

Children's Ethics Course –

Contents, Indexes and Preface for participatory lessons for ages 4-12



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Contents

Chapter I (Introductions)	Page
Indexes to chapter contents	iii-v
Preface: Ethics and Humanism	vi
Humanist Society of Victoria Incorporated	vii
History and Acknowledgements	viii

Yearly manuals – see headers for title. (Page numbers within each manual are shown in Preface pp iii – v and on p 2 of each manual.)

Ages 4 to 6 or Preschool to Preps

Age 7 or school Grade 1

Age 8 or school Grade 2

Age 9 or school Grade 3

Age 10 or school Grade 4

Age 11 or school Grade 5

Age 12 or school Grade 6

Within each chapter there are twenty-seven lessons, which could be used in each of the school years, but by Victorian Government decision they can only be done away from school in the foreseeable future.

Many lessons were originally designed to occupy thirty to sixty minutes, which is suitable for parents teaching at home. In schools they would have been shortened for normal periods or extended over two consecutive weeks.

The full ethics course comprises an increasing number of original lessons together a large number of lessons from other sources to which the compiler is deeply indebted. The use of such material is believed to comply with fair dealing under Section 41 of the (Australian) Copyright Act 1968, but if any copyright owner feels that infringement has occurred please contact the compiler.

Although users of the Manual will have to acquire the primary sources for themselves, the compiler can assist.

End

Lesson indexes, ages 4 – 7

CARE, SHARE, WONDER AND PLAY

Category\Chapter <i>Grade indexes</i>	Preps or age 4 - 6 <i>page 2</i>	Grade 1, age 7 <i>page 3</i>
Art of living	<i>page 3</i>	<i>Page4</i>
1	Your life as a trick 1	Your life as a trick 1
2	Your life as a trick 2	Your life as a trick 2
3	Happy with Oneself	Being ordinary
Behaviour	<i>page 6</i>	<i>page 6</i>
4	Right and Wrong	Right and Wrong
5	Bad and Good	Bad and Good
6	Personal preferences	Personal preferences
7	Fairytales	Fairytales
Environment	<i>page 15</i>	<i>page 11</i>
8	Chocolate chip mining	Chocolate chip mining
9	Spin the Saltine	Spin the Saltine
10	Beauty in Nature	Changing as we grow up
11	Our school environment	Our school environment
Philosophy	<i>Page 20</i>	<i>page 16</i>
12	Criteria for existence	When does something exist?
13	Rules	Fairness
14	Neighbourliness	Loneliness
15	Choices	Values in our lives
16	Stealing	Wrong ideas on stealing
Rights and responsibilities	<i>page 25</i>	<i>page 21</i>
17	Giving and receiving	Giving and receiving
18	George Washington	Walter Tell
19	Teaching	Teaching
20	Talking and listening	Talking and listening
Science	<i>Page 30</i>	<i>page 26</i>
21	Balances	Balances
22	The water cycle	The water cycle
23	Magnetism	Magnetism
24	How Whales Walked into Sea	How Whales Walked into Sea
World citizenship	<i>page 35</i>	<i>page 30</i>
25	Budding World Citizens 1	Budding World Citizens 1
26	Budding World Citizens 2	Budding World Citizens 2
Miscellaneous	<i>page 36</i>	<i>page 32</i>
27	Emotions left and right	Emotions left and right

