

LESSON 1: Freedom and Choice



REFERENCE

Page 367 [TRAINING: FREE CHOICE]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (3) LSM: 'Freedom to Choose'
- (5) Bibles

AIM

- To assist learners to understand the concepts of true freedom and choice so that they will be able to apply these in their lives

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners have a better knowledge and understanding of true freedom and choice.
- SKL Learners are able to apply their learning to daily decision-making.

TEACHER'S NOTE

In this lesson the focus is on the twin concepts of 'freedom' and 'choice'. Learners need to understand the connection between them. They need to sense clearly that without freedom, there can be no choice, and without choice, there can be no moral blame.

The lessons following will then encourage a sense of responsibility, so that, having dispelled an unnecessary and unhealthy sense of guilt, there will be, all the more, a willingness and freedom on the part of learners to act in a truly human way.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Brainstorm 'freedom' and 'choice'. Is there any connection between the two? Try to get the learners to reach the following statement, or something like it: "Only where there are reasonable alternatives and true freedom is there choice." (See CORD p 367.) Try to elicit examples of reasonable or unreasonable alternatives from the learners' lives.

2 Limitations to Freedom

- i. Discuss: Are there limitations to freedom? Encourage the learners to share some examples.
- ii. Display the following list (CORD 194, p 367):
 - Fear and force
 - Overwhelming emotion (passion)
 - *Bona fide* (in good faith) mistakes and forgetting
 - *Bona fide* ignorance and inadvertence
 - Brainwashing (through 'education', through religion, through the media, through advertising)
 - Habit and routine
 - Environment and culture
 - Limitations of time and space
 - The genetic factor

- Psychological factors (neuroses and unconscious motivation)
- iii. Ask learners to identify the different entries in the light of their examples. Call for further examples to clarify any of the items on the list that have not been identified. Make the distinction between external and internal limitations.

3 Freedom to Choose

Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Freedom to Choose'. Invite them to respond to the scenarios presented. Give or elicit examples from the learners of internal limitations to freedom in these cases.

4 Moral Responsibility

Without freedom there can be no choice. And where there is no choice? Pose the following questions:

- Is a kleptomaniac (a person with an uncontrollable tendency to steal things) morally responsible for stealing?
- Does a homosexual person choose his/her sexual orientation? (It is a different matter, of course, how the person *chooses* to act out this orientation.)

5 Prayer

Reading for silent reflection: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

OTHER IDEAS

6 The Lost Sheep

The following story from *Song of the Bird* (Anthony de Mello. 1987. Anand: Gujarat Shitya Prakash) is a commentary on free choice.

A sheep found a hole in the fence and crept through it. He wandered far and lost his way back. Then he realised that he was being followed by a wolf. He ran and ran, but the wolf kept chasing him, until the shepherd came and rescued him and carried him lovingly back to the fold. In spite of everyone's urgings to the contrary, the shepherd refused to nail up the hole in the fence.

7 The Lure of the Media

It is an unfortunate fact that the world today glorifies intemperance. Men and women are lead to believe that glamour, sophistication, sex-appeal, the right silhouette, and the right liquor are the only things in life worth striving for. Learners make a study of a selection of adverts from newspapers and magazines and list the words that encourage an intemperate way of life.

8 Bombing

Bearing in mind that responsibility comes with freedom to choose, invite learners to rank the following according to the degree of responsibility:

- The person who drops a bomb.
- The person who designed the plane.
- The officer who ordered the air strike.
- The person who paid taxes.
- The person who maintains the plane.
- The person who built the bomb.

(Finley & Pennock. 1984. *Christian Morality & You*, p 44)

9 Birth Control Pills

Pose the following scenario: You are rummaging through your 16-year old sister's belongings for a sweater she borrowed from you last week when you come across some birth control pills. The prescription is in her name. Think of three possible courses of action. List several consequences for each action.

