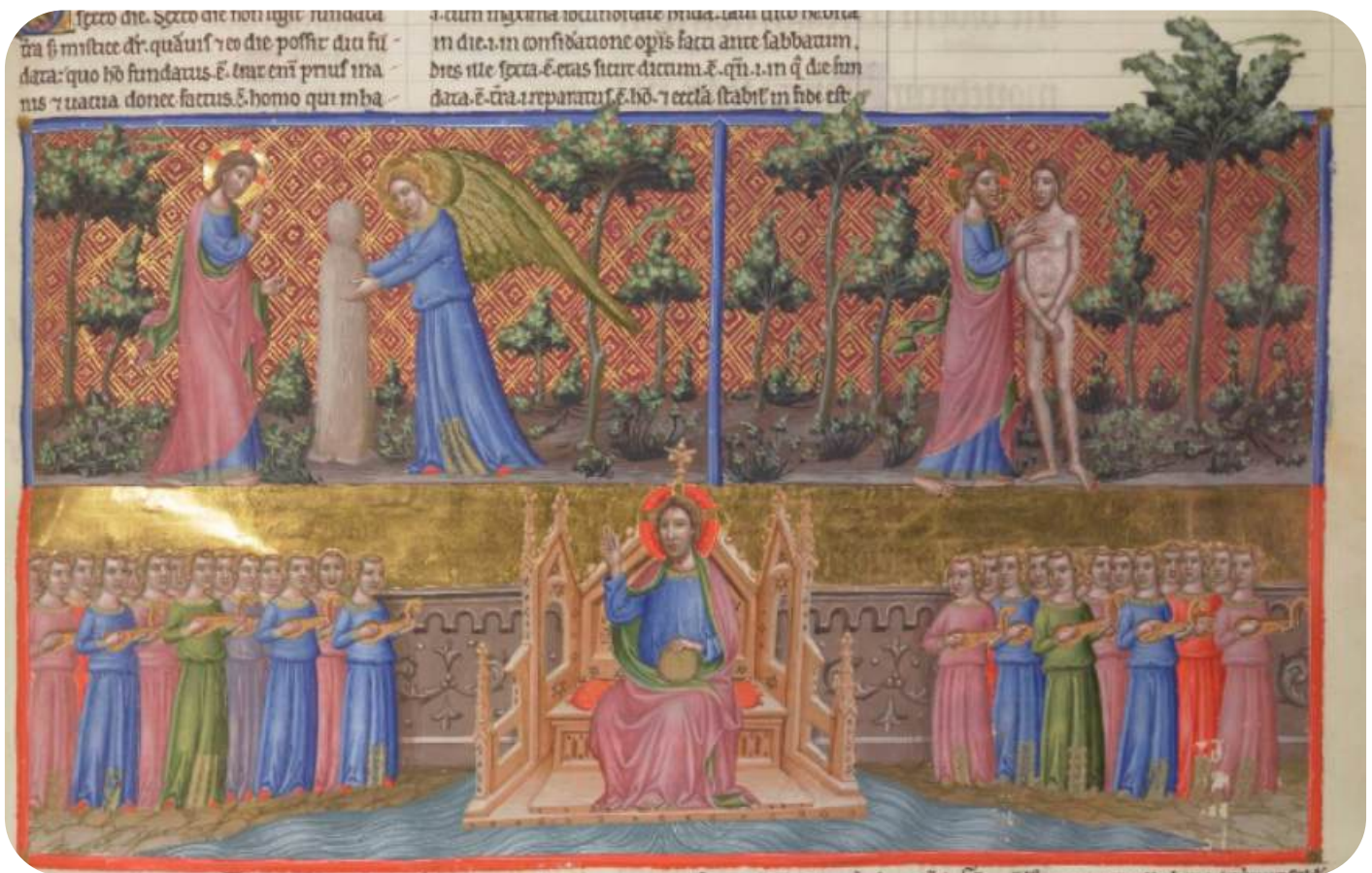
Then Athena, the goddess of wisdom, came near.
She looked at the clay people and smiled.

