

Civics: A Christian Worldview.

The Magic Slope – When “Helping Society” Becomes Control (15-20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Prep

- **Objective:** Students learn to recognize how laws presented as “helpful improvements” can gradually increase government control over individuals.
- Students evaluate whether scenarios represent liberty, a small step (or “slide down the ‘Magic Slope’”) toward tyranny, or tyranny.
- Print this page and a copy of Pages 2 and 3 for each student (front to back if possible!).

Instructions

1. Hand out Pages 2 and 3 to students.
2. Read the instructions aloud with the students. (Get a volunteer if possible!) Today, students will work individually on the scenarios.
3. Give students 8-10 minutes to complete the scenarios. (Running short on time? Just do 6 or 9 of them!)
4. Discuss in groups/tables or in pairs first, then as a class. Take turns calling on different students!

Answer Key to Scenarios

1. L (Note: Students will see pretty soon that the answers all progress from L to S to T for each set of three scenarios, 1-3, 4-6, etc., and that’s fine!)
2. S
3. T
4. L
5. S
6. T
7. L
8. S
9. T
10. L
11. S
12. T

Wrap-Up Questions to Ask Students

- How did the scenarios progress from liberty to “Hey, we’re just trying to help!” to tyranny?
AWW.
- Which is more dangerous—obvious tyranny, or tyranny disguised as “help”?
Obvious tyranny is often easier to detect; tyranny disguised as “help” is more dangerous because people accept it willingly.
- What does the Bible say government’s proper roles are? Do they match the S and T versions of these questions?
No, the Bible says rulers are to be a “terror” to “evil”/harm. These actions in the activity are just examples of rulers meddling with society unjustly.

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Bastiat warned that tyranny rarely appears suddenly. Instead, government often claims it is simply trying to improve society—education, safety, fairness, or prosperity. He called this placing society on an “incline.” Today you’ll identify where that incline begins—and where it leads.

Label each scenario either “L” (Liberty – People choose freely), “S” (Small Step/Magic Slope – Law claims to help, but increases control), or “T” (Tyranny – Law forces behavior and removes liberty).

Scenario 1: The government publishes pamphlets encouraging healthy eating habits.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 2: The government taxes unhealthy foods extra so people will make “better choices.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 3: The government bans certain foods entirely to “protect public health.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 4: Parents may choose any school for their children.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 5: The government requires all schools to teach certain approved subjects.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 6: The government bans private schools so all children receive “proper education.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 7: Citizens may start any business they wish.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 8: The government requires licenses for certain jobs to “protect consumers.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 9: The government bans certain jobs entirely to “protect workers.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 10: People may peacefully criticize government leaders.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 11: The government fines people for “misinformation” in criticizing leaders to “prevent harm.”

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____

Scenario 12: The government arrests people who criticize government policy.

L / S / T

What is the government controlling? _____