

Lesson Plan, Grade 7 - Chapter 13

Catechist Background

Doctrinal Content

- God made us with a free will, an intellect, and a soul; our conscience works with these gifts to help us choose good and avoid sin. (CCC, 1705, 1706, 1711)
- The distinction between mortal and venial sin, evident in Scripture, is also part of the tradition of the Church. Mortal sin and venial sin both affect a sinner's relationship with God, but in different ways. (CCC, 1854-1863)
- Morally good actions require that their object, intention, and circumstance be good; the end does not justify the means. (CCC, 1750-1754)
- A well-formed conscience—and the help of Christ's teachings, the Church, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and wise people—will guide us to do what is right and good. (CCC, 1783-1785)

Catechist Background

God in the beginning created human beings and made them subject to their own free choice. If you choose, you can keep the commandments; loyalty is doing the will of God. ... Before everyone are life and death, whichever they choose shall be given them. —The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Sirach) 15:14-15, 17

Reflect How does God's gift of freedom affect our responsibilities?

The Church teaches that a person's first obligation in making moral decisions is to form one's conscience. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches us that conscience is our ability to reason so as to discern the will of God. Conscience then is a gift that we are given by God, a gift that begins with the presumption that what we seek is to do God's will.

Each of us has the obligation to work to keep our consciences informed. When we have important choices to make, we need to pray, learn the Church's teachings, and seek counsel from a committed disciple, someone who can help us understand God's revelation through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. In this way, the law written in our hearts is uncovered and becomes the guide for our attitudes, words, and actions. We have a treasure of incredible value in our moral teaching, formed by the revelation of God in Sacred Scripture and illuminated through the centuries by the Magisterium. From generation to generation, the Church hands down the "language of faith" so as to open our hearts to the "understanding and the life of faith." The Church keeps central the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ for the sake of salvation and unity of all people.

Reflect What do you do to try to maintain a healthy, well-formed conscience?

Catechist's Prayer

God, the Father of life, help me to set a good example for my students. Help me to keep my actions and my words consistent with one another and with the teachings of the Church. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sharing the Message

How Seventh-Graders Understand Chapter Topics

Seventh-graders have many competing voices in their lives when it comes to moral decision-making. Often popular culture gives one message (especially through television, music, movies, and video games), while the Church (and perhaps the family) gives quite another. It's important for seventh-graders to understand that only God knows what is best for us, because God made us.

Teaching Tip

Research has shown that when making decisions about risky behaviors, it helps seventh-graders to think about their bigger life goals and how a particular decision might either get them closer to that goal or make the goal less possible. Discussing some decisions this way in a group setting can help seventh graders be more prudent in their daily decision-making.

Sharing the Message with Seventh-Graders

Younger adolescents are still prone to making impulsive decisions, particularly when pressured by peers.

- Seventh-graders need to be taught to think through the various consequences of their choices.
- At this age, the young people are still focused on themselves, but they are also beginning to grow into a deeper awareness of the rights and feelings of others. It's important to encourage and nurture this growth.

Chapter Connections

Tasks of Catechesis Helping children grow in a faith that is "known, celebrated, lived, and expressed in prayer" (NDC, 20). This chapter focuses on the following tasks of catechesis:

- Promoting Knowledge of the Faith
- Moral Formation

NCEA IFG: ACRE Edition

Knowledge of the Faith

- Objective: To know and understand basic Catholic teaching about the Incarnate Word Jesus Christ as the way, truth, and life

Moral Formation

- Objective: To be knowledgeable about the teachings of Jesus and the Church as the basis of Christian morality and to understand Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Faith Literacy

conscience, mortal sin, venial sin

Catholic Social Teaching

To integrate Catholic Social Teaching into your lesson, choose one of the following features: Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person, pages 338-339; or Solidarity of the Human Family, pages 344-345.

