
EXERCISE: Knowing and believing

Do you agree or disagree with the following? Why?

1. Jason said, "I can see and touch my hands. I know they're my hands and I believe they're my hands."
2. Sheila said, "I can't see my ears (except in the mirror, and that doesn't count). I believe I have ears, but I don't know it for sure."
3. Dora said, "No one can see my wings. But I believe I have them, even if I don't know it for sure."
4. Joseph said, "I can't see or touch my mind, so I don't believe I have one. But I know I have one, because I think."
5. Elizabeth said, "I know my name is Elizabeth but I find it hard to believe."
6. Clark said, "I don't know what my name is, but I believe it's Superman."

EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION PLAN: Knowing and believing

Make two lists on the board — know, believe. Have your students volunteer items for each list — things they know and things they believe. Enter each child's name next to the item he/she volunteers so you can call on them readily in the discussion that follows. Then, as a class group, compare the lists. The following questions/guidelines might help with your discussion.

1. Are there any items that appear on both lists?
What makes one student say he/she knows it, and what makes another student say he/she believes it, etc.
2. How do you know when to believe something?
3. What's it like to know something?
4. Are there some sorts of things that you can only believe?
5. Are there some sorts of things that you just know?