

Morality: A Call to Catholic Living

Topics

- What is Morality?
- Catholic Morality
- Grace
- Grace and the Holy Spirit

Key Terms

actual grace
Catholic morality

conscience
covenant

grace
Holy Trinity

morality
natural law

sanctifying grace

Objectives

To help the students:

- understand that moral decision making is a human condition reflecting both our intellect and free will.
- realize that our morality is a response to the life and teachings of Jesus.
- learn that grace as a sharing in God's life is both a comfort and a challenge.
- recognize that the grace of the Holy Spirit helps us in our vocations.

Catechism Connection:

Catechism of the Catholic Church #68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 228, 231, 261, 316 319, 381, 455, 460, 480, 495, 508, 747, 1711, 1713, 1715, 1745, 1975, 1978, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2024, 2025, 2033



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Lesson Plan Strategies

Day 1

INTRODUCTION TO MORALITY

1. Pray the chapter opening prayer (p. 1).
2. Introduce yourself to the students. Tell them something about yourself and why you are teaching this course. Have the students form pairs, encouraging students to link up with someone they don't know well. Give the partners 5-10 minutes to discuss with each other their ideas on any aspect of morality. After the allotted time, have each student introduce his or her partner to the class.
3. Explain that because they will explore sensitive moral issues throughout the course, it is important that they feel comfortable sharing information about themselves and their ideas. Emphasize that the course calls for actively listening to the ideas of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
4. Invite the students to turn to the Chapter 1 Opener. Ask the students to read silently the chapter overview, and encourage them to ask questions about morality. Have the students read the "Before we begin . . ." questions (p. 1) and offer their responses aloud.
5. Begin a brainstorming session on what morality means. Ask the students to write the first three words that come to mind when they think about the concept of *morality*. Highlight those responses that focus on:
 - practical issues about how individuals live their lives
 - decision making
 - positive and negative effects of our actions on others and ourselves
6. Have the students read "What Is Morality?" and "Morality and the Challenge of Decision Making." Lead a class discussion on the scenarios presented. Focus on the fact that everyday choices, not just the momentous decisions in our lives, give us a chance to live as Jesus taught.



HOMEWORK

- Read "Choosing Good or Evil" and "Decision Making Day by Day."
- Prepare to discuss the Group Talk exercise (p. 4).

Day 2

CATHOLIC MORALITY

1. Pray the chapter opening prayer.
2. To review the HOMEWORK readings, ask the following questions: **What helps us decide whether an act is moral or immoral?** *the object chosen, the intention of the action, and the circumstances surrounding the act.* **Give an example to illustrate that moral decision making is both a challenge and a comfort.** *Answers will vary.* **Why does being moral require a sense of responsibility?** *Much, if not most, of our behavior does not concern ourselves alone. We must recognize and accept responsibility for the fact that our actions or inaction can affect other people.* **What does it mean to say that morality is an everyday occurrence?** *Since decision making is an everyday occurrence and our moral viewpoints guide our decisions on a daily basis, morality is an everyday occurrence.*

3. Ask volunteers to present their responses to the homework.
4. Have the students complete the Activity questionnaire (p. 6) and discuss their insights into their own sense of morality. Discuss any changes in the students' perceptions of morality as well as their own sense of morality. If time permits, have the students work on the Reflection exercise (p. 6).
5. Read "Catholic Morality" and "Christian, Recognize Your Dignity." Discuss the text using the Reflection exercise (p. 7) and/or Group Talk (p. 8).



HOMEWORK

- Read "God's Love."

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



To help students appreciate morality as a positive dimension to everyday life, have students read **Case Study 1-A** in the separate *Morality Case Studies* Book and discuss the accompanying questions.




The Challenge of Being Catholic.