- Start the Live step of the process by talking about Blessed Aloysius Stepinac on page 220. Then move directly to the Catholic Social Teaching feature.
- Or, to expand the lesson, complete page 220, then move to the Catholic Social Teaching feature.
- Return to Chapter 13 for the prayer on page 221.

Music Option

- Use the following song to enhance catechetical learning or for prayer.
 - "Be Merciful, O Lord," Live, Page 221

Catechist Instruction, Grade 7 – Chapter 13

Invite Page 211

Objective

- Reflect on God's personal invitation through Scripture

♥ Let Us Pray

Invite the young people to gather in the prayer space and make the Sign of the Cross. Have a volunteer pray the Psalm verses aloud for the group. Prompt the group response. Have the youth move out of the prayer space and back to their seats.

Say: Because of free will, we have the ability to choose to follow God's will or to act against it. In today's reading, we'll learn about the responsibility that comes with the freedom to choose.

† Scripture

Guide the youth through the process of Scripture reflection.

Invite the young people to be still, close their eyes, and focus on their breathing. Encourage them to open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them.

- Proclaim the Scripture and have the youth sit in silence.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Allow volunteers to share.

► You may play instrumental music to begin the reflection.

Remember, this is a spiritual discipline that takes practice. The young people will grow in their capacity to sit in silence. Throughout the year, build to four minutes.

Have you ever thought...

Say: God the Father gave us the gift of free will, and with that comes the great responsibility to live a moral life by following Jesus' teaching and actions. • Invite the young people to respond to the questions.

Discover (1) Pages 214-215

Objectives

- Discuss the interrelationship of the soul, intellect, and conscience in following the moral law
- Contrast mortal and venial sin and their effect on the sinner's relationship with God

Living Is Thinking and Doing

Direct the young people to read the first paragraph.

† Scripture

Proclaim Matthew 7:12.

- Ask: How do you think this Scripture ties in to making decisions?

Your Decisions

Review these paragraphs with the group.

- Have the youth underline or highlight what they think are the most important ideas.

Made to Choose

Tell the young people to silently read this section.

- Ask: What are three things humans have that make us unique from other creatures? ***a soul, intellect, and a conscience***

Choices That Lead You from God

Challenge the youth to find the two definitions of sin in the first paragraph. Sin is “any deliberate thought, word, or action that goes against moral law and offends God,” and “a deliberate choice to disobey God.” Point out the three conditions for a sin to be mortal:

- The matter involved must be very serious.
- The person must know the action is serious and sinful.
- The person must freely choose to commit the wrong anyway. Be sure that everyone understands these points before moving on.

Work with Words

Help the young people study the Catholic Faith Words and their definitions. • Ask them to shut their books for a quick review of the vocabulary. • Write the Catholic Faith Words on the board and read aloud each definition, letting volunteers match it to the correct word.

Activity

Have the young people complete the activity with a partner.

Quick Review

Because we are made in God’s image, we have a soul, our intellect, and a conscience that help us as we make choices. This leaves open the possibility for personal sin, which can hurt our relationship with God.

Discover (2) Pages 216-217

Objectives

- List and explain the elements that determine the morality of an action

- Explain how the circumstances of an action can increase or decrease its moral goodness. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the opening question. Invite ideas and comments from the group.

The Sources of Action

Point out the three things that determine the morality of a human action by reading aloud the bullet points. Share the quote from the *Catechism*.

- Write *object*, *intention*, and *circumstances* on the board or on chart paper. Ask volunteers to read aloud the paragraphs in the case study.
- Pause after each paragraph to make sure everyone understands.
- Discuss the question on page 217.
- Give the youth an opportunity to ask any additional questions about the example.

Go to the Source

Have the young people read Matthew 6:2-4 to find Jesus' teaching on the need for the appropriate intention when doing good deeds.

† Scripture Background

What's in Matthew?