She leaned close and gave them a gentle breath.
With that breath, the clay people came to life.

They could move.
They could think.
They could feel.

And so, people were made from the Earth,
but life came from something more.

That is why some people say
we belong to the Earth,
and we also carry something invisible inside us.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creation_of_life_from_clay#/media/File:The_Great_Canterbury_Psalter_-_Psalms_93.png

Clay Activity

Shape the Beginning

Take a piece of clay in your hands.

Feel it.

Press it.

Notice how it changes when you touch it.

Now shape the clay into something that feels alive.

It can be a person, a part of nature, or a new shape.

When you finish, take a deep breath
and gently blow toward your clay,
just like in the story.

Look at what you made.

Think quietly:

Your hands can change things.

Maybe the world changes like this too.

3 - Coloring

Later today, you can come back to this page and color the drawing below with your own favorite colors.



4 - Rhyme Time: Match the Words

Draw a line to match the words that sound alike. Words on the left rhyme with words on the right. Take your time. Say them out loud if you like

Earth •

• Far

sky •

• High

clay •

• Birth

star •

• way

Summary of What We Learned Today

- People wonder where the world came from.
- Long ago, people told stories about it.
- Some people looked at nature for answers.
- Nature has patterns we can see.
- The Earth can be shaped, like clay.

Before beginning Lesson 4, please read the fourth chapter of the book *Sophie's World*, "The Natural Philosophers," with the child. This can be done right before the lesson or the day before, at a calm moment.

Lesson 4

The Greek Philosophers

How did humans start explaining the world differently?

Hello little Philosopher,

After people asked where the world came from, some thinkers began to look at the world in a new way.

They looked at water, air, earth, fire, plants, animals, and stars.
They wanted to understand how nature changes.

They noticed something amazing.

Fish come from water.

Flowers grow from the ground.

Babies grow inside their mothers.

Nature is always changing.

These thinkers believed that there must be something basic behind all this change.
Something that everything comes from and returns to again.

They did not all agree on what it was.

Some thought it was **water**.

Some thought it was **air**.

Others thought it was **many things working together**.

What matters most is not which answer was correct.

What matters is how they thought.

They stopped telling stories about gods and started looking carefully at **nature**, asking questions, and searching for patterns.

That is why they are called **natural philosophers**.

They were learning to understand the world by thinking, observing, and wondering.

Enjoy your lesson!

1 - what do you think the world is made of?

Draw your answer below.

You can also use modeling clay to make a sculpture or paint on a canvas instead.



2 - Forming opinions

Read the thoughts on the cards below. Which one do you agree with the most?
Do you agree with more than one card?



Which two words describe the card best?
Circle your two answers.

Thales

- Thales thought that water was the beginning of everything. He noticed that:
- Plants grow when there is water, animals need water to live, water can change into ice or steam.
- He believed the world comes from something natural we can see.

☐

Natural
Observable
Mythical

Anaximenes

- Anaximenes believed that air was the beginning of everything. He noticed that:
- Air can become wind, clouds, rain, and ice. Air can be thick or thin. He thought air could change into all other things.

☐

Air
Fixed
Transforming

Heraclitus

- Heraclitus believed that everything changes all the time. He said:
Everything flows,
Nothing stays exactly the same,
Opposites belong together.
- He trusted what he could see in nature.

☐

Permanent
Change
Flow

Anaximander

- Anaximander thought the world came from something without limits. He believed:
- There are many worlds. The source of everything is something unknown. This source is bigger than anything we can see.
- He taught that not everything needs a clear shape or name.



Boundless
Abstract
Visible

Parmenides

- Parmenides believed that nothing really changes.
- He trusted thinking more than seeing.
- Even though things look different, he believed they stay the same inside.
- He taught that reason is very important.



Reason
Sensory
unchanging

Empedocles

- Empedocles thought the world is made of four elements:

Earth Air Fire Water

He believed:

- Things change when elements mix and separate, nothing disappears, it only rearranges.



