



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

Morality

Rationale: Adolescence is a time of questioning and critiquing personal, social, and cultural values. It is important for adolescents to develop and use an interiorized, principled moral value system and understand Christian conscience and the process of moral decision-making.

Goal: That students will acknowledge and respect their dignity as a human person and recognize this inherent goodness in all people.

That students will experience the ever-present love of God and live a moral life reflective of this love.

Objectives: To view Jesus as the fundamental norm of morality, the standard or model on whom people should pattern their lives.

To make students aware of their profound dignity that comes from being made in the image and likeness of God.

To learn the moral concepts and precepts that govern the lives of Christ's disciples.



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**(Based upon the Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework of the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age (2008), p. 27-30)*

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>I. Morality</p> <p>A. What is morality?</p> <p>B. Morality as a response to God</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. freedom = responsibility 2. response to Love <p>C. Natural Law: reason as the building block of moral decision-making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. law within us 2. Ten Commandments 3. Law of Love 4. Civil law 5. Canon (church) Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six Precepts of the Church <p>* St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine</p>	<p>Brainstorm Songs, TV shows and movies that reflect modern culture. Compare and contrast them with Catholic values and moral standards.</p> <p>Describe a recent situation in which you took responsibility for your own choices, actions, and thoughts. How did this feel?</p> <p>Describe a current situation where a prominent figure did or did not take responsibility for their actions.</p> <p>List some guidelines for using freedom in a moral way as you mature and move through life.</p> <p>Google ‘silly laws’ on the internet. What makes them silly?</p> <p>Read Mt 22:36-39. How can young people today live out Jesus’ Law of Love?</p>	<p>In your experience, do most people appear to be freely choosing what they do? If not, what do you think influences their choices? What keeps people from exercising their power to choose freely?</p> <p>Does caring about someone change how responsible we feel to help or protect them? Why/ why not?</p> <p>Do you think young people should be free to do anything they want? Why/why not?</p> <p>How does what we believe shape what we do?</p> <p>How do your present choices shape who you will be in the future?</p>



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<p>II. Conscience</p> <p>A. What is conscience?</p> <p>B. Building conscience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sources of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture • Church (Magisterium) • people who live good lives 2. inviolability of conscience <p>C. Making moral decisions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. search out the facts 2. think about alternatives and consequences 3. consult others 4. pray for guidance <p>D. Discernment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. motives 2. intentions (Ends & Means) 3. consequences 4. alternatives 5. circumstances <p>* St. Ignatius, St. Joan of Arc</p>	<p>Think of a serious moral issue that is prevalent in our world. Think of the way Jesus would respond and role play your response.</p> <p>Have students create and discuss top 10 list of people who have helped them form their conscience.</p> <p>Identify some adults who have negatively influenced your moral decision-making and state how this affected you. (Use code names if necessary)</p> <p>Role play different moral decision making scenarios. Discuss the two endings (consequences).</p> <p>Help young people create a list of people they can contact to help with moral issues.</p>	<p>What do you think Jesus’ attitude would be today toward: people living with AIDS, recent immigrants, unwed mothers/fathers, drug addicts, etc? How might you become more like Jesus in your attitude toward the outcasts of today’s society?</p> <p>In our time, is the Church’s guidance and teaching valued? Why or why not?</p> <p>Does fear of consequence play a part in decision making? As Catholics what are the consequences for poor choices? Discuss reconciliation.</p> <p>What are some examples of everyday moral decisions that young people might make? What are some “big” moral decisions young people might make?</p> <p>How are good decisions made?</p>



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<p>III. Virtues/Character Building</p> <p>A. What is virtue?</p> <p>B. Theological Virtues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faith 2. Hope 3. Charity <p>C. Cardinal Virtues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prudence 2. Justice 3. Fortitude 4. Temperance <p>D. Developing Character and Good Habits</p> <p>* St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Benedict</p>	<p>Have students plan a prayer service for guidance using the gifts of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Choose an area of moral controversy from the news. Debate the issue from a Catholic position and a cultural/ social point of view. Have teens use the Catechism and Bible to support their points</p> <p>List some of the virtues that seem to be lacking in people’s lives today. What factors contribute to this lack of virtue?</p> <p>Jesus challenges us to live lives that are holy. Read Thes 4:2-8. As disciples, what are we instructed to do? How can we best reach this objective?</p>	<p>Discuss: “People are as good as their teachers.”</p> <p>What rules do you now follow that you will have your own children follow. Why are these important?</p> <p>What would be some essential rules, virtues or character traits to use in planning for a lifetime of good decision-making?</p>



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<p>IV. God’s Love</p> <p>A. The Gift of Jesus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incarnation 2. Redemption/Resurrection <p>B. Jesus as our Model</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beatitudes 2. Golden Rule 3. prayer 4. healing 5. Eucharist <p>C. Grace</p> <p>* Mary, St. Margaret Mary Alocque</p>	<p>Have students prepare a list of 20 characteristics of Christ. Then match people from their lives with those traits.</p> <p>Divide into eight small groups. Each group is assigned one of the Beatitudes. Prepare a brief skit in which people your age are called upon to live by the Beatitude assigned to you. Present the skit.</p> <p>Write a letter to God asking for help in carrying out the Golden Rule.</p>	<p>Read the Beatitudes in Mt 5. Rate yourself on how you are living each of the Beatitudes.</p> <p>How do you think Christians can carry out Jesus’ work of redemption in the world today?</p> <p>What are some reasons why some young people do not attend Mass weekly? Discuss three ways parishes could help young people feel part of the Sunday liturgy.</p>



