

What is Good? (30 minutes) Middle school

Summary:

Today we will be exploring the cardinal virtues and the four vices of stoicism. We will be identifying what under the category of a cardinal virtue, vice, and indifference. This will be achieved through lines of questioning that discuss normal topics and then taking time to see what category the topic at hand would fall into.

Activity:

[Good, Bad, or Indifferent?](#)

The Stoics differentiated between 'good', 'bad', and 'indifferent' things. The good things include the cardinal virtues wisdom, justice, courage, and self-discipline. The bad things include the opposites of these virtues, namely the four vices folly, injustice, cowardice, and indulgence.

Indifferent things include all the rest, but mainly life and death, fame and bad reputation, pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, and health and sickness. Indifferent things can be summed up as health, wealth, and reputation.

Above is a general description of stoicism's belief on how to live a good life. Stoicism follows the line of thought that you can live a good life by following certain values, none of which requires anything out of your control such as wealth or fame. Follow the activity and see what the students think you need to have a good life and then compare it with the stoic philosophy.

Additional Resources:

10 Stoic Principles

<https://www.njlifehacks.com/what-is-stoicism-overview-definition-10-stoic-principles/#:~:text=The%20Stoics%20differentiated%20between%20'good,injustice%2C%20cowardice%2C%20and%20indulgence.>

Reflection:

Discuss the answers the students shared and compare it with the answers of the stoic scholars.

Do you think they were right?

Do you really not need anything to be satisfied or happy with life?

Why are seemingly significant circumstances such health, poverty, etc considered something you should be indifferent about?

Are indifferent things that can