








Democracy

This module gives teachers and pupils tools to reflect about the meaning of issues referred to democracy, such as justice, tolerance...

-  10-14
-  11 x 60 min.
-  board/flip chart;
-  This module gives teachers and pupils tools to reflect about the meaning of issues referred to democracy, such as justice, tolerance...
-  **Cosmopolitan issues**



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Introduction

Background information and didactical perspective

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an approach that was developed by Professor Matthew Lipman, who was influenced by educational psychologists and philosophers such as Vygotsky, Piaget and Dewey as well as by the tradition of Socratic dialogue. P4C builds on higher order thinking (critical, creative and caring thinking), inquiring, reasoning, listening and dialogical skills. Children are encouraged to create their own philosophical questions. The facilitator supports children in their own thinking, reasoning and inquiring, as well as in building on each other's ideas in a dialogue. In P4C, the facilitator fosters student-led discussions on philosophical questions. The role of the facilitator is crucial to ensuring quality dialogue and progress, as well as integration within the curriculum. It is well documented that P4C has an impact on children's cognitive, personal, social and emotional development. P4C encourages children as well as young adults to think for themselves and develop dialogical skills.

Learning outcomes

Competencies

critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective skills, inquiry skills, dialogical skills

Lesson plan

Abbreviations:

A = Activity
D = Discussion
GW = Group work
IW = Individual work

HW = Homework
PW = Partnerwork
PTS = Previous Teacher's Study

PO = Pupils opinions
PP = Pupil's presentations
TP = Teacher's presentation

Lesson No 1 : Distributive justice

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Distributive justice</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of the exercise <i>Distributive Justice</i> to each pupil, then introduces the subject asking students to read the questions contained in the text	M1 Leading idea "Distributive justice" M2 Exercise "Distributive justice"
Main section (5 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pupils should start reading the questions and think about them	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher stimulates the discussion among pupils about the questions contained in exercise <i>Distributive Justice</i> inviting them to discuss with classmates the issues that they think are more relevant. Students do not need to answer all of them. The questions should create a philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answers (not allowing "yes" or "no" answers) to facilitate a critical thinking about the meaning of distributive justice	

Lesson No 2 : Distributive justice and equality

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	How can everybody eat? Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Distributive justice</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise• Prepare a circle of chairs• Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher divides the class into small groups and hands out a copy of exercise <i>How can everybody eat?</i> to each group. Then the teacher introduces the topic asking students to read the text contained in the exercise.	M1 Leading idea "Distributive justice" M3 Exercise "How can everybody eat?"
Main section (15 min.) GW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a group, students must try to find out a solution for the problem presented in <i>How can everybody eat?</i>, sharing their opinions and reflections	
Discussion (30 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once the previous task is finished, the whole class discuss each solution to the problem explaining the reasons of their choices	

Lesson No 3 : Fairness

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Distributive justice</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise Prepare a circle of chairs Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher asks each pupil to write down a definition of the word 'fairness' (exercise <i>Fairness</i>). Under the definition he or she also has to provide some examples 	M1 Leading idea "Distributive justice" M4 Exercise "Fairness"
Main section (10 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students work individually writing definitions and examples 	
Discussion (20 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The definitions and examples of the whole class will be compared and discussed 	M4 Exercise "Fairness"
Discussion (20 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher encourages pupils to discuss the questions provided in exercise <i>What is fair?</i> Students do not need to answer all of them. The questions should create a philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answers (not allowing "yes" or "no" answers) to facilitate critical thinking about the meaning of distributive justice 	M5 Exercise "What is fair?"