Single
Elements
Combination

3 - The Cave Story

Long ago, a philosopher named Plato told a story.

He said: Imagine some people who have lived inside a dark cave their whole lives. They are sitting still and can only look at one wall. Behind them, there is a fire. In front of the fire, shapes move around. The fire makes shadows on the wall.

The people see only the shadows.

They have never seen anything else.

So they believe the shadows are the real world.

One day, one person stands up and turns around.

At first, the light hurts his eyes. Everything looks strange and confusing. Then he walks out of the cave.

Outside, he sees the sun, colors, animals, trees, and flowers. He realizes something important: The shadows were not the real things. They were only pictures of real things.

The person feels happy and free. But then he thinks about the others still in the cave. So he goes back to tell them. He says: "There is a bigger world outside. The shadows are not everything." But the others do not believe him. The cave feels safe to them. The new ideas feel scary.



Inside the Cave and Outside the Cave

What You Need

A small flashlight, lamp, or phone light

A wall or a blank sheet of paper

A few small objects or toys (animals, blocks, hands, leaves)

A slightly darkened room, if possible

Part 1: Inside the Cave (Shadows)

- Dim the lights in the room.
- Turn on the flashlight and point it at the wall.
- Place an object between the light and the wall.
- Watch the shadow appear.

What do you see on the wall?

Does the shadow look exactly like the object?

What happens if you move the object closer or farther?

Part 2: Leaving the Cave (Light)

- Now turn on the lights.
- Look at the real objects together.

Does the object look the same as the shadow?

What can you see now that you couldn't see before?

Which one shows more details, the shadow or the object?

What the Story Teaches Us

Plato wanted to show that:

- Sometimes we think we know everything, but we only see part of it.
- Learning new things can feel uncomfortable at first. Thinking deeply helps us understand the world better.
- Plato was also thinking about his teacher Socrates, who asked hard questions and helped people think, even when they did not like it.

The cave is like not asking questions. The light outside is like learning and thinking. When you ask questions, you are stepping out of the cave.

4 - A Philosophical Debate

Today, you will practice debating like a philosopher.

Greek philosophers liked to talk, listen, and disagree calmly.

They liked clear reasons, not shouting.

Greek philosophers believed that good questions are more important than fast answers.

They believed ideas grow when we share them.

This is called a **debate**.

A debate is not a fight.

It is a way to share ideas with words.

When you explain your ideas and listen to others, you are thinking like a philosopher.

Step 1: Choose a Question

Read the example question below:

"What is more important: Water or Air?"

There is no right answer.

What matters is how you explain your idea.

Step 2: Choose Your Side

☐ I think **water** is more important

☐ I think **air** is more important

Take a moment to think why.

Step 3: Build Your Argument

Complete this sentence out loud or in writing:

"I think _____ is more important because _____."

Try to give one clear reason.

Step 4: Listen to Another Idea

Try to understand their idea. You can respond with one of these sentences:

"I understand your idea."

"That made me think."

"I see it differently."