Matthew 6:2-8 is the source for considering one's intention in determining the morality of an action. Doing good for selfish reasons diminishes the rightness of the action. Interestingly, this section is followed by the Lord's Prayer, which keeps us focused on what is really important in God's eyes. Tertullian is known to have said that the Lord's Prayer is "the summary of the whole Gospel." The words of the Lord's Prayer are Jesus' words.

Consider This

Tell the youth to silently read this section.

- Explain how the circumstances of an action can increase or decrease its moral goodness
- Discuss how the philosophies of Saint Thomas Aquinas still apply today.

Activity

Have the young people read the instructions for themselves.

- Give them time to reflect on a personal moral decision.
- Have them complete this activity on their own.

Quick Review

There are three elements that determine the morality of an action: the object, the intention, and the circumstances. Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that whether an act

was good or evil depended on the end results of that action, and that the circumstances of an action can increase or decrease its moral goodness.

Extend the Lesson

Use **Activity Master 13: What's Your Decision** to extend the lesson; it is not included in the timed estimate for this section of the Lesson Plan.

Discover (3) Pages 218-219

Objectives

- Relate the formation of a good conscience to the need to learn and practice new skills
- Explore the steps needed to make a good moral decision

Teaching Activity: Forming Your Conscience

Youth will learn the importance of having a well-formed conscience by comparing well-made brownies with a batch made from a different recipe. They will then write lyrics to a song that helps detail the steps for making a moral decision.

Before the Lesson

Materials Needed

✦ Go to aliveinchrist.osv.com and download the Building Your Conscience pages and Steps in Making a Moral Decision handout 2 boxes of brownie mix and ingredients

Preparation

- Bake two batches of brownies (avoid using nuts and confirm food allergies prior to the lesson). Follow the recipe for the first batch and add salt to the second batch until the brownies mix is no longer sweet.
- Once the brownies cool, mix together some of the regularly prepared brownies and some of the salty brownies in a basket. Keep some of the regularly prepared brownies on hand during the activity to replace the salty brownies that the participants have received.

Activity Directions

Begin the activity by passing out the brownies to the participants. Have the youth take one and pass the basket to the next person. Instruct them to wait until everyone has a brownie before eating.

Say: If have to make a choice to do the right thing, how do you know what is right?

Your conscience Yes, God gave us the gift of a conscience.

By this time, the young people should have taken their first bites of the brownies. The participants who have eaten the salty ones will probably be spitting them out and looking around the room.

Ask: What is wrong?

Some participants will say that their brownie tastes bad while others will say what that theirs are good. Respond by acting confused and telling the participants that you don't understand. With the group, examine the brownies. Ask the group if they notice a difference in the way the brownies look and feel. After a couple of minutes of musing about how they look and feel the same, admit to the group that there were two different batches of brownies and tell them how one batch was made with a different mixture of ingredients.

Say: The point is, if you don't follow the recipe and put in the necessary ingredients, the brownies are not made well—they are not formed correctly. It makes a difference.

Give a regularly prepared brownie to each participant who received a salty one.

Say: Those brownies are like our conscience. While God plants in us the desire to know and do what is right, we must FORM our conscience—we have to follow a recipe in order to discover his truth. Here is the recipe for forming your conscience.

Post the Building Your Conscience pages and ask three volunteers to each read one point.

Say: Read and pray with God's Word, search out and find someone who can help you understand what the Church teaches (because the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit), and get advice from people you believe are faith-filled and know that God wants what is right.

Say: Who in here can do a sit-up? How many sit-ups can you do in one set? 20, 30, 40? Every time you do a sit-up, it is strengthening your muscles. The next time you do a set, you will probably be able to do more. Virtues (good spiritual habits) and vices (habits or tendencies to be more sinful) are just like that. The more we flex our "goodness" muscle, the stronger we are to resist evil. The more bad choices that we make, the less likely we are to continue to do good.

Distribute the Steps for Making a Moral Decision handout.

Say: Here is a process for making a good decision. Read through the text.

