

Welcome - 10 minutes

- Introduce yourself express how excited you are to be there and how it's going to be a great year and share some information about you. Family, work, what you like to do, what you are looking forward to being a chatechist. Anything!
- Take attendance and when each name is called as the kids to introduce them selves and Share:
 - School Name
 - Something about their family (brother's and sisters etc.),
 - Favorite subject
 - Extracurricular activities/way spend free time.
 - Something that made them smile that day
- The goal is to get them comfortable sharing with you and each other

Freedom and Responsibility 20 minutes

Page 5 in the kids book has the following opening prayer

LEADER: Wondrous God, you have given us thhe awesome gift of freedom. With that gift comes the responsibility to make choices that show our love for you, each other, and ourselves.

"What is man that you are mindful of him, and a son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god, crowned him with gory and honor."

ALL: Jesus we want to do what is right. Show us. Teach us. Be with us as we discover how to love you well.

Scripture:

"God in the beginning created human beings and mad them subject to their own free choice. If you choose, you can keep the commandments; loyalty is doing the will of God; Set before you are fire and water; to whatever you choose, stretch out your hand. Before everyone are life and death, whichevef they choose shall be given them."

- The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Sirach) 15: 14-17

Say: This scripture explains that God gave us free will, and that comes with great responsibility to live a moral life by following Jesus' teaching and actions.

Ask the kids:

Why did God create us with the freedom to choose?

How do we know what is right?

Possible answers: we are the only creatures that have the ability to choose what is right vs. what is needed to survive

Choosing what is right requires a conscience

Encourage kids to think of Jesus' values and how he lived

Watch the video

Everyday Discernment by Catholic Central

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQH018oSp6M>

7:06 minutes long

Read:

Everyday you are faced with choices that require decisions. Some decisions seem more important than others , and you might not know how to make the more difficult ones. Just remember, you've been given some important tools to help you.

God made humans unique from all other creatures. You have a **soul** - the spiritual principle of a human person that is individual, created by god, and will exist forever. You have an **intellect** – the God given ability that makes it possible for you to think, reason, and judge. You also have **free will** – the God given freedom and ability to make choices on your own without being forced to choose or act in a certain way.

This unique combination makes you an image of God. You are created with the tremendous ability to seek what is good and true, and therefore reach happiness with God in Heaven.

God gives you an other important gift to help you make decisions: your **conscience**. Your conscience is like an inner voice, part of your ability to reason, that helps you to judge whether actions are right or wrong.

Ask:

Who knows the golden rule?

Many may say "do unto others" (but this is not complete) see story below

It should be clarified as either:

Do unto others whatever you would have them do to you OR Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Funny story- a little boy cried to the teacher that a friend had hit him. In the middle of crying he stopped and said "I know... do unto others"... "I know, I'll go hit him back!" The teacher kindly stopped him and clarified what the Golden Rule REALLY is!

Ask the kids if they keep the Golden Rule in mind

Examples: asking someone to sit with you at lunch; helping someone that is lost or confused, not shouting at a sibling if they are being frustrating, offering your parents help; holding the door for someone who has their hands full

Ask if they have examples of using it to make the right choices

Has anyone ever been mean to you, but you walked away? (if no one talks, that's ok, just plant the seed)

Have you every thought about doing something that could embarrass someone, but you didn't because you have been embarrassed before and know how it feels?

Have you ever stopped a friend from being mean to someone else or embarrassing someone else?

Time Check – Should be close to 6:30

Choices that Lead You from God 10 minutes

Listening to your conscience leads you along the path that keeps you in the right relationship with God and away from **sin** – any deliberate thought, word, or action that goes against moral law and offends God.

Sin is a deliberate choice to disobey God. It's not a mistake or an accident.

There are two types of personal sins for which someone is responsible. **Mortal sin** - is a very serious sin which breaks a person's relationship with God. The effect of mortal sin, without repenting and being forgiven, is total separation from God forever.

For sin to be mortal three conditions must be met:

- The matter involved must be very serious
- The person must know the action is serious and sinful
- The person freely chooses or agrees to commit the wrong anyway (complete consent)

The Commandments specify gravely serious matter. But not all sins are gravely damaging or mortal. Less serious sin, called venial sin, weakens a person's relationship with God, but does not destroy it.

Venial sins lessen the love of God in your heart and make it more difficult for you to resist sin. Venial sins arise from not using moderation or acting without full knowledge, and can sometimes lead to mortal sin.

Watch: Mortal vs. Venial Sin by The Religion Teacher 2:19 minutes

The Sources of Action – 15 minutes

What determines whether an action is good?

How do you know if what you are doing is moreally right? Three things determine the morality of human action:

- The object, which characterizes the action in and of itself.
- The intention, which is the immediate end or purpose the person intends to achieve through the action
- The circumstances which surround the action

“A morally good act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances together....One may not do evil so that good may result from it”

Consider this situation: your older brother is driving Grandma to the doctor using your dad's car with his permission. The object of the action is to drive his grandmother to the doctor.