5 - Reflecting

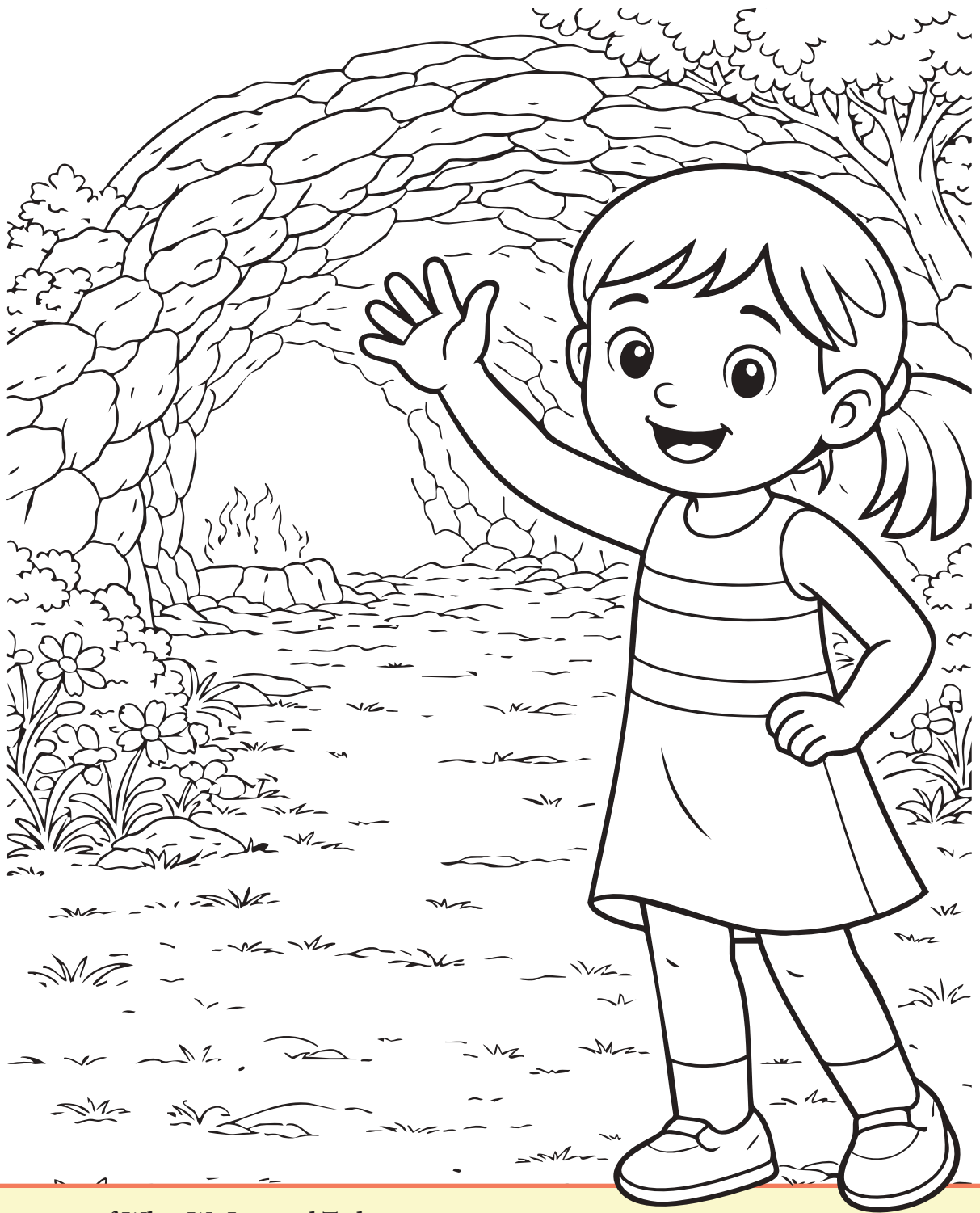
How do you feel?

- ☐ I felt confident sharing my idea
- ☐ I learned something new
- ☐ I changed my mind
- ☐ I listened carefully

Can you think of words to describe philosophy

You can write them here.

6 - Coloring



Summary of What We Learned Today

- Some Greek thinkers asked big questions about the world.
- They wanted to understand nature, not just tell myths.
- Each philosopher had a different idea about what everything is made of.
- They used observation, thinking, and discussion to explain change.
- Philosophy began when people started asking why instead of just believing stories.

Lesson 5

Thinking About Philosophy and Religion

Hello little Philosopher,

It's Sophie again. As I kept learning philosophy, I noticed something important: For a long time, people did not separate philosophy and religion the way we sometimes do today. People believed in God, but they also asked questions. They asked:

Where does the world come from?

Why are we here? How should we live?

What is good and what is wrong?