Lesson No 4 : Cases of distributive justice

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Distributive justice</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise• Prepare a circle of chairs• Prepare a flip chart Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher writes on the flip chart the various situations presented in the text contained in exercise <i>Cases of distributive justice</i>	M1 Leading idea "Distributive justice" M6 Exercise "Cases of distributive justice" Additional material <ul style="list-style-type: none">• board/flip chart
Discussion (45 min.) PO D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher invites students to reflect on whether, and in what sense, the situations written on the flip chart can represent cases of distributive justice and for which reasons	

Lesson No 5 : Right and wrong

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Right and wrong</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Right and Wrong</i> to each pupil and invites them to read the several examples contained in the text and to reflect whether each example is to be considered right or wrong	M7 Leading idea "Right and wrong" M8 Exercise "Right and wrong"
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The pupils share with the classmates their conclusions explaining the reasons for each choice and the criteria used for their judgment.	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Helped by the teacher, the students reflect whether a universal way to define what is right or wrong really exists, or if what is right or wrong changes depending on its context, historical time, or culture	

Lesson No 6 : Right and wrong behaviours

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	Hot potato – right and wrong behaviours Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Right and wrong</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise• Prepare a circle of chairs• Prepare a music player• Prepare a ball• Prepare a flip chart Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher introduces the activity as it is described in activity <i>Hot potato - right and wrong behaviours</i>	M7 Leading idea "Right and wrong" M9 Activity "Hot potato – right and wrong behaviours" Additional material <ul style="list-style-type: none">• board/flip chart• ball
Main section (15 min.) A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During the activity, the teacher takes notes on the flip chart of all the examples that the participants gave to designate right or wrong behaviors	Additional material <ul style="list-style-type: none">• board/flip chart
Discussion (30 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When students end the activity, the teacher asks the participants to explain the reasons for their choices. It is likely that there will not always be an agreement and this could trigger a discussion	

Lesson No 7 : What are you going to do?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Right and wrong</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairs Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>What are you going to do?</i> to each pupil and invites them to read the several situations and think about them	M7 Leading idea "Right and wrong" M10 Exercise "What are you going to do?"
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The students should debate with their classmates the reasons for choices and the criteria they used to make their decisions	

Lesson No 8 : The majority rule

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	The majority and the minority Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>The majority rule</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairs Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher introduces the subject of the activity as it is explained in leading idea <i>The majority rule</i>	M11 Leading idea "The majority rule" M12 Activity "The majority and the minority"
Main section (15 min.) A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The students put forward several proposals explaining the reasons for supporting one over the other.	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The students discuss two or three proposals and then put them to a vote. There will probably be one proposal chosen by the majority. Now the students ask each other why the other proposals were not voted for, and ask the people belonging to the minority whether they are in anyway satisfied with the final choice. If this is not the case, the majority will try to convince the others that the final choice is the right one. On the contrary, it may be the minority who convince the majority to repeat the vote in reference to the other proposals	

Lesson No 9 : The assembly

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>The majority rule</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairs Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher divides students into two groups and asks each group to identify an issue to debate and solve, as it is explained in activity <i>The assembly</i>. The issue could be a real one, such as extending the time for the break between classes or when to plan exams. Each group will have to identify who is the recipient of the request (for instance, the principal in the case of the break, or a teacher in the case of exams) and choose a spokesperson	M11 Leading idea "The majority rule" M13 Activity "The assembly"
Discussion (45 min.) A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Each group should choose, not elect their spokesperson. This implies a preliminary discussion during which each group must explain the good reasons and criteria for the choice. Subsequently, each group will debate how to submit the request to its respective audience, what reasons they gave and what the expected outcomes are. Later, every spokesperson will explain his or her group's request to the other group as if he or she were speaking to the official addressee. Which spokesperson will succeed in correctly reporting what had been discussed during each group's assembly?	

Lesson No 10 : Solidarity

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) PTS TP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Solidarity</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairs <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Solidarity</i> and exercise <i>Acts of solidarity</i> to each pupil and invites them to read the several questions and think about them. He also invites them to think about the characters actions in <i>Acts of solidarity</i> and identify the reasons that supported their actions	<p>M14 Leading idea "Solidarity"</p> <p>M15 Exercise "Solidarity"</p> <p>M16 Exercise "Acts of solidarity"</p>
Discussion (40 min.) A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Helped by the teacher, the students reflect on the questions concerning solidarity and discuss them with the rest of the class.	

