

Fifth-Grade Students Thinking About Hope

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During the pandemic, I met with a fifth-grade class from Magnolia Elementary School in Seattle every week for online philosophy sessions. In one session, we explored the meaning of hope.

We began by watching this [short film](#) and then we discussed the following questions:

What do you hope for and why?

What is hope? Is it an idea, a feeling, a virtue? Something else?

Is hope necessary for living a good life?

Can art express hope? How?

Can hope ever be a bad thing?

Can it be good to hope even if there's no good reason to do so?

Editor comment: *These are some of the thoughts and ideas they shared. You will find the students' artwork and poems throughout this issue.*

Can it be good to hope, even if there's not good reason to do so?

I believe, well I think it is, IF it makes you feel better—otherwise, why are you hoping? What is the purpose of doing it if you don't have a reason to?

Why are you doing something if you don't have a reason to? (Oh, sorry, that's another topic . . .)

—DEXTER CHINN

Hope is a good thing; it also depends on what you're hoping for. If you have no hope left, then that means you gave up, for example: if you were on a sinking ship, would you hope somebody comes and save you? Or would you be hopeless. Hope can always be a good thing, it's like a wish.

—JANE NATHAN