Catholicism and the practice of the faith in the context of the Catholic Church is a major theme underlying *Morality: A Response to God's Love*. To help the students deepen their understanding of the Catholic Church's place in their lives, have the students complete **Handout 1:1—The Challenge of Being Catholic.**

Day 3

GRACE

1. Pray the chapter opening prayer.
2. Ask the students to define *grace*. (*Grace refers to our participation in the life of God.*)
3. Have the students read the case studies "Amy's Dream World" and "Jackie and Her Dad." Form small groups, and have them complete the Reflection exercise (p. 10).
4. Read "God's Grace" and "Grace Brings Challenge." Review the text by asking: **Who was Dietrich Bonhoeffer?** *He was a Lutheran pastor who actively protested Nazism during World War II.* Build on this story by dividing the students into five small groups to discuss their answers to the homework  **Handout 1:1—The Challenge of Being Catholic.** Assign one question to each group. Allow time for the members of each group to discuss all the questions. Then have each group summarize for the class its ideas and responses to the assigned question.

5. Read “Comfort and Challenge” and the case study “Living Grace.” Discuss the text using Group Talk (p. 14).



HOMEWORK

- Read “Grace and the Holy Spirit” and “Vocation: Being Co-Workers with God.”
- Tell the students to read Matthew 25: 14–27 (“*Using the Master’s Talents*”). Ask them to prepare a one page, creative story that teaches the same lesson but takes place in modern times.


ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



Case Study 1-B and **Case Study 1-C** in the *Case Studies* book provide students an opportunity to explore choices, responsibilities, and consequences of their actions. You might assign half of the students to work on **1-B** and the other on **1-C**. Allow them time to jot down notes for each question, and then discuss with them the issues (plagiarism and true happiness) as described in the stories.

Day 4

GRACE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Pray the chapter opening prayer.
2. To review the HOMEWORK readings, ask the following questions: **What happened on Pentecost?** *Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples and gave them the power to spread the gospel.* **In what sense is vocation another term for Christian morality?** *Vocation involves a personal sense of morality. Our vocation is a personal response to the Christian call to morality.* **What did the word talent mean in biblical times? What does the word mean now?** *In biblical times, talent referred to a unit of money. Today, it refers to God-given personality traits and abilities.* **What does it mean to be a co-worker with God?** *Being a co-worker with God means using our vocation to make something beautiful out of our God-given talents. We are called to use our talents to bring the world closer to God’s loving vision.*
3. Ask for volunteers to share with the class their creative-writing assignments on Matthew 25:14-27 by reading them aloud. Share with the students that, just like the servants in the story, we are called to develop and share our talents. We should not squander the assets given to us by God.
4. Form small groups. Instruct each group to complete the Activity exercise (p. 16). Have the students brainstorm ways that their individual talents combined with those of others could be used to offer creative solutions to societal problems.
5. Have the students read “Vocations Means Living a Christian Life.” Distribute  **Handout 1:2—Overcoming Obstacles in Vocation.** Ask the students for responses to the story of Daniel Ruettiger and his Insights for Success.
6. Have the students complete the Reflection exercise (p. 17). Explain that you will not be reading these, but circulate through the room to ensure students are completing the assignment.

7. Offer the students an opportunity to ask questions regarding the upcoming Chapter 1 Test.
8. Read the “Model of Morality” story. Discuss the ways that Katie and Mark exemplify many of the lessons found in Chapter 1.




HOMEWORK

- Have the students study for the Chapter 1 Test.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Catechism Connection

A major resource for this course on Catholic morality is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which is a reliable and systematic presentation of Catholic faith and doctrine. To help the students to become better acquainted with this text, assign  **Handout 1:3—Catechism Connection** for students to review.


Day 5

TESTING AND PRAYER SERVICE

1. Begin the class with silent prayer.
2. Administer the Chapter 1 Test from the Teacher Manual.
3. After tests are collected, allow the students a few minutes to write in their notebooks their thoughts on this question: *How can I apply the information presented in this chapter to my own life?* Invite them to share their thoughts on the question with the class.
4. Conclude the session with the “Celebrating Morality” prayer service (p. 19).



HOMEWORK

- Have the students read “Come, Lord Jesus” and “The Person of Jesus” in Chapter 2.
- Distribute  **Handout 2:1—The Sermon on the Mount** to be completed for the next class.



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