Lesson No 11 : Rules

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>Rules</i> in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercisePrepare a circle of chairs Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Rules</i> to each pupil and invites them to read the several questions and think about them	M17 Leading idea "Rules" M18 Exercise "Rules"
Discussion (40 min.) A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Helped by the teacher, the students reflect on the questions concerning rules and discuss them with the rest of the class	

M1 Leading idea “Distributive justice”

Since the time of Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, distributive justice has been defined as that which regulates the distribution of goods and available resources in a way that is proportional to the production and merits of each and every person, while commutative justice is that which regulates contracts and has a goal of balancing the advantages and disadvantages of the contractors.

In the idea of distributive justice, an equality criterion is implied, but we need to understand to what kind of equality we are referring. Indeed, for instance, in ancient Greece, the idea of equality was different from that which we are (or should be) familiar with today. The ‘equals’, that is, those who could benefit from a just distribution, were, in the Athenian democracy, only the ‘free men’, excluding women and slaves (and children, of course). Consequently, one can see that in ancient times (but are things so different nowadays?), equality in the possession of goods is actually based on an acceptance of a substantial inequality of individuals determined by chance. It is essential to reflect on the issue of distributive justice in a world where 1% of people possess a high proportion of the global wealth and most people live in conditions of moderate to extreme poverty. The conflict, latent or manifest, engendered by the model of a globalized society that is organized according to the dictates of a “wild” and trading system free-from-rules (and often managed by unscrupulous multinationals) appeals to our minds and our consciousness. For this reason, it is important that we have the opportunity to reflect on what is meant by ‘a fair distribution of resources’, and what might be alternative models to existing policies.

This reflection is especially significant nowadays, since many populations are moving from their native countries with the hope of finding better financial and working conditions in the host countries or because they are forced to move because of wars or political persecutions.

M2 Exercise “Distributive justice”

Stimulate the discussion among students about the following questions but remember that they do not need to answer all of them. The questions should create philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students’ answers (not allowing “yes” or “no” answers) to facilitate critical thinking about distributive justice.

1. Is it fair that there are very rich people and very poor people?
2. Is it fair that there are rich countries and poor countries?
3. Is it inevitable that some people are rich and others poor?
4. Could there ever exist a world in which everyone is equally rich or has equal access to resources and opportunities?
5. Would it be fair if everyone had what they need, nothing more or less?
6. Would it be fair if everyone had access to resources and opportunities based on their merits? How can we decide what are merits?
7. Would it be fair if everyone had access to resources and opportunities according to their needs? How can we decide what are needs?
8. Is it fair to have more than what one needs?
9. Must people who are more intelligent have more than others? If so, is that fair?
10. How can we decide what is fair?
11. Who decides the criteria for fairness?
12. What is the difference between justice and fairness?

M3 Exercise “How can everybody eat?”

You are on a trip with your friends and at lunchtime you realize that some of them don't have their packed lunch or money to buy some food. There are 10 of you, only 4 of you have a sandwich and you all are very hungry. Take into account that in the group there is a celiac boy, an Islamic girl who is observant, and a boy who is intolerant to dairy products. Even if you could gather the money, you would not succeed in collecting more than 10 €, and the cheapest sandwich, salami and cheese, costs 2.50 €. What would you decide to do? Which criteria would you use to satisfy everyone's needs?

M4 Exercise “Fairness”

Each student tries to write down a definition of the word ‘fairness’. Under the definition he or she has to provide also some examples. Afterwards, the definitions and examples of the whole class should be compared and discussed.

M5 Exercise “What is fair?”

1. Is it fair to treat every child the same way?
2. Is it fair to compare children in class with each other?
3. What do we mean by “fair enough”?
4. What do you mean if you say that we have to share the cake fairly?
5. Is it fair to ask children to do chores?
6. What does it mean to say something is a fair price?
7. What is a fair game?
8. It is fair that a child should not be penalized by society for being a refugee.

M6 Exercise “Cases of distributive justice”

Various situations are presented below. Reflect on whether, and in what sense, they can represent cases of distributive justice and for what reasons.