End

Lesson indexes, ages 8 – 10

WEIRD, WHACKY AND WONDERFUL

Category <i>Grade indexes</i>	Grade 2, age 8 <i>page 2</i>	Grade 3, age 9 <i>page 2</i>
Art of living	<i>page 3</i>	<i>page 3</i>
1	"I choose, I choose"	Mastering 1
2	Friendship 1	Mastering 2
3	Belonging	What would happen if nobody
Behaviour	<i>page 6</i>	<i>page 6</i>
4	Habits	Sets of rules
5	Playmates	Sports' Code
6	Fairytale	Codes of Behaviour
7	Fairytale	The Angry Sportsman
Environment	<i>page 11</i>	<i>page 10</i>
8	Our school environment	A school ground's walk
9	Energy at Home 1	Plant solar collectors
10	Energy at Home 2	Hard & soft water
11	Spin the Saltine	Home Energy survey
Philosophy	<i>page 18</i>	<i>page 16</i>
12	Personal identity 1	Personal identity 2
13	Accepting rules	Feeling good 1
14	The Big Bang and you	Optimism
15	Differences in a community	Imagination
16	Sharing	A sense of reality
Rights and responsibilities	<i>page 23</i>	<i>page 21</i>
17	School Rights Responsibilities	The Little Dutch Boy
18	Walter Tell	Secular ethics
19	Teaching	Proverbs
20	Children's poetry	Golden Rule
Science	<i>Page 28</i>	<i>page 25</i>
21	Animal in you, The	Church bells
22	Beauty	Liquid surfaces
23	Camouflage egg hunt	Racing jars
24	Geological strata	Inertia
World citizenship	<i>page 35</i>	<i>page 29</i>
25	Russian dolls	Russian dolls
26	If the World were a Village	Schooling and Literacy
Miscellaneous	<i>Page 37</i>	<i>page 31</i>
27	Make your own fossils	Future evolution

End

Lessons index, ages 11 – 12

REACH FOR AN EQUALITY OF DIGNITY IN EVERYONE

Grade 4, age 10 <i>page 2</i>	Grade 5, age 11 <i>page 2</i>	Grade 6, age 12 <i>page 2</i>
<i>page 3</i>	<i>page 3</i>	<i>page 3</i>
Who are you? You are... Marbles for Homework	Who are you? You are! African chimps	Ethical concerns Teasing The fishing trip
<i>page 6</i>	<i>page 6</i>	<i>page 7</i>
Giving and Receiving 1 Giving and Receiving 2 Friendship Boasting	Good person Looking good Friendship and grief 1 Ill in the street	Care & compassion 1 Care & compassion 2 Looking good Planning One's Day
<i>Page10</i>	<i>page 10</i>	<i>page 13</i>
Camouflage egg hunt Energy from Sun Mapping school plants Sound the alarm	Around the corner Our school's leaf litter Spin the Saltine Accuracy of assessment	Our school's leaf litter Let nature take its course Climate change Wind turbine
<i>page 16</i>	<i>page 14</i>	<i>page 17</i>
Personal identity 3 Friendship 2 Feeling good 2 Friendship 3 Friendship 4	Personal identity 4 Artistic issues 1 Artistic issues 2 Friendship and grief 2 Examples and analogies	Waltzing Matilda ethics Advertising Protagoras Beliefs and values Ends, means
<i>page 21</i>	<i>page 29</i>	<i>page 24</i>
The Little Dutch Boy Communication skills Golden Rule Human Rights Declaration	"Ain't that work?" Can, Is Ought (theory) Can, Is Ought (examples) Grandma's mangoes	"Ain't that work?" Cause and effect Duties, obligations Factory
<i>page 25</i>	<i>page 23</i>	<i>page 30</i>
Air pressure Balancing Gravity Slide Machine	Bones and muscles Colour Magnetism & electricity Static electricity,	Simple electric cells Earth magnetism Temperature Weather station
<i>page 29</i>	<i>Page 27</i>	<i>page 234</i>
Your fridge & the world Refugees	Rights & responsibilities UN Declaration of Rights	Refugees awaiting asylum Get global
<i>page 31</i>	<i>page 29</i>	<i>page 36</i>
Travelling plants	Exploring Identity	Re-enact the 'monkey trial'

End

Ethics and Humanism

“What ought I to do?” is the great ethical question for everyone, and “How does this question affect my commitment to all **humankind**?” is the great ethical question for capital-H Humanists.

Answering these questions leads to the perfect formula for bringing up ethically minded children because Humanism is the resolve to think for oneself without imagining devils, fairies, gods, magic and other supernatural forces.