(Finley & Pennock. 1984. *Christian Morality & You*, p 194)

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- Michael Pennock. 1991. 'Freedom to Choose' in *Choosing: Cases in Moral Decision-Making*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p 85-86



Lesson Materials



Freedom to Choose

Responsible decision-making implies the presence of two kinds of freedom. *External* freedom enables us to act without undue restraint or control of another. *Internal* freedom, on the other hand, comes from within. It is the state of mind and spirit which enables us to achieve our full human potential.

Here are three situations where external freedom is present. Thus, the condition is present where you can choose to act in a way that will enable you to grow as a human person, a child of God with dignity. How would you exercise your freedom?

1. Your father and mother have gone out of town on a business trip. Your brothers and sisters are staying with relatives. You will remain alone in the house. Your parents have instructed you not to have any friends over. What would you do?
2. You work as a waitress in an ice cream shop. The store policy is that employees are allowed one sundae or its equivalent every night they work. They may not give free ice cream treats to friends. However it is impossible for the owner to monitor his employees since he is not there most of the time. Would you keep his policy?
3. The night before an important game against a rival school, your best friend asks you to go to a concert with her. Your coach told you to be in bed by 9 p.m. so you'd have plenty of rest for the contest. You can't possibly be home from the concert until after midnight. And there would still be homework to do. What would you do?

Discuss:

- Would it be morally wrong for you to go against the wishes of any of the authority figures in the various stories? Explain.
- What principles of good behaviour are at stake in each of the cases?

LESSON 2: Look Before You Leap



REFERENCE

Page 369 [TRAINING: The ability to DECIDE RESPONSIBLY]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) LSM: 'Touchstone Questions'
- (3) (4) LSM: 'Moral Dilemmas'

AIM

- To guide the learners through a process of decision-making so that they will then be helped to make serious, moral decisions

OUTCOMES

- SKL Learners are able to apply a method to their moral decision-making.
- DAP Learners recognise the importance of the ability to make sound moral decisions.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Learners need to realise that there is a gap between judging what is right, on the one hand, and deciding to do it, on the other. If you have time, a consideration of the four cardinal virtues (given under Other Ideas) will help to bridge this gap.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Learners think about an important decision that they have been faced with at some time in their life. They reflect on the following questions:

- How did you decide what to do? In the light of the consequences, was it a good decision?
- Would you use that method again?

Write up some of the 'methods' used. Are there any that are alike?

2 Touchstone Questions

Review the Moral Check-Questions (Touchstone Questions) dealt with in Grade 11 Lesson 7 and the STOP Sign method of decision-making encountered in Grade 11 Lesson 2. These two aids are put together in the Lesson Materials page 'Touchstone Questions'.

3 Moral Dilemma

The learners are now challenged to apply the Touchstone Questions to one of the scenarios found on the Lesson Materials page 'Moral Dilemmas' – 'Linda' or 'The Judge'. Use a process such as the following:

- Present the dilemma to the learners who might work alone or, preferably, in small groups.
- Give them time to consider it, applying the Touchstone Questions.
- They commit their tentative decision to paper.
- They own their decision and are able to answer for it in a reasoned way
- They listen to others sharing their decisions.

4 Prayerfulness

Close the lesson with a period of quiet reflection and prayer, using the suggestions on the reverse side of the Lesson Materials page 'Moral Dilemmas'.

OTHER IDEAS

5 More Dilemmas

Instead of the scenarios given above, you might like to substitute one of the following:

Miracle Cure:

Reginald works for a prestigious university. He has recently discovered a cure for a rare, but deadly, blood disease. He is trying to decide if he should make his results known immediately or publish them in a national journal. If he waits for publication in the journal (six months away) he will almost surely be given lots of attention and win some important consulting jobs that will pay him handsomely. He would use the money to pay for the education of his retarded child. But if he waits, at least five people will die of the blood disease in this country alone.

Discuss:

- i. If you were Reginald what would you do?
- ii. Would it be immoral not to reveal the research findings right away? (Consult the STOP Sign.)
- iii. In Kohlberg's terms, at what stage was your answer in question i?