A bike rider loses control and swerves in front of the car. Your brother makes a snap decision and turns the steering wheel causing the car to jump the curb. The object of his action and his intention are to avoid hitting the biker. Your brother's intention is not to break the rules of the road or to put pedestrians in danger, but to avoid hitting and hurting the bike rider.

The circumstances are that no pedestrians are at or near the curb and that your brother only drove on the curb long enough to avoid the biker. In this case the immediate object of the brother's action was to avoid the biker. This, too, was his intention.

The circumstances permitted him to do this without hurting anyone else. Even though he technically violated the law by going off the road, the immediate object of his action was to avoid hitting the biker. The object, intention , and circumstances were good. His was morally a good act.

When making a choice, you have to consider all three elements: what is the action or object itself; why are you doing it, or not doing it; and what are the pressures, environment, or issues surrounding it that might be affecting your judgement.

Consider This

A good intention does not make an object or behavior that is morally wrong, ok to do.

EX: If your intent was to help your sister but you had to lie to your parents to do it, lying is still not ok.

A bad intention can make an object or behavior that is good morally become bad.

EX: If you want to show off in front of your friends, donating money does not change that being boastful is morally bad.

As Jesus said “take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people might see them”.

Saint Thomas Aquinas argued that whether an act is good or evil depends on the end result of that action. Human acts are good if they promote the purpose and honor of God. Aquinas taught that by repeating a good action, people develop a moral habit, which allows them to do good easily. He wrote: “An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention.” Today we say “The end does not justify the means”.

Here is an extreme example: if asked what to do in a situation where killing one person would save one hundred other lives, a Catholic person’s answer is that murder is wrong no matter how many lives it saves. The circumstances of an action can increase or decrease the moral goodness of the action. Factors such as fear, ignorance, and pressure are some examples. But circumstances cannot change whether an act is morally good or not, only the degree of its goodness or evilness. Some acts, such as murder, are always wrong no matter the intention or the circumstances because choosing them entails so great an evil that they are against the natural moral law.

Watch: Formation of Conscience by Catholic Central

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slG07L6pBgs>

6:53 minutes

Activity – 5 minutes

Think of a moral decision someone your age could be facing. Write about the act, the intention, the circumstances and what your conscience might tell you if you were the one making that decision.

Discuss some examples from the group if they are comfortable sharing.

Formation for Doing Right 20 minutes

How can a well formed conscience help you?

Athletes know that if a person wants to build up his or her body, he or she has to work at it. He or she has to establish a routine involving exercise and the right food.

Building and shaping a conscience is similar. If you want to make good decisions through life and do the right things then forming a conscience is critical. If a conscience has been formed well, it will lead you to what is truthful and just. It will help you make sound, rational judgments and follow what is good.

Ask – who in your life has influenced your conscience?

For the positive? How about for the negative?

When you have a moral decision to make, your conscience will move you to make a right (morally good) judgement that follows reason and God's law. Or it can lead you to make an incorrect (morally bad) judgment that does not follow reason and God's law.

Conscience Formation

Someone who wants to become a better pianist will seek out a teacher who can introduce skills and guide the student to feel the music as they play. The person will spend a lot of time practicing and accepting the fact that their development will be on going; if you don't use the skills you will lose them. The same holds true with building your conscience.

There are important ways to build your conscience:

- Scripture – What does the Bible Tell you
- Church teaching – what does the church say about it

- Getting advice- ask for input from family members, trusted adults, study the facts of the situation and look at the standards of society

Vices and Virtues

Practice makes perfect, but have you ever thought of the reverse? What will happen when you keep repeating the same negative sinful behavior over and over? You create in yourself a vice, a habit or tendency to be more sinful. Vices refer to the seven capital sins that tend to produce other sinful behavior.

The vices can be countered with Cardinal Virtues. They help strengthen us and fight our vices. The more they are practiced, the more we can rely on them.

Watch: 7 Deadly Sins by Catholic Central 8:18 Minutes

Sins

Pride
Covetousness/Greed
Envy
Anger/Wrath
Gluttony
Lust
Sloth/Laziness

Cardinal Virtues:

Prudence
Justice
Fortitude
Temperance

If there is time:

Ask the kids to write sins they may struggle with and the virtues that they want to develop and grow. They do not need to share this, or keep this, just want it to be a thought starter for themselves and their personal growth.

While they are working play:

Play : Eric Champlin – Where you Begin (feat. Mikayla Jackson)

Closing

Close by saying thank you to the kids for participating. Let them know you are excited to work with them this year and look forward to everyone getting to know each other and feel more comfortable together.

Pray the Our Father.