

What does Spiritist Philosophy Mean to Children?

Spiritist Philosophy is sometimes viewed as many Spiritist beliefs regarding the universe and human beings. However, to put the philosophy into practice, meaning, to practice the philosophic teachings, is not simply to pass on the principle of Spiritist beliefs. When Putting those principles into practice, we must analyze those principles, question them, and search a better comprehension of their meaning and their consequences, specially devoting attention to the ones concerning moral and ethics.

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How Can Children Benefit from the Spiritist Philosophy?

The objective of this educational proposal is to aid children and youngsters find rational explanations which support their moral actions, thus, improving and maintaining a more positive and constructive attitude in their lives.

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How does the Spiritist Philosophy Work for Children?

Basically, it creates room for significant learning, for extending the knowledge of basic spiritist concepts and as to the perception of the relation of those concepts with practical life. The features of the philosophic investigation we carry out are:

- Cultivating the abilities of the thinking process
- Searching the meaning of reality and the perception of consequences.
- Freedom of questioning
- Fluent communication and dynamic participation
- Relation/theory/practice
- Respecting all thoughts and opinions

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Experimenting and Experiencing

The practice of philosophic teachings is linked to a possible degree of experience of the themes being studied, in order to create reflection and bring forth interior transformations. Hence, by utilizing practical examples from the life, or daily activities of the students. This method of teaching will not only make them think but it will make them look inside themselves, analyzing their own choices and their patterns of thinking and feeling, in short, interaction with the theme at hand.

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To Dialogue/To Interact

In lieu of a monologue, where one teaches and the others learn, we dialogue with the students.

What is a dialogue? It is a horizontal relation from A to B. It begins with a criticizing source and creates criticism (Jaspers). It is nourished by love, humanity, hope, faith and trust. For this reason, only in dialogue one communicates. And when both sides of the dialogue interact with love, hope, faith in each other, they become critics in search of something which produces an "empathy" relationship between the both of them. Only there, there is communication.

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Pensentir????

"Pensentir" is one of these words which came up to express an idea which could not yet be expressed.

This word first appeared in the dialogues of the Spiritist Philosophy Groups for Children, as a necessity to talk about what we were searching in the philosophy teachings which we desired to develop: pensentir the concepts.

It's not just to think or just to reason; it's not just to feel or experience it, but to make all this at the same time!

Science and intellectuality is highly valued in our society. Our schools (and even in some Spiritist places) are full of this scientific knowhow which, even though it has its value in a more ample context, when by itself, it doesn't help the person in the quest of the knowledge of his/her self knowledge and in his/her self transformation.

We almost don't see any conscious effort in learning about feelings. The need of being a charitable person is often said, but little is said about the real feelings and emotions.

People act motivated by emotions and feelings. For that reason, while analyzing moral questions and situations by using solely our reason, we will have only a partial view of them.

It is not possible to talk about interior transformation without the thinking/feeling/
PENSENTIR.

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The Art of Questioning

A question can be an excellent way to start a philosophic investigation.

But, not any question!

The teacher often starts his/her class making questions which solely aim to check on the previous learned contents. These questions only can have one right answer. It's not of this type of question we are talking about.

We are referring to the ones which leads the student to think, and creates an atmosphere that motivates dialogue, and the type of questions which can have many answers

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Open questions and closed questions

Closed questions only have one answer, hence, they are used to evaluate knowledge and ask for information. Ex: Who discovered Brasil? What day is today?

Open questions may have many correct answers and stimulate the thinking process. Ex: Why are we friends with some people and not friends with other people? Why are there people who don't believe in God? If people were not so much in a hurry, would they live better?

Its goal is not to obtain one answer, but to open the possibilities for new ideas, for re-examination of the thinking and exchange of opinions.

As they come up with the answers for open questions, the subject gains new perspectives, and each student improves his/her comprehension. Thoughts get organized and students have more opportunities to express new questions.

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Encouraging Environment

The result of an investigating activity in the classroom depends on asking the right questions as well as the disposition that the teacher has, as an investigator, to accept the validity of different opinions and course of actions.

Therefore, creating an encouraging environment which respects different point of views, even of the minority, will motivate the exchange of opinions as well as stimulate the spirit of research about the subject at hand. As all students get involved, they develop a sense that they can contribute to the formation of a more solid and deep understanding.

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Some Examples

What we have said has to do with the initial questions which propose the subject to be investigated.

Other questions which the coordinator have asked during the dialogue, may have the same effect. Examples:

- Why do you think this way?
- Could you explain it better?
- Can you give us an example?
- You mean that...?
- Does anyone have a question to?
- Do you agree with the argument that...?
- Can you look at this subject from a different view point?
- Does what you are proposing seems correct to you? Why?
- What consequences could arise from this thought?
- What consequences could arise from this attitude?
- How did you say you may be able to help us?

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Elaborate your own classes

Defining the objective

Every class has a goal which makes up, together with the objectives of the other classes, the path to a clearer and deeper comprehension of the spiritual life and God's laws. We understand that this comprehension is not disconnected from self knowledge. Which means each class, at least in theory; we should also find out something about ourselves. A theme may have many objectives. It is possible that all of them are important, but we recommend choosing to concentrate on one for a particular moment. We can talk about the same theme but with a different objective at another opportunity. Every goal must be looked at as a basic question, from which we can search for answers within a chosen strategy. Answering the question will be the focus of our dialogues and thoughts.

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Researching Texts and Materials

- A good educator is always prepared. When getting ready to prepare a class for the following week, one can get ideas from a song, a sentence, a movie scene, a magazine, internet, recyclable garbage, a science experiment, finally, at any moment and in any place.
- Our experience has shown us that when we are receptive to intuitions from the guiding spirits, these intuitions will come up, specially if we maintain the channels open and the antenna turned on.

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Creating a Strategy that Leads to a Well Defined Objective

The definition of strategy is connected with the age of the social mental development of the children. In which way this subject would affect our children? How can they perceive it? What type of activities would interest them?

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Motivation

Every activity needs motivation. To motivate is to create an interest for the theme and the desire to learn more about it. Traditionally, this is referred to as Initial Incentive. We prefer to call it Motivation for it is crucial to be present from the beginning to the end of the class; when we notice that its level has decreased during a certain activity, the activity needs to be re-developed. ???(retomada)

Development

We will begin a dialogue on the questions related to the text. For this, we can utilize group dynamics.

Final Activities

Offer a recreational or artistic activity, preferable one that they can interact with each other, such as forming sentences, texts, murals, drawings etc. An activity where it is possible to summarize the answers the group discovered.

The importance of being well prepared

Being well prepared is fundamental for the success of any work. Not only preparing a good class, but also prepare yourself and the work atmosphere. Various aspects of the subject must be observed in order to create a dynamic class. Taking into consideration what is the group interest and the practical consequences in their lives