Centrefold:

Sue is a very attractive model. She has always refused to pose in the nude, but recently she was offered R25,000 to pose for a centerfold in a "soft-core" porn magazine. Normally, she would not give the offer a second thought. However, she has just seen a national television programme on world hunger and was deeply moved by it. She vowed then that she would try to raise some money for the starving children she saw in the programme. She is tempted to take the lucrative job offer and give the money to the poor.

Discuss:

- i. If Sue were your sister, what would you advise her? Why?
- ii. In Kohlberg's terms, at what stage is your answer?

(Pennock. 1979. *Moral Problems*, p 224-5)

6 Some More Dilemmas

- i. You have information about a crime and you know you will be in danger if you divulge it. What should you do?
- ii. Your parents do not like your friend because he/she does not belong to the same social class as you. What do you do?
- iii. You have got into very serious trouble and nobody knows about it yet, but you are worried sick. What do you do?

(Nano Brennan & others. 1977. *The Moral Life: Guidelines for the Teacher*. Dublin: Veritas, p 10-11)

7 Cardinal Virtues

Four virtues play a pivotal role in our moral life. They are called cardinal virtues since all the others are grouped around them. They are named in Scripture: "If virtue is the object of a person's affections, the fruits of wisdom's labours are the virtues; temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude, these are her teaching, and in life there is nothing of more value than these." [Wisdom 8:7]

Present the virtues, and invite a discussion of how they relate to decision-making.

- **PRUDENCE** is the ability to foresee which things must be done, and which avoided, in order to attain a worthy goal. It involves making decisions about present circumstances in the light of past experience. A prudent person makes sure of the facts (present circumstances), takes counsel (draws from others on the practical wisdom of the past), decides on a course of action, and considers the manner in which the decision will be implemented.
- **JUSTICE** is a virtue that regulates our social behaviour. It is the cement that binds together the bricks of the house of humankind. It consists in the constant and firm will to give what is their due to God and neighbour. Justice towards God is called the “virtue of religion”. Justice towards others disposes one to respect the rights of each, and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good.
- **FORTITUDE** is the virtue which enables a person to overcome difficulty in the pursuit of good. It directs his/her actions when faced with situations involving danger, fear and anger. It is the courage to take prudent, calculated risks. A courageous person can face the danger of death without flinching (but does not court death without serious reason), is not defeated by difficulty but faces it with inner strength, does not collapse in the face of trouble, does not run away from responsibility, and is prepared to weather storm and stress.
- **TEMPERANCE** is the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. The happiness of both the individual and society demands self-control. A person does not live simply by instinct or desire, but by reason. A person’s instinctive cravings for food and drink and the pleasures of sex are impelling because they are related to survival (self and species), but they must be controlled by the virtue of temperance.

(See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, articles 1805-1809)

MATERIALS



LEARNER

- Michael Burke. 1991. ‘Moral check-questions’ 190 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 149
- Michael Pennock. 1979. ‘The STOP Sign’ in *Moral Problems*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 54
- Pennock & Finley. 1984. ‘Linda’ and ‘The Judge’ in *Christian Morality & You*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 195, 197
- Michael Pennock. 1979. ‘Miracle Cure’ and ‘Centrefold’ in *Moral Problems*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 224-5
- Michael Pennock. 1991 ‘Prayer Reflection’ in *Forming a Catholic Conscience*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 43

Lesson Materials



Touchstone Questions

SEARCH

1. Am I doing this in order to feel good, or in order to respond to the call of goodness?
2. Are my feelings ruling my judgement?
3. What's my real intention in this? Is there a chance that I may be fooling myself?
4. Have I made the effort to understand the situation fully?
5. What are the real issues and values and value-conflicts involved here?

THINK

6. Have I considered all the possible consequences? Are there any predictable bad consequences that overrule the possible good ones?
7. What would happen if everyone did this?
8. What are the alternatives?