1. Dividing a sandwich with a friend who doesn't have lunch.
2. Giving money to charity.
3. Giving a lift to a friend who doesn't have a motorcycle.
4. Allowing your classmate to copy a test.
5. Dividing the booty from a theft in equal parts.
6. Cutting a 10 € note in order to share it with your friend.
7. Teachers' paying the same attention to all the different needs of the children in the class.
8. Fouling during a football game in order to help your team (hoping to go penalty-free).
9. Speaking with your classmate silently while the teacher is explaining the lesson.
10. Sharing someone else's secret with your friends.
11. Sharing a problem with your friends.
12. Giving up on going out with your friends in order to take care of your brother or sister who is ill.

M7 Leading idea “Right and wrong”

We often use the words “right” and “wrong” to express whether a mathematical process or claim is correct. We would say, for example, that a mathematical calculation is correct if it respects a procedure of predefined rules, or an answer to a history question is correct if it corresponds to the facts (or accepted story) of the event in question.

In addition, the two expressions are used to indicate what is right or wrong in a moral or ethical sense. In this case ‘Right’ and ‘wrong’ refer to what is appropriate regarding one’s moral or ethical duty. Usually, we intend “moral” to refer to what concerns the personal sphere and “ethical” to refer to what concerns the public or social sphere.

It would be interesting to explore with your students the meanings they give to the words “right” and “wrong.” For example, you could invite them to reflect if there exists a universal way to define what is right and what is wrong, or if what is right and wrong changes in different contexts, historical times, or cultures.

M8 Exercise “Right and wrong”

Read the following and say whether each example is of something right or wrong. Explain the reasons for each choice and the criteria used for your judgment.

1. To avoid the oral test, Giovanni pretended to be ill and remained at home.
2. Afrah’s parents asked the principal to find an alternative activity to the religion class, but the principal replied that it was not possible. Afrah would have to move into another room during the religion lesson.
3. At Giulia’s party there were some children who were vegetarian. Her parents made only vegetarian sandwiches.
4. Yesterday Giorgio met Sandro, the boy with whom he always argues. Sandro’s moped had stopped working, leaving him stranded, so Giorgio stopped and helped him fix it.
5. Last Sunday, since the weather was lovely, Tiziana called Suthescika to invite her to go out for a walk in the park. While they were walking, some guys insulted Suthescika by commenting on the color of her skin. Tiziana reacted by insulting them in return.
6. Ilaria wanted to buy her boyfriend a present for his birthday. Since she did not have money after using all her pocket money, she opened her mother’s purse and took 10 euros without asking.

M9 Activity “Hot potato – right and wrong behaviours”

You need some music and a ball. The game is a variant of “hot potato”. The students sit in a circle and one of them has the ball. When the music starts, the ball is passed around to the closest classmate, in a clockwise direction. The ball is like a potato that has just been baked, so therefore it is hot. When the music stops, whoever has the ball has to present an example of a right behavior (for example: telling the truth). The music starts up again and the ball is passed around; when the music stops again, whoever has the ball has to present an example of a wrong behavior (for example, punching a classmate). Everything has to move very quickly. The one who goes more than five seconds without saying anything will be eliminated.

During this activity, the teacher takes notes of all the examples that the participants gave to designate right or wrong behaviors. When the students end the activity, the teacher asks the participants to explain the reasons for their choices. It is likely that there will not always be agreement and this could trigger a discussion.

M10 Exercise “What are you going to do?”

1. Read the following questions and choose an answer that actually corresponds to what you would do if you were in the situations described. Subsequently, you should debate with the rest of the class the reasons for your choices and the criteria you used to make them.
 - a. You were invited to a party and you know that your parents absolutely do not want you to go. What are you going to do?
 - b. Try to convince your parents to give you permission to go by promising to do your homework and keep your room tidy for the rest of your life.
 - c. Respect the will of your parents and decline the invitation because you think that your parents, with their experience, cannot be wrong.
 - d. Accept your parents' decision, even if you think it's wrong, simply because they are your parents.
 - e. Convinced that you are right, lie to your parents by telling them that you are going to sleep at a friend's house, and then go to the party.
 - f. Other reaction.....
2. Two friends are furiously arguing during the break and one of them offends the other by referring to the colour of his or her skin. What are you going to do?
 - a. Take your racially offended classmate's side, without worrying if he or she was right or wrong.
 - b. Tell the teacher, but without mentioning the racial offence.
 - c. Try to make them reason with each other about the object of the argument without any interest in the racial offence.
 - d. Stay there to watch them without intervening – it is not your business.
 - e. Other reaction.....
3. Your elder brother has discovered that your best friend belongs to a different culture and, for this reason, he wants you not to meet your friend any more. What are you going to do?
 - a. Demand for a “family summit” to reason together on the issue.
 - b. Decide not to see your friend anymore.
 - c. Report the issue to an association that fights against racial and ethnic discrimination.
 - d. Think, “Who cares? Whatever will be will be”.
 - e. Other reaction.....