Primitive ethics probably owes its origin to prior animal group behaviour extending back over millions of years with many species showing a capacity to show some limited compassion or what Darwin called “moral sense”¹ within nature, “red in tooth and claw”. With humans, such ethics became logical and widely communicable by the invention of speech from about two hundred thousand years ago. Therefore in learning ethics today, children should also to learn the principles of the basic science of human development to help them make their own choices.

But important though it is, science alone is insufficient to avoid perverse interpretations such as eugenics. Some overriding sentiment is required. Of the several criteria suggested in the Humanist literature, many Humanists prefer the greatest good for the greatest number and no harm to others. This in turn leads to listening to all disadvantaged persons to check on no harm.

Therefore the ethics lessons are participatory rather than dogmatic so that the children can feel free to study all views. Children need the tools to think for themselves, and they will master more if they can enjoy themselves whilst thinking. Any one given view ceases to be unique.

In the result Humanist ethics is applied ethics in everyday life. For Humanist’s children their daily behaviour at school should be exemplary regarding caring, diligence and honesty. This ethics course supports the ethics of a nominally secular education system.

1. The evolutionary ethics model was described by Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man*, chapters 2 – 5, see http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/charles_darwin/descent_of_man/, and by V.M. Tarkunde, *Towards a Fuller Consensus in Humanistic Ethics*, pp 154 – 172 in *Humanist Ethics - Dialogue of Basics*, edited by Morris B. Storer, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY, 1980.

Humanist Society of Victoria Incorporated

The Humanist Society of Victoria Incorporated (HSV) was founded in 1961 by the late Dr Myfanwy “Miffy” Beadnell (1907—1988), and has its own belief statement, beginning:



“Humanists reject ideas of a creator god, believed by some to control human life and answer prayers ...”

The Society also has statements on ethics

“Humanists value human rights and environment protection as set out in the declarations of the United Nations.” , and

“... that children should be reared to be honest, kind and fair in their dealings with others.”

The Society is affiliated with the Council of Australian Humanist Societies, which in its turn is affiliated with the International Humanist and Ethical Union. Therefore the Society subscribes to the IHEU minimum statement on Humanism:

"Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality."

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History of the Manual

This manual was prepared with the assistance of members of the Humanist Society of Victoria Incorporated to whom I'm grateful. It was offered to the Education Department of the Victorian Government, Australia, in 2008 and tentatively approved for the teaching of ethics during the special religious instruction periods. However in 2009 the Minister of Education countermanded this on the grounds that Humanism was not a religion.

Fortunately many of the lessons are more easily done in a home than in a schoolroom and therefore are most suitable for parents wishing to instruct their children in ethical behaviour, which is free of the religions.

Acknowledgements

The aims of the manual were devised in consultation with the then president of the Humanist Society of Victoria, Rosslyn Ives, and committee.

Most of the of the lesson categories (Art of Living, Behaviour, Environment, Rights and Responsibilities, Science and World Citizenship) were suggested by Sophie Aitken, but she graciously declined to be a co-author although it was her contribution, which made the compilation comprehensive.

The inclusion of philosophy was prompted by the current HSV president, Stephen Stuart, who suggested that he and I attend sessions of the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations Conference, 2007.

Several of the lessons were first delivered to children of the Friends (Quaker) Eastern Suburbs Local Meeting, Melbourne, Victoria, from about 1966 onwards, during the period when I was a member of Friends, and to whom I remain grateful for their encouragement. The lessons have also been practised with children of Humanist parents, meeting in the Tresise Centre, Hawthorn, Victoria, plus my own young grandchildren Andrew, James, Kartina and Oliver, together with their friends.

Teaching hints were given by ex-schoolteachers, Gwen Brumhead and my daughter, Jenny Gardner, my teacher daughter, Gayle Gardner, also Marietta Elliot, Audrey Goldberg, Del Thompson and many others.

Harry Gardner, January 2011