OTHERS

9. Am I taking into account the feelings and point-of-view of the other people involved? Should I be consulting someone?
10. What guidance does the Church's experience offer me in this matter?

PRAYER

11. How would God feel about this? Have I prayed about it? How does this measure up to the Gospel? What might Jesus have done?

© Michael Pennock. 'The "Stop" Sign' in *Moral Problems*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, pp27-53 (summary)

© Michael Burke. 1991. 'Moral check-questions' 190 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p.149

Lesson Materials



Moral Dilemmas

PROBLEM #5: Linda

Linda failed to return home from a dance Friday night. On Saturday she admitted she had spent the night with an Air Force lieutenant.

Her parents decided on a punishment that would "wake Linda up". They ordered her to shoot the dog she had owned for about two years.

On Sunday, the parents and Linda drove the dog into the desert near their home. They had the girl dig a shallow grave. Then her mother grasped the dog's head between her hands and her father gave his daughter a .22 calibre pistol and told her to shoot the dog.

Instead, the girl put the pistol to her right temple and shot herself. The police said there were no charges that could be filed against the parents except possibly cruelty to animals.

On the basis of Christian morality, what immoral act (if any) was committed by each person involved?

1. Linda
2. The lieutenant
3. Her parents
4. The police

Discuss: Which of the actions involved appears to most seriously disrupt the love relationship with God and with others?

PROBLEM #7: The Judge

A Catholic judge has just presided over a murder case. The jury found the defendant guilty and recommended the maximum penalty.

The state allows capital punishment (in this case, the electric chair) in order to deter other potential criminals. There is tremendous popular support for the death penalty in this case.

However, the judge believes, in conscience, that capital punishment is just a sophisticated form of revenge.

Discuss/...

Lesson Materials

MORAL DILEMMAS (cont)

Discuss:

1. What should the judge do? Why?
2. Suppose the judge decides for life imprisonment, rather than for the death penalty. Would *not* enforcing the state law permitting capital punishment be acting immorally?
3. Does a public official have an obligation to set aside his or her personal conscience when called on to fulfill a sworn duty to uphold the laws of the land? Explain.

© Pennock & Finley. 1984. 'Linda' and 'The Judge' in *Christian Morality & You*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 195, 197

Prayer Reflection

We need to remind ourselves periodically of what Jesus tells us about prayer. Read the following parable and reflect on its message. Ask the Lord for the faith to believe his message.

"Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, 'My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him'; and the man answers from inside the house, 'Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you'. I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will make him get up and give his friend all he wants."

[Luke 11:5-8]

Reflection

When was the last time you asked the Lord for something? Did you keep asking or did you give up easily?

Resolution

Where do you need help in your life right now? Pray to the Lord in the coming week for his help and guidance.

© Michael Pennock. 1991 'Prayer Reflection' in *Forming a Catholic Conscience*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p. 43

LESSON 3: Marriage and Family Life



REFERENCE

Page 370-371 [EXPLORING: Respect for the HUMANNES OF RELATIONSHIPS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) (4) (5) LSM: 'Marriage and Family Life'
- (2) Bibles
- (3) TSM: 'Loving Relationships'

AIM

- To explore the fourth, sixth, and ninth commandments as ways of healing our world through restoring the realisation of the beauty of marriage and family life which embody fidelity, love, support, and respect

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners recognise and understand the positive wisdom of the fourth, sixth and ninth commandments.
- SKL Learners are able to judge their actions in the light of the Scriptures.
- DAP Learners are convinced of the sacredness of marriage and family life.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson and the following explore responsibility in relationships, with a focus on the Fourth, Sixth, and Ninth Commandments. Lesson 3 looks directly at the three commandments and their requirements. Lesson 4 deals with a specific issue, namely premarital sex.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 The Commandments

Remind learners that each of the Commandments is "particular concrete dramatisation of a wider issue" (CORD p 354). What is the wider issue in the case of each of the three commandments under discussion? Help them to come to the following:

- 4th Commandment: responsible, loyal, loving, and respect for authority
- 6th Commandment: chastity, or responsible sexuality
- 9th Commandment: marital fidelity

These Commandments are stated on the Lesson Materials page 'Marriage and Family Life'.