Ask the large group to choose a contemporary song that they all know. Ask them to hum the melody together as a large group. Let them know that they will be rewriting the lyrics to this song, but keeping the melody the same. Divide the young people into five groups and assign each group one of the steps of making a moral decision. Have

the groups break away from the large group to write their verse to the song based on the step they've been assigned.

When the small groups have finished, have them share with the new lyrics with the large group, one step at a time. Ask for a volunteer from each group to perform the lyrics while the rest of the participants hum the melody. Now or at a later date, video the group performing their new song. You may want to email the video clip to the parents.

Live Pages 220-221

Objectives

- Identify resources that will aid a person in making a moral decision
- Explore the faith life of Blessed Aloysius Stepinac
- Participate in an Examination of Conscience

Our Catholic Life

Have a volunteer read aloud this section.

- Allow the young people to privately journal their responses to the Our Catholic Life question.

People of Faith

Explain to the youth that Blessed Aloysius Stepinac believed very strongly in the freedom of all people.

- Read aloud the People of Faith paragraph.
- Review with the group the additional details in the People of Faith Background box.
- Invite the youth to silently pray the Act of Hope from page 387.

Here are some additional details about Blessed Aloysius Stepinac to assist you in presenting this section:

- Blessed Aloysius Stepinac didn't just raise his voice against the Nazi regime, he also helped to hide many Jewish people in order for them to avoid persecution.
- Even though it was very dangerous, Blessed Aloysius Stepinac spoke out against the persecution of gypsies and the Serbs in addition to his protesting of the treatment of those who were Jewish.

Activity

Have the young people read the instructions and complete the activity independently.

- If time is an issue, you may wish to work through a hypothetical issue as a group.

Examination of Conscience

♥Ask three volunteers to each be one of the readers.

Gather the youth in the prayer space with their textbooks opened and ready to read the responses in the prayer.








Follow the order of prayer on the prayer page.

► Conclude by playing or singing with the young people “Be Merciful, O Lord,” downloaded from **aliveinchrist.osv.com**.

Chapter Review

If you are using eAssessments, remind the young people that they will need to be completed by the due date. Feedback is important at this age. For the tool to be used effectively provide feedback to the young people about their work.

Chapter 13 Lesson Plan


Objectives	Process	Materials
Invite, 15 minutes		
Freedom and Responsibility Page 211	 Psalm 8:5–6 Pray the opening prayer.  The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Sirach) 15:14–17 Guide the youth through the process of Scripture reflection. • Discuss Have You Ever Thought questions.	
Discover, 45 minutes		
Living is Thinking and Doing Pages 214–215 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the interrelationship of the soul, intellect, and conscience in following the moral law • Contrast mortal and venial sin and their effect on the sinner's relationship with God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about soul, intellect, and conscience.  Read Matthew 7:12. • Discuss different levels of sin. • Activity Reflect on being aware of and having a well-formed conscience. 	<input type="checkbox"/> pencils or pens <input type="checkbox"/> board or chart paper <input type="checkbox"/> highlighters
The Sources of Action Pages 216–217 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List and explain the elements that determine the morality of an action • Explain how the circumstances of an action can increase or decrease its moral goodness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the three elements of the decision-making process.  Reflect on Matthew 6:2-4. • Activity Write about a moral issue. • Activity Master What's Your Decision? 	<input type="checkbox"/> pencils or pens <input type="checkbox"/> board or chart paper <input type="checkbox"/> Bible  Activity Master 13
Formation for Doing Right Pages 218–219 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate the formation of a good conscience to the need to learn and practice new skills • Explore the steps needed to make a good moral decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Activity Youth will learn the importance of having a well-formed conscience by comparing brownies made to recipe with a batch made with added ingredients. They will then write lyrics to a song that helps detail the steps for making a moral decision. 	 Building Your Conscience, Steps for Moral Decision Making <input type="checkbox"/> tape <input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes of brownie mix and ingredients
Live, 15 minutes		
Our Catholic Life Page 220	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the questions in the Our Catholic Life section. • People of Faith Learn about Saint Aloysius Stepinac. • Activity Review some decision-making resources. 	<input type="checkbox"/> pencils or pens
Examination of Conscience Page 221	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select three readers. • Follow the order of prayer. 	 "Be Merciful, O Lord"