M11 Leading idea “The majority rule”

The concept of justice is closely connected to the question of the best form of government: a just society will express a just government. In a cosmopolitan context, it could be important to reflect on what is, or should be, the form of government or political structure capable of sustaining societies which are increasingly becoming a mixture of different cultures, ideas, and traditions. It would seem that nowadays the form of government deemed as the most just is democracy, in its Western version. However, the debate is on going over what kind of democracy is the fairest: representative or participatory. It is evident that, due to the growth of the modern states, and the increase in the number of citizens, it would be difficult to have an effective bureaucratic functioning and state apparatus under direct democracy. As a consequence, most states in our world are based upon representative democracy as their system of government.

Democracy should be the form of government that recognizes and sanctions the equality of all citizens before the law, and guarantees the freedom of opinion of each and every person. Freedom of opinion implies the possibility of debating and expressing one’s own critical judgment and, therefore, the possibility of thinking for oneself.

Through the representative system, there is the risk of what has been called “the tyranny of the majority,” which is the danger of a massive levelling and homogenization of individual liberties. The power of the majority is dangerous because it leaves no room for discussion and is based on the idea that “wisdom” resides purely in the larger numbers, while there is actually no guarantee that the choices of the majority are necessarily just or that the minority has chosen wrongly. The risk looms large that the minority will in the end acquiesce to the will of the majority. At this point, it is interesting to remember Solomon Asch’s experiment. In 1956, Asch demonstrated how, in a group, the choices of the majority, even if clearly wrong, influence and modify a person’s judgment - even regarding his or her visual perception.

Representative democracy is in danger of taking the possibility of active participation in political life away from the citizens, who, through the mechanism of delegation, are relieved of any responsibility and lose interest in what should concern them and in debate, exchange, and critical reflection. How can this danger be avoided? What do your students think?

M12 Activity “The majority and the minority”

Imagine that the head teacher has asked you to paint your classroom and to change the arrangement of your desks, the teacher’s desk and the blackboard. The head teacher has given you carte blanche: you can use one color or cover the wall with murals. You have to choose colours or the theme of the murals and everything that concerns the rearrangement of the items in the classroom. Put forward several proposals and explain the reasons for supporting one over the other. When, after a discussion, you identify two or three proposals, put them to a vote. There will probably be one proposal chosen by the majority. Now ask each other why the other proposals were not voted for, and ask the people belonging to the minority whether they are in anyway satisfied with the final choice. If this is not the case, will the majority be able to convince the others that the final choice is the right one? Can it happen that, instead, it is the minority that convinces the majority to repeat the vote in reference to the other proposals?

M13 Activity “The assembly”

Divide students into two groups. Ask each group to identify an issue to debate and solve. The issue could be a real one, such as extending the time for the break between classes or when to plan exams. Each group will have to identify who is the recipient of the request (for instance, the principal in the case of the break, or a teacher in the case of exams) and choose a spokesperson.

The spokesperson should be chosen, not elected, and this implies a preliminary discussion during which each group must explain the good reasons and criteria for the choice. Subsequently, each group will debate how to submit the request to its respective audience, what are the reasons they gave, and what are the expected outcomes. Later, every spokesperson will explain his or her group’s request to the other group as if he or she were speaking to the official addressee.

Which spokesperson will succeed in correctly reporting what had been discussed during each group’s assembly?

M14 Leading idea “Solidarity”

In a cosmopolitan society, human relationships offer a significant starting point to develop a new interpretation of reality. Together with empathy and imagination, solidarity is an important element that reinforces relationships. Is solidarity an instinctive or a rational act? Does solidarity arise from an instinct related to us as human beings? Does it come from a deliberate reflection on what we should do in a specific circumstance?

