Philosophical Enquiry for KS1
Problem Pet

*Meet Tabitha. I stroke her as often as you stroke your cat, I walk her as often as you walk your dog,
I LOVE her as much as you love your rabbit. Does it matter that Tabitha is teddy
(or a teapot or a television!?)*

Philosophical Content	**Possible Concepts** • ETHICS: Living, Non-living, Animals, Humans, Love, Friendship, Care, Responsibility • EPISTEMOLOGY: Imagination, Reality, Believing, Being right or wrong about the Truth **Example Questions** • Is Tabitha an ordinary pet? If not, how is she extraordinary? • Is Tabitha actually a pet? • What is a pet? • What makes a *good* pet? • What are pets for? • What makes something alive? / not alive? • Do pets have to be alive? • If a pet dies, is it no longer a pet? • What kinds of things can you love? / can't you love? • Can you only love living things? • Can I love Tabitha? • Can Tabitha love me? • Can people love their pets? • How do you know if your pet loves you? • What if Tabitha was a teapot a train or a television?
Philosophical Method	**Thinking Moves** • QUESTION the teacher's claim that Tabitha is a pet. RESPOND to different views in the class, JUSTIFY your own views about Tabitha.* **Facilitation Tools** • Teacher-in-role, Eliciting personal experience, Thumb Poll**

Materials	• Teddy (but chose a toy that doesn't look too much like a real animal) • Dog lead, cat bowl, carrot blanket • Circle of chairs • Passing Pom-pom, flip chart / white board, pens

* This is the metacognitive language of *Thinking Moves A-Z* by Dialogue Works. For more info see
https://dialogueworks.co.uk/thinking-moves/ or ask us about our accredited Thinking Moves Training.

** A list of this language for facilitation accompanies these resources.

PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	Introduce everyone if necessary.	
Ethos	Recap expectations, perhaps giving the class one rule to focus on e.g. Look at the speaker.	
Warm up game	**Drawing on personal experiences** Ask: • Who has a pet at home? Who knows someone with a pet? • What can you tell us about pets? • How do you spot a pet?	
STIMULUS		5 min
Presentation of Stimulus	**Teacher-in-Role** This works best if you are absolutely convincing. Try bringing your teddy to school in a cat box, perhaps keep the box covered by a blanket all morning to build up suspense. They should expect to meet a *real* puppy or tortoise. *"I've brought my pet into school today to meet you. My pet's name is Tabitha, would you like to meet her?"* *"Tabitha is very shy. She's hiding underneath this blanket. Before I get her out, maybe you'd like to see some of her things."* [Slowly reveal to the class, each of the objects you've brought in; first the dog lead, then the cat bowl, then the carrot.] *"Can you guess what my pet is?"* [The children will guess, dog, cat and rabbit, and perhaps some other things too. Each time they make a suggestion, ask them for a reason.] *"You've made lots of different guesses, I think it's time for Tabitha to say hello."* [Take the teddy from under the blanket, attach the dog lead and place the water bowl and carrot in front of it. Do this as naturally as possible and act bemused by the children's responses – typically laughter and surprise.] *"What's funny about my pet?"*	
Thinking and Sharing Time	Give the children a chance to think and talk about anything funny, silly, surprising or confusing about the pet teddy. They may laugh or giggle and they may also want to touch it or stroke it. They might also ask questions like 'what do you feed her?' (biscuits, obviously!) This time to react, play and explore is really important. It also allows you to move on to a discussion in the next section.	

QUESTION(S)		1 min
Prepared Question	After the children's more unstructured responses, focus the group on the prepared question: ***"is Tabitha the teddy, a pet?"***	
DIALOGUE		15 min
Collecting Ideas	• Gather a range of responses. • Where it is the case, point out to the children that they don't all agree; some children think Tabitha could be a pet and others think she couldn't. • Point out that the children who agree, don't all have the same reasons for agreeing. For example, some think she can't be a pet because she can't move, others thinks she can't be a pet because she can't eat. Some because she doesn't make a noise. Etc.	
Challenging ideas	• Take one or two of the reasons and gently challenge them. • First playfully e.g. Move the teddy and claim; *"She can move!"* Or Feed the teddy some biscuits. • Then more seriously. E.g. *"Your lizard doesn't make a noise, but he's a pet, so why not Tabitha?"* • Having modelled a challenge, see if your children can do the same. E.g. *"My caterpillar is in a cocoon; she doesn't move or eat"*	
Getting Focused	Pay attention to any issues that emerge out of the children's interests. Formulate one of these in a final focused question. Here are a few examples: • What is a pet? • What makes something alive? / not alive? • What kinds of things can you love? / can't you love?	
REFLECTION		4 min
Reflection on the Content	Ask the children to share one interesting *new* thought that they have had during the session.	
Reflection on the Content	Did we follow our rule? E.g. Did we look at the person speaking?	