



WORK ETHICS



7-11



Class



40 minutes



TO GO OR NOT TO GO?



The goal of this exercise is to help children to:

- understand the value of work ethics;
- recognize work ethics as a personal and social value;
- realize that work ethics can be challenged and tested throughout life.



You can use a work ethics scenario as follows, which can be read out, or printed out and handed-out to pupils.

The work ethics scenario to be used:

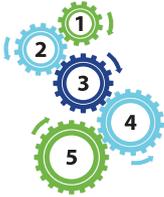
Every week Georgia has committed herself to tidy up her room and help in walking and bathing the dog on Fridays in the afternoon. This is always so helpful for her parents and she never skips her tasks. A couple of weeks before, Georgia's best friend Anna told Georgia, that her father has made arrangements and bought tickets for Anna's family to attend a well-known music show coming to town for a unique show.

The day before Friday, right after the school, Anna told Georgia that due to a last minute change, Anna's father would not attend the show. So there was one ticket available for someone to use it and attend the show with Anna's mother and Anna, since Anna's father won't make it after all.

The day of the show is Friday, and it starts at 6 o'clock, coinciding with the commitments of Georgia as scheduled and promised to her parents and to herself. Georgia is really highly interested to attend the show, since her favorite music group is playing. Anna tells Georgia that she shouldn't miss this opportunity!

She even tells her to find some kind of excuse to avoid the tasks and go to see her favorite music group for free. All this happens on Friday, just a few hours before Georgia has to start attending her afternoon tasks.

What should Georgia do? What decision should she make?



The exercise is based upon a work ethics scenario with fictional characters. An open in-class discussion on the possible decisions to be taken by the story characters, serves the facilitator to highlight the main properties of work ethics. How each person perceives the value of work ethics as an important aspect of hers/his relationship with the others and the self, as well as hers/his understanding of the concepts of commitment, 'right or wrong doing', self-respect, and respect for the others.

Introduction to the concept of work ethics

Introduce the children to the term of work ethics. Use a simple explanation, like for example, that work ethics is about a person's beliefs and values about a task, or a job they do. Draw a parallel, stressing that what they do now at school and at home, and more importantly how they do it, is a preparation phase for what they will do and how they will act in the future as grown-ups.

Make a clear statement, that beyond the subjects they learn every day at school (e.g. reading, writing, painting, playing etc.) 'work ethics' is something that can be taught not in the sense of the other subjects, but as a way to help them be responsible and dependable at what they do, knowing at the end that they did the best they could do with respect to a task or job, in different and diverse situations.

Explain the value of work not only as a personal issue, or as an issue that serves as a mean of just earning money. Stress the importance of work as a service to the others and a way to create common good, bringing eventually joy not only to one's self, but to others as well.

In-class discussion on work ethics based on the scenario

Having read the work ethics scenario, children should be involved in an open discussion regarding the possible decisions to be made by Georgia about how she would handle the situation. Allow children to state their opinion, suggesting what Georgia should do. Write all possible statements on the board. You can add possible statements as well. A list of possible options should come up and look like this:

- Georgia says a clear 'no' to Anna right from the start and stays firm on her commitment to go for fulfilling her tasks.
- Georgia tells her parents and informs them that she cannot make it, giving out the true reason for this.
- Georgia tells her parents first that she is tired to do the tasks, and then, tries to talk them into letting her go to the show.
- Georgia asks her parents if she can change the schedule for Friday, so that she can do the tasks the day after or some other day.
- Georgia skips the tasks and in afternoon she just 'announces' to her parents that she would prefer to go to the show.
- Georgia tells Anna that she cannot go to the music show but they can meet afterwards, when her tasks are done.

Prompt a discussion by allowing children to explore the consequences of each option for Georgia, Anna, and the parents involved. Show connections between each option and the concepts of responsibility, honesty and dependability.

Discuss the issue of work ethics as something that can be changed according to the situation at hand versus something that is constant and consistent whatever the situation.

Ask the children if they would be able to recognize best options and make right decisions for themselves and their work each time they are facing a dilemma? Is that even possible?



Lead the discussion towards full conclusions, prompting the children to think about work ethics with the help of the scenario, by asking themselves the following indicative questions:

- Does the option I choose make me feel good about myself and proud of myself?
- Can I honestly say to myself that this is the right thing to do?
- Whichever decision I make, how would I feel if others found out (friends, parents, etc.) what I decided to do and eventually did?