CATHOLIC FAITH WORDS

soul, intellect, conscience, mortal sin, venial sin

ASSESSMENT

Chapter Review, Page 222

 aliveinchrist.osv.com Customize and Download Assessments, Interactive Student Reviews, eAssessments

Name _____

Date _____

What's Your Decision?

For each moral dilemma described below, identify the object, the intention, and the circumstances of each situation. Use these elements to decide what you would do.

MORAL DILEMMA #1 You were directed to read six books over the summer. For most of the summer you did not do the reading and spent time with your best friend. It is now August, your best friend is on a trip, and so you begin the work. You realize that you probably won't have time to finish the book list. So, you find someone who has done the work and use his/her notes.

What is the object? _____

What is the intention? _____

What are the circumstances? _____

What is your decision? _____

MORAL DILEMMA #2 You want to give your mom a nice birthday present, but you don't have enough money. You would never steal anything from a store in the small town where you live because you know how that would hurt the store owners. But today you are in the mall. Many of the stores at the mall are owned by big corporations that get their merchandise at a discount and charge too much. The gift would really make your mom happy and she has had a really difficult year.

What is the object? _____

What is the intention? _____

What are the circumstances? _____

What is your decision? _____

MORAL DILEMMA #3 There is a group of students at your school who have singled out one person in the class. They constantly make fun of that person and now you hear that they are harassing this person online. You and your friends do not participate in the bullying but you also haven't taken any action to stop what is happening.

What is the object? _____

What is the intention? _____

What are the circumstances? _____

What is your decision? _____

Name _____

Date _____

Match each description in Column A with the correct term in Column B by filling in the appropriate letter.

Column A

Column B

- ____ 1. A sin that weakens a person's relationship with God
- ____ 2. The God-given ability that makes it possible to think, reason, and judge
- ____ 3. The spiritual principle of humans that is individual, created by God, and exists forever
- ____ 4. A grave sin by which someone turns completely away from God

- a. mortal sin
- b. venial sin
- c. soul
- d. intellect

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Then rewrite false statements to make them true.

5. It is all right to do evil if a good result will come from it. **True/False**

6. Conscience is the God-given ability that helps individuals judge whether actions are right or wrong. **True/False**

7. We do not need to do anything to form our conscience. **True/False**

8. Follow these steps to make a good moral decision: 1) Think about possible consequences, 2) Compare your options to the Commandments and Beatitudes, 3) Talk with someone who can advise you, 4) Pray to the Holy Spirit, and 5) Act with confidence that you have made the right decision. **True/False**

Write a response on the lines below.

9. Why is it important to have a well-formed conscience?

10. Explain the three elements that determine the morality of a human action.

A well formed conscience
will lead to what is truthful
and just.

Scripture: What does the
Bible tell you?

Church teaching: What does the Church say about it?

Getting advice: Ask for input from family members or trusted adults, study the facts of the situation, and look at the standards of society (e.g., is the action legal?).

Steps in Making a Moral Decision

Think

Take time to consider your options and the possible consequences to yourself, others, and your relationship with God. Take time to hear what your conscience might be saying.

Compare

How do your options compare to Jesus' Beatitudes, his New Commandment, the Ten Commandments, and Church teachings? If an option contradicts any of these, then it's not really an option anymore.

Talk

Find someone who can understand the situation you are in. Tell him or her what you are thinking and why. Ask for advice.

Pray

Turn to the Holy Spirit in prayer, asking for guidance to make the right decision.

Act

Make your choice and be confident that you have made the right one based upon your conscience.