2 Scripture

Read Matthew 15:3-9 and Matthew 5:27-32. Discuss: What is Jesus saying about these commandments? What are the implications for our lives?

3 Teasing Out

Tease out the wider issues identified above by using mind maps. Examples are provided on the Lesson Materials page 'Loving Relationships'.

4 Plan Ahead

Learners complete the exercise 'Plan Ahead' on the Lesson Materials page 'Marriage and Family Life'. After allowing individuals time to make a written response, discuss each item as a class. If there is time, discuss the "hot and heavy" scenario.

5 Closing

Use the Prayer Reflection on the Lesson Materials page 'Marriage and Family Life'.

OTHER IDEAS

6 Scripture References

- **4th Commandment:** Ex 20:12 and Dt 5:16; Gen 22:1-14; Gen 46:28-34; Judges 11:29-40; The Book of Ruth; Tobit 4; Tobit 11; 2Maccabees 7; Sirach 3:1-18; Mt 8:14-15; Mt 12:46-50; Mt 15:1-9; Mt 21:28-32; Lk 2:41-50; Jn 2:1-12; 1Cor 12:12-30; 1Cor 13:4-8; Eph 6:1-4.
- **6th Commandment:** Ex 20:14 and Dt 5:18; Mt 5:27-32; Job 31:1; Num 5:11-31; Sirach 9:1-13 (could also be for 9th commandment); Dt 24:1-4 - seems to be the section Jesus is talking about in Mt 5:31-32 and Mt 19:1-9; Jn 8:1-11; 1Cor.7:10-11; What about Gen 2:18-25 and Gen 16:1-16? Dt 24:1-4. For a positive side of the beauty of love and marriage and their redemptive powers, see The Song of Songs and the prophet Hosea. There are other beautiful passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel - Yahweh's love for his Bride, Israel.
- **9th Commandment:** Ex 20:17 (incorporates 9th and 10th commandments - all coveting!) Dt 5:21; Micah 2:1-5; Is 5: 8-10; Gen 12:10-20; 2Sam 11:1-12:15; 1Kings 21:1-29; Dan 13; Mt 20:1-16; Mt 20:20-23; Mt 21:33-46; Mt 26:6-13.

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- CIE. 2005. 'Loving Relationships'

LEARNER

- Michael Pennock. 1991. 'Plan Ahead' in *Forming a Catholic Conscience*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p 88
- Michael Pennock. 1991. 'Prayer Reflection' in *Forming a Catholic Conscience*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p 90-91



Lesson Materials



Marriage and Family Life

- IV Honour your father and your mother.
- VI You shall not commit adultery.
- IX You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.

Plan Ahead

Here is a checklist of items that can help you act morally before you find yourself in a tough situation. Honestly examine each item and mark each according to this scale:

- + - I commit myself to this statement.
- ? - I need to think about this a little more.
- 0 - This isn't for me.

1. *God's plan is right.* Premarital sex will not lead to my happiness. Struggling to live a chaste life will.
2. *I will set limits.* I know where I will stop. I know what to avoid and what might get me into trouble. I will do my best not to set obstacles in my way.
3. *I have figured out what to say if someone pressures me.* "I love you too much." "Our love will grow stronger if we wait." "I want sexual sharing to be special, so I am waiting for my wedding night."
4. *I believe the Lord lives in me.* He gives me strength to live as I ought. I will pray on a regular basis for help and guidance.
5. *I know whom to approach with any questions or problems I might have for this or any moral issue.* This person is: _____
6. *I want friends who share my values.* Right now I consider _____ to be such a friend.