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<p>V. Responding to God’s Love</p> <p>A. Love of God</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. first three commandments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are some of our gods? • treating God’s name with respect • keeping God’s day holy 2. Mass – central act of worship 3. personal prayer 4. dangers of cults/occult <p>* St. Mary Magdalene, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross</p> <p>VI. Responsibility to Neighbor</p> <p>A. Love of Neighbor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. respect 2. charity 3. forgiveness 4. honesty 5. compassion <p>* Mother Teresa, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Martin de Porres</p>	<p>Using magazines have students create a collage of their ‘gods’. How do they ‘worship’ them? Have students tear them up or burn them as part of a prayer service.</p> <p>Prepare a variety of prayer experiences including meditation, centering prayer, Taize prayer, devotional prayer, etc. Use them as the opening prayer for class.</p> <p>Keep a prayer journal. Reflect on your growth and development as a person of good moral character.</p> <p>Read Mt 22:36-39. How can young people today live out Jesus’ Law of Love?</p> <p>Break into small groups and have each group plan a service project for those in need.</p>	<p>In what ways do some people use money to buy happiness? Describe how money has distorted our conscience individually and as a society. Describe how money can become our “god.”</p> <p>How do modern Catholics “keep the Sabbath?” Could we do this better? How?</p> <p>How do we interpret “love your neighbor”? Do we set limits on who our neighbor is and therefore on who receives our love?</p>



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<p>VII. Social Justice</p> <p>A. Old Testament Prophets</p> <p>B. Church and Social Justice</p> <p>1. seven themes of Catholic social teaching</p> <p>C. Courage</p> <p>* Archbishop Oscar Romero, Dorothy Day, John Paul II, Martin Luther King, Jr.</p> <p>VIII. The Dignity of the Human Person</p> <p>A. Creation & its Goodness</p> <p>B. Children of God</p> <p>C. Temple of the Holy Spirit</p> <p>D. Dignity of Human Life</p> <p>E. Seamless Garment</p> <p>* St. Francis of Assisi, St. Gregory the Great</p>	<p>Brainstorm a list of people whose careers involve working with social justice issues. Invite one or more of these people to share their work with the class.</p> <p>Become an Old Testament Prophet and write your own “Thus Says the Lord” speech on an issue of unfairness or injustice today.</p> <p>Research labor practices, including child labor, in some Third World countries. Determine if any American clothing companies are contracting with those who exploit workers.</p> <p>God has given you the power of choice. Read Dt 30:19-20. List some situations in which teenagers are faced with the decision to choose life or death.</p>	<p>Do you feel an obligation to challenge others who act immorally? Why/why not? Have you ever done this? What was the experience like?</p> <p>What does it mean to have moral courage? Where does moral courage come from?</p> <p>Have you ever been in a situation in which you found it difficult to stand up for your belief in Christ? Explain.</p> <p>Do you think people can be as good as they want to be? If you basically wanted to be a good person, could you? What would it take?</p>



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<p>IX. Self-Respect/Self-Love</p> <p>A. Respect for Self</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintaining health 2. avoiding alcohol and drugs 3. healthy development of sexuality <p>B. Human Sexuality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. dual purpose of sexual relations 2. Sacrament of Marriage 3. education 4. spirituality <p>* St. Joseph, St. Agnes</p>	<p>List at least ten attacks on human life and dignity which are evident in society. How can you work to change these situations?</p> <p>Create a balance sheet with young people about how they spend their time. (how many hours doing what). Discuss self-control and moderation</p> <p>Visit www.Cornerstonemedia.org for song reviews and discussion ideas. Look at the list of “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.”</p> <p>Watch two of your favorite TV programs that deal with family life. Identify all the positive and negative messages they give concerning marriage and family life.</p>	<p>“Social Justice can be obtained only when the dignity of all people is respected.” CCC #1929 What are some ways you can work to promote the dignity of all human life?</p> <p>Viktor Frankl, a famous psychiatrist, once wrote that even in the most terrible situation “everything can be taken from a person but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one’s attitude in a given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.” What does this mean?</p> <p>Identify three instances in your life when you tended to conform to peer pressure. Identify three instances in which you tried to resist peer pressure. What were the results?</p> <p>How does thinking about human sexuality as holy go against the understanding of popular culture?</p>



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<p>X. God's Forgiveness</p> <p>A. Sin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. definition of sin 2. Seven Capital Sins 3. images of sin – Old and New Testament 4. kinds of Sin <p>B. Jesus and Forgiveness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scripture <p>C. Sacrament of Reconciliation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. elements of the Sacrament <p>* St. John Vianney</p>	<p>Write an Examination of Conscience you can use daily or in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</p> <p>Name some common fears that prevent people from seeking reconciliation with others.</p> <p>Have students create videos or skits on the Woman at the Well, Peter's Betrayal, Prodigal Son, Good Samaritan, and the Woman Taken in Adultery. Indicate the power of forgiveness in human relationships.</p> <p>Give some examples from every day life that prove the existence of evil and sin.</p>	<p>How is sin a spiritual sickness?</p> <p>Do you think people today treat sin too lightly?</p> <p>What do you think are the main reasons many people today don't seem to put much value in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?</p> <p>The Sacrament of Reconciliation involves talking with a priest about our struggles and failures. What are your feelings about this Sacrament?</p> <p>What might be the advantage of using the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis throughout your life?</p> <p>Read Rom 7. What is Paul saying regarding our human weaknesses and sinfulness?</p>

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