Indeed, solidarity is when we understand ourselves (and experience ourselves) as part of a larger whole. It involves seeing ourselves as an extension of others and sharing our living space with the people that surround us so that what happens to them involves (implicates) us.

In this sense, solidarity is like a geometrical body: every part of the body is necessary to the whole. If just one side of the geometrical body falls down, the whole body collapses. In this way, every single part of the whole is interested in the survival of the other parts.

The question is whether solidarity concerns only closed groups of human beings who defend themselves against others (for example, think of the working class) or whether solidarity can exist in the name of a more general concept, such as equality. However, sometimes people who carry out an act of solidarity seem to disregard their own interest and are willing to jeopardize their own life or defy the law for the sake of an Other. Consider the example of people who have put their lives in danger when violating the laws and norms of their own country in order to save persecuted people.

M15 Exercise “Solidarity”

1. If my classmate is unjustly scolded by our teacher, do I feel like I am being unjustly scolded myself?
2. If my classmate is unjustly scolded by our teacher, do I defend my classmate against my teacher?
3. If my classmate is unjustly scolded by our teacher, should the whole class rebel? Why?
4. If my little brother or sister is hit by an older child, do I feel like I am being hit?
5. If my little brother or sister is hit by an older child, do I instinctively run to help him or her?
6. If my little brother or sister is hit by an older child, what are the reasons that might make me decide to defend him or her?
7. If I see some people who are making fun of a friend of mine, do I feel like they are making fun of me?
8. If I see some people who are making fun of a friend of mine, do I instinctively react to defend him or her?
9. If I see some people who are making fun of a friend of mine, what are the reasons that might make me decide to defend him or her, and how?
10. If I see a person I don't know in danger, is it as if I were in danger too?
11. If I see a person I don't know in danger, do I instinctively help him or her?
12. If I see a person I don't know in danger, what are the reasons that might make me decide to save him or her?

M16 Exercise “Acts of solidarity”

Khadim is a boy of African origins. His family was evicted by their landlord without notice. Since Khadim’s parents didn’t have a lease, they couldn’t sue for it; on the contrary, the landlord had threatened them – if they didn’t go away immediately he would reported them to the police for squatting. Khadim and his family had to leave the house, and the landlord didn’t give them the deposit back either. Some of their family friends, also Africans, put them up until they could find a new house. The father of one of Khadim’s friends is a lawyer and offered to help them get their money back. The students’ parents had a collection to help them pay the legal costs, which they couldn’t otherwise afford.

Think about the characters’ actions and identify the reasons that supported their actions. After that, discuss if and in what sense they could be defined as acts of solidarity.

- Their African friends helped them because...
 - a. they come from the same culture.
 - b. they belong to the same social class.
 - c. they think that something similar could happen to them too.
 - d. other reasons

- The lawyer helped them because...
 - a. he is a man of the law and he can’t stand injustices.
 - b. he has African relatives.
 - c. it is important for his career as a lawyer.
 - d. other reasons

- The parents of Khadim’s classmates helped them because...
 - a. they are Catholic and believe in Christian charity.
 - b. they are good friends of Khadim’s parents.
 - c. they believe no human being should be treated like that.
 - d. other reasons

M17 Leading idea “Rules”

There are many different kinds of rules. Rules can be guidelines that suggest how to do things. Rules can be regulations, for example they help to regulate the traffic.

We have language rules: rules for grammar and spelling to help understand each other. When we play a game we follow rules. If we want we can formulate our own rules just for ourselves to regulate our day or to make life easier. There are behavioral rules that differ from family to family, from community to community, from culture to culture.

Do we need rules at all? What would happen if there were no rules?

M18 Exercise “Rules”

1. What are rules?
2. Can you formulate some rules that affect you?
3. Why do we have rules?
4. Are there some rules we have to obey during the day?
5. What kind of rules do you know?
6. Why do we sometimes set up rules?
7. Can you imagine rules that do not make any sense?
8. Are there some rules that are important?
9. Could we live without rules?
10. Who makes rules?