The Ethics Bowl offers high school students a unique opportunity: to both enhance their current studies and prepare them for college-level work. Students who participate in Ethics Bowls are asked not only to think deeply and critically engage with ethical issues, but also to embrace new ways of approaching the presented material. As members of a team, students identify the central ethical dilemma in each case, consider different ethical lenses through which to view the dilemma, and come to a consensus. They then present their point of view in a setting that fosters civil discourse, and is as collaborative as it is competitive. Students appreciate the opportunity to think for themselves, to weigh opposing points of view, and to construct sound, relevant arguments. Many come away from the event with a much deeper appreciation of complexity, and of the need to hone their critical thinking skills to become more responsible citizens.

The inaugural National High School Ethics Bowl took place in 2013 at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Parr Center for Ethics. Fourteen teams participated in the two-day event. The final teams were drawn from regional bowls across the country— involving over 1,000 students. Eighteen teams participated in the 2014 Nationals, and over twenty are expected in 2015.

High school students also have the opportunity to participate in a Case Writing Competition. Students compose cases (and possible questions) to be considered for subsequent bowls.

“An Ethics Bowl offers an opportunity for students to stretch their thinking to the limits of their abilities…and even beyond. There are few activities available on the high school level that allow our academically advanced students to use so many higher-order thinking skills and then to apply their results to real-life situations.” –Team Coach, ‘13

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