Religion often answered these questions with stories, teachings, and rules for living. Philosophy answered them by thinking, discussing, and using reason. For many centuries, philosophers believed that faith and thinking could work together. Some philosophers believed that:

Faith helps us trust that life has meaning.

Reason helps us understand the world more clearly.

A philosopher named Thomas Aquinas believed that reason and faith were like two different paths leading to the same truth. One path used belief, the other used thinking. Other philosophers believed that reason should ask questions freely, even about religion. They believed that thinking should never be afraid. What matters most is this: Philosophy does not tell you what to believe. Religion does not stop you from thinking. Both try to help people understand life.

You are allowed to ask questions.

You are allowed to wonder.

You are allowed to think carefully and kindly.

That is how humans have learned for thousands of years.

With curiosity,

Sophie

Lesson 5

1 - Believing and Thinking

People understand the world in different ways.

Some people **believe**.

Some people **think** and ask questions.

Most people do **both**.

To Believe

To believe means to feel that something is true, even if you cannot see or prove it.

Believing often comes from:

- trust
- stories
- feelings
- family or culture

Believing can make people feel safe or guided.

To Think

To think means to use your mind to ask questions, look at ideas, and try to understand things. Thinking often comes from:

- wondering
- observing
- asking "why?" or "how?"
- comparing ideas

Thinking About Believing

Some people believe stories or ideas that are important to them.

Answer gently:

Is there something you believe in?

Does believing make you feel safe, calm, or curious?

You can draw instead of writing if you like.

Thinking About Thinking

Circle the sentence that feels closest to you today:

I like to ask questions.

I like to think quietly.

I like to talk about ideas.

I am still learning how I like to think.

2 - How Do I Know What I Know?

Knowledge can come from different places

Part 1: Knowing with the Senses

Choose a few objects and place them in front of you.
Then, talk about the questions below:

What do you see?

What color is it?

Is it big or small?

Is it soft or hard?

Part 2: Knowing with the Mind

Now ask questions without showing objects:

Can you imagine a unicorn?

Can you remember yesterday?

Can you think of something far away?

Part 3: Thinking Together

Ask gently:

Which one feels easier, seeing or thinking?

Can you think of something you know without seeing?

Can you see something but not understand it?

Sometimes we learn by looking. Sometimes we learn by thinking.

Reflection: Finish the sentences

I know things with my eyes when I _____.

I know things with my mind when I _____.

3 - Reading and understanding

First we will read the text below, then we will answer some questions.

The Wall That Looked Like Something Else

Once upon a time, there was a curious girl who loved to look closely at the world around her, especially when something felt a little strange or surprising.

One day, she stood in front of a tall wall, and on that wall she saw what looked like a long hallway stretching far into the distance, with lines and shapes that made her feel as if she could walk straight inside it.

She tilted her head, stepped a little closer, and slowly raised her hand, because something inside her whispered that maybe the wall was not exactly what it seemed to be.

Her eyes were telling her one story, but her body was not so sure.