Discuss

As a class, discuss each of the above items. Then, discuss the following: Decide what you will or can do if a "hot and heavy" physical situation develops on a date. Assume that you didn't plan for the situation to get out of hand. Things have gone too fast and it is time to back out. List and discuss five ways you can gracefully "cool off" without hurting the other person.

© Michael Pennock. 1991. 'Prayer Reflection' in *Forming a Catholic Conscience*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, p 90-91

Prayer Reflection/...

Lesson Materials

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE (cont)

Prayer Reflection

Pray with conviction St. Thomas More's prayer for a holy heart.

*Lord, grant me a holy heart
that sees always what is fine and pure
and is not frightened at the sight of sin,
but creates order wherever it goes.
Grant me a heart that knows nothing
of boredom, weeping, and sighing.
Let me not be too concerned
with the bothersome thing I call "myself."
Lord, give me a sense of humor
and I will find happiness in life
and profit from others.*

Reflection

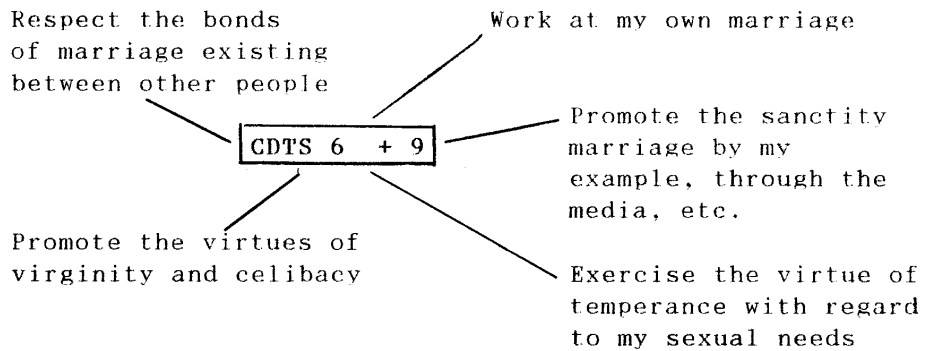
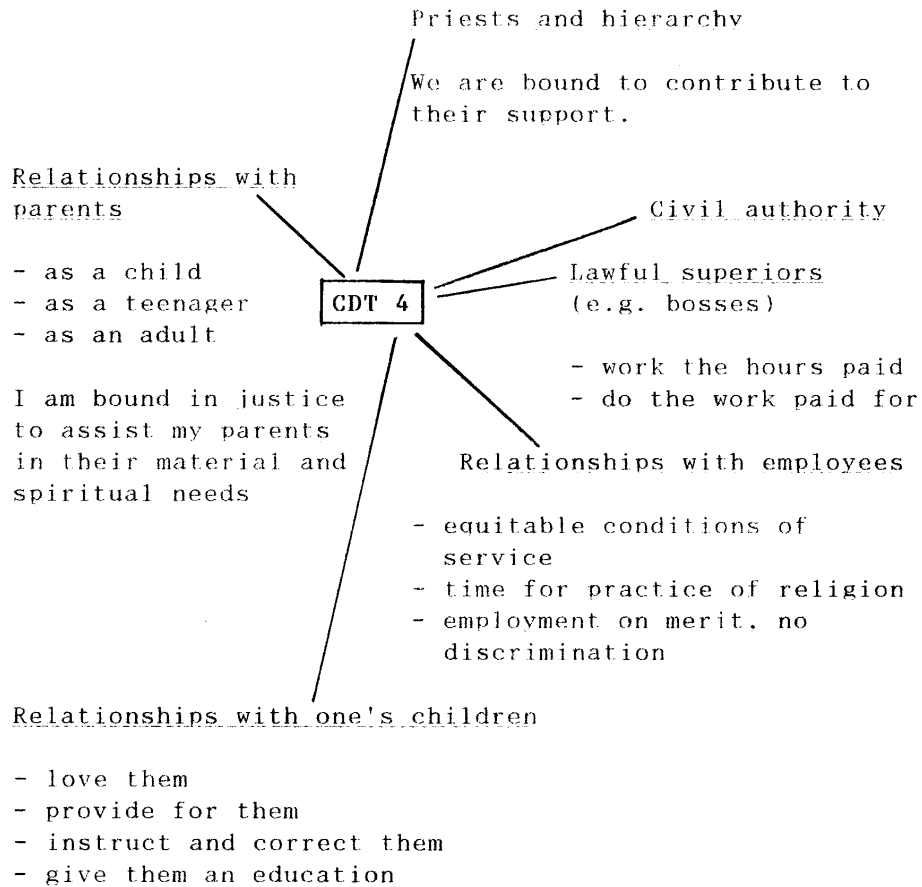
Are you able to laugh at yourself? Why or why not?

