

LESSON 26: Listening to Our Conscience

AIM

To help learners understand the importance of being guided by an informed conscience when making moral decisions. To develop the habit of listening to their conscience. (7.2, 7.5, 11.2.5)



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Worksheet (3)(6)(7)
⇒
- * Bibles (8)

OUTCOME

Learners think about the relationship between truth, conscience and values.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Geppetto and Pinocchio:** Invite learners to bring to mind the famous children’s story of the old lonely carpenter who decided to make a puppet, a little boy to keep him company. Geppetto wanted to share his love and life with this little puppet. While he slept the puppet turned into a real boy. Geppetto was beside himself with joy at seeing the puppet take on real life. To help the child live in freedom Geppetto gave him a conscience - Mr Cricket, who became Pinocchio’s ‘little voice’ who warned him of his wrong doings.
- 2 **Our Conscience, a Gift from God:** We all have our Mr Cricket, the ‘little voice’ who informs us when we make choices. Explain that our consciences are formed from the time when we are born. Our families teach us how to live and grow as members of our community. Many other people help us as well in this growing process - parents, teachers, and religious leaders. They teach us how to understand and live our religious values, to live God’s Law of Love, to do what is good and avoid what is evil. Just as Geppetto gave Pinocchio Mr. Cricket as a gift to help him stay away from wrong doings, so has God given us the gift of conscience to help us know what is right and what is wrong.
- 3 **Making choices:** Invite learners to look at the stories of Sarah and Keith in the worksheet. ⇒ What choices do they think Sarah and Keith should make. Can they say why? Ask them if they have ever been in a situation like Sarah or Keith, and who or what helped them make their choices.
- 4 **Following our Conscience:** Ask learners what they understand by ‘following one’s conscience’. Would it be like a little dog following its owner? Or like Mr Cricket? Explain that conscience is something within us. Following it means listening to what is in our hearts and minds in order to make good decisions. God says to us: “I will put my law within you and write it in your heart”. [Jeremiah 31:