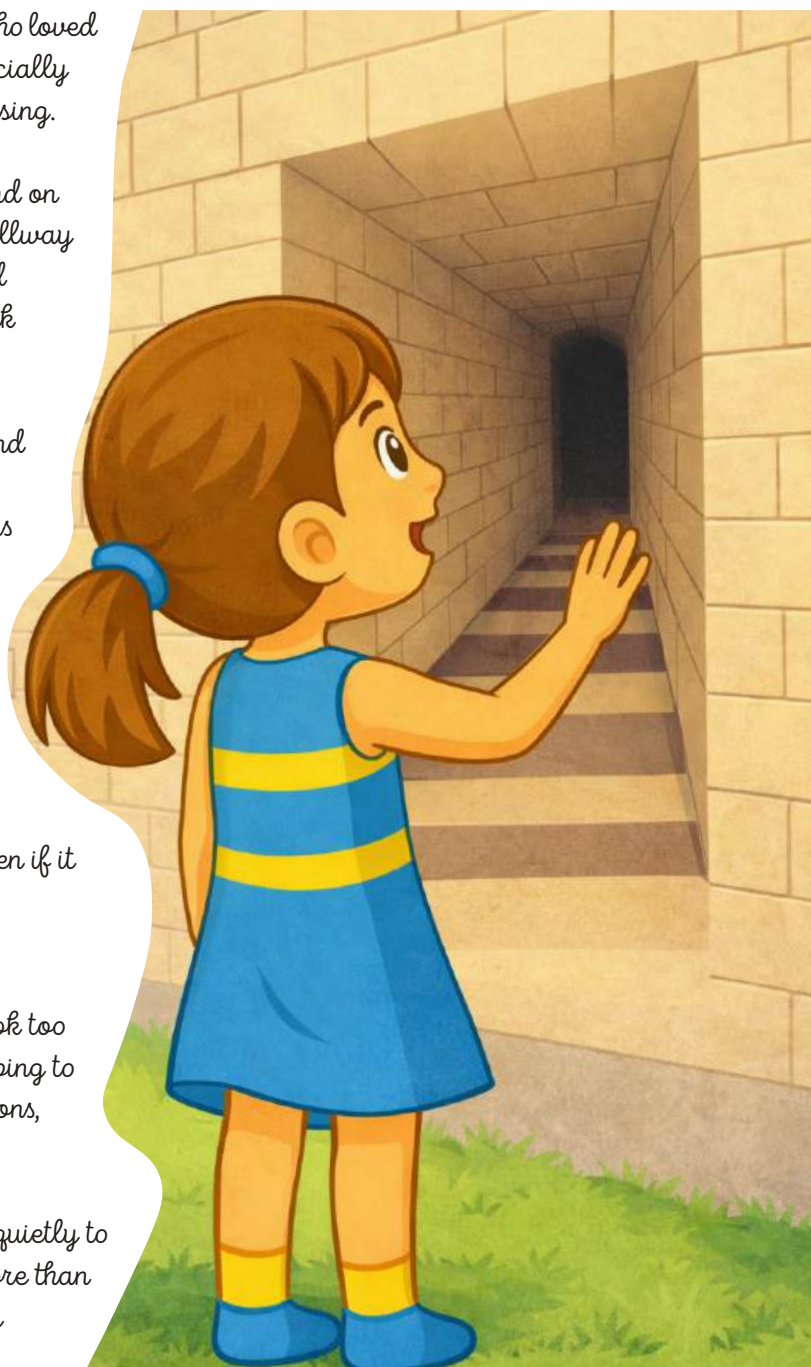
Was the hallway real, or was it only a picture?

Could something look deep and far away, even if it was flat and close?

Could her eyes be playing a trick on her?

She remembered that sometimes, when we look too quickly, we believe what we see without stopping to think, but when we slow down and ask questions, new ideas begin to appear.

So she paused, looked again, and wondered quietly to herself if understanding the world meant more than just seeing it. And that is where your thinking begins too.



Part 1: Describe What You See

Use words to tell what your eyes notice.

*What shapes do you see on the wall?
What do the lines make you think of?
Does the wall look flat, or does it look deep?*

You can point, talk, or draw your answer.

Part 2: Think a Little More

Now, stop and think.

*Do you think the hallway is real, or is it just a picture?
Why do you think your eyes see it that way?
Has this ever happened to you before, when something looked different than it
really was?*

There is no right or wrong answer.

Part 3: Listen to Your Thinking

Close your eyes for a moment, then open them again.

*Did your idea change after thinking more?
Did your eyes and your thoughts agree with each other?
What helped you understand the picture better: looking, thinking, or both?*

Summary of What We Learned Today

- People try to understand life in different ways.
- Believing means trusting something that feels true.
- Thinking means asking questions and looking for reasons.
- Believing and thinking can exist together.
- Asking questions helps us understand the world better.

Philosophical Questions

Use the next five pages to write your own philosophical questions as they appear in your life. Take your time. Some questions take a long time to arrive.

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