Resolution

Find something in your life that needs order right now.
Outline several steps you can take to begin to put it into order. Begin to carry out your plan this week.

Lesson Materials

Loving Relationships



LESSON 4: Responsible Sex



REFERENCE

Page 370 – 371 [EXPLORING: Respect for the HUMANNESS OF RELATIONSHIPS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) LSM: 'Premarital Sex'

AIM

- For learners to apply their skills of moral decision-making through a study of the issue of pre-marital sex

OUTCOMES

- DAP Learners hold that sex belongs in the loving committed relationship of marriage.
- SKL Learners have developed their skills of moral decision-making.
- KUI Learners understand the possible effects of pre-marital sex.

TEACHER'S NOTE

In this lesson, learners have the opportunity to explore in depth an issue related to the 6th Commandment – that of pre-marital sex. While you, as teacher, cannot impose a 'right' answer on the discussion, you can guide the process so that learners reflect deeply and honestly on the issue. The lesson ends with a challenge to the learners in their discussion groups: Every choice has a consequence. Which verdict will turn out to be wise and life-giving?

This lesson relies extensively on: Michael Pennock. 1979. 'Chapter 5: The STOP Sign Applied' in *Moral Problems*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, pp 111-137.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Thinking of Love

Open the lesson with a reflection on the meaning of love. Use the following prompts:

- When you think of love, what primarily comes to mind? (Display the list, and invite learners to respond.)
 - a feeling
 - an attraction
 - a giving
 - an instinct
 - a commitment
 - friendship
- What does it mean to love unconditionally? What are some of the limiting conditions which of necessity are present in a relationship outside of marriage?
- In what way is sexual love communication? Explain.

(Pennock. *Moral Problems*, p 128)

2 The STOP Sign Method

Learners work through the exercise on the Lesson Materials page 'Premarital Sex' using the STOP Sign decision-making method as indicated. This is best done in small groups who have to come to a verdict at the end of the exercise:

- What is your decision on premarital sex?
- Why do you hold this position?

3 Report Back

Each group reports back on their decision, giving reasons for it. Further discussion at this point will probably be counterproductive. There will probably be a difference of opinion which discussion or argument will not settle. Rather, emphasize the importance of following one's conscience, but a conscience that is properly formed and informed. Also, pose the following: Every action or decision has a consequence. Which of the decisions made by the groups will turn out to be wise and life-giving ones?

OTHER IDEAS

4 What's the Issue?

Discuss:

- The moral issue involving pre-marital sex is not that sex is somehow indecent or dirty. What is it?
- The moral issue involved in contraception is NOT the frustration of nature. What is it?

5 Imagination

This may be a good way to end the lesson. Pose the following for discussion:

Because so many elements of our society leave very little room for imagination when it comes to sexual love, you might conclude that imagination has little to bear on this topic. In reality, though, it does. Where creative imagination is most needed is for non-married friends to discover ways to enrich their friendship without "going all the way".

