



# **Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy through Children's Literature**

*By Thomas E. Wartenberg*



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Big Ideas for Little Kids includes everything a teacher, a parent, or a college student needs to teach philosophy to elementary school children from picture books. Written in a clear and accessible style, the book explains why it is important to allow young children access to philosophy during primary-school education. Wartenberg also gives advice on how to construct a 'learner-centered' classroom, in which children discuss philosophical issues with one another as they respond to open-ended questions by saying whether they agree or disagree with what others have said.

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**Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy through Children's Literature** By Thomas E. Wartenberg **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Oh, to be a child in a literary discussion with Thomas Wartenberg! He understands that young children are deep thinkers trying to figure life out and that great children's books can help them do so. As he makes clear, "philosophy" is just a fancy grown-up word for an activity kids do naturally, and this teacher-friendly, easy-to-read book with its invaluable guided questions for individual titles will help all of us improve the quality, depth, and liveliness of discussions in the classroom reading corner. (Sam Swope, author of several books, including *I Am a Pencil* and *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*)

Those unfamiliar with philosophy will love the brief introduction to the disciplines of philosophy; philosophers will find the use of children's literature a refreshing starting point. While intended for educators new to pre-college philosophy, this book nicely encapsulates for philosophers one method of doing such work. Far preferable to Marietta McCarty's *Little Big Minds* (2006). Highly recommended. (*CHOICE, April 2010*)

Unleash the power of picture books! Using clear guidelines and concrete examples, *Big Ideas for Little Kids* shows us how to transform a few carefully crafted questions, an attentive ear and the natural curiosity of young minds into impressive instruments for nurturing the creative, autonomous, respectful, engaged, critically thinking citizens of tomorrow. This book helps teachers and parents understand how to identify philosophical ideas within picture books and young reader novels, and demonstrates how to facilitate inspired discussions with children... (Andrea Ross and Mark Blevis, coproducers of [JustOneMoreBook.com](http://JustOneMoreBook.com))

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This book is an excellent resource, helping primary teachers of RE to develop children's ethical and spiritual thinking through well-chosen stories, and providing a structure and methodology for them to do so. (*Retoday*)

#### About the Author

Thomas E. Wartenberg is professor of philosophy at Mount Holyoke College and has been working with teachers on teaching philosophy for children for over a decade. He is a member of the American Philosophical Association Committee on Precollege Instruction in Philosophy. Among his other books are *Existentialism and Thinking on Screen*.

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