(Pennock. *Moral Problems*, p 129)

6 Views of Sex

The following exercise may be a useful alternative opener to the lesson. Below are statements about sex, which have been held or are held by people in our society. Learners mark with a C or an L those statements that they think are too conservative or too liberal. They leave unmarked those statements, which they believe give a correct description of human sexuality. The statements may be presented on handouts or on newsprint. A short discussion could follow the individual exercise.

- Sex is only for fun.
- Sex is only for procreation.
- Sex is sinful.
- Only men enjoy sex; women tolerate it.
- "Living together" is OK.
- Kissing is wrong except for married couples.
- Virginity is an old-fashioned word.
- Abortion on demand is OK.
- Having kids is too much trouble.
- Having kids is the only reason to get married.
- Women are asking for trouble when they wear immodest clothes
- Nudity makes you free.
- People should be allowed to wear whatever they want.

(Pennock. *Moral Problems*, p 116)

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- CIE. 2005. "Premarital Sex"



Lesson Materials



Premarital Sex

The Scriptures see sex as basically good, as sexual activities are generally *life-giving* and *love-communicating*. While Christian morality presents us with an ideal, we should never be discouraged because we sometimes fail to live this ideal. Rather we should be aware of the wholeness we wish to achieve with the help of God. We are a pilgrim people on the way to the Father, who calls us not to hate ourselves when we fall short of the ideal, but to keep striving towards it.

We apply the **STOP** (**S**earch, **T**hink, **O**thers, **P**rayer) Sign to the question of premarital sex.

Search

What?

Before passing judgement on the morality of premarital sex, we must know precisely what issues are concerned here (Masturbation? Impure thoughts? Handholding? Kissing? Petting? "Going all the way"? Where should I draw the line?)

- o *What is appropriate behaviour for me?*
- o *What behaviour truly represents my relationship and commitment?*

Why?

Motive is an important question to answer in every area of morality. (For release of tension? Because it feels good? To use another person for my own pleasure? To dominate another person? To share myself in love with another? To build up my own self-image? To overcome loneliness? To experiment?) A bad or selfish motive would make us suspect immediately that the action one proposes to do is wrong.

- o *Does a good intention automatically make an action right?*
- o *What is/will be my motive?*

Who?

Promiscuous sex dehumanises people. In a casual relationship sex is engaged in selfishly and thus the other person is used and not treated with dignity and respect. People are turned into anonymous things; they lose their individuality.

- o *Is the other person a close friend or an acquaintance/stranger?*

When & Where?/...

Lesson Materials

PREMARITAL SEX (cont)

When & Where?

Here we are referring to sexual relationships *before* marriage; this is the 'when'. The 'where' is important because if one wants to minimise the chance of temptation to premarital sex one ought to avoid places and times that are likely to lead to it.

- o *When and where would be the most caring respectful time and place?*

How?

Sexual activities become immoral if they are uncaring, harmful or exploitative of another person.

- o *What degree of caring do I bring to this action?*

THINK

Reason is often clouded by emotional involvement. It is therefore important to think about the issue before one becomes emotionally involved. To be truly human is to see more than one way to approach reality, even if the crowd see it just the one way. A chaste life before marriage, one that respects one's own and another's sexuality and does not abuse it, is the ideal possibility and norm of Christian morality. It is an option that should be considered and acted upon. Human sexuality should express the unity between body and spirit. Improper use of sexuality can close us off from true love; it can make us selfish, keep us from growing, or make us guilty and distrusting. This can alienate us from God. St Paul sees abusive sexual practices as unsuitable for a person who is the Temple of God

- o *What are the advantages of living the values of chastity and self-control?*
- o *What are the possible consequences of pre-marital sex – emotionally, physically, spiritually?*

OTHERS

- o *How do we relate to the other? How will this act influence the other person?*
- o *What is the value of principles discovered by others who have gone before us? What is the value of consulting suitable, trusted others on their beliefs about premarital sex?*

PRAYER

God understands us; our problems, our joys, and strong desires, better than anyone. God knows the kind of society we live in. God stands ready to help us in all difficult decisions, but we must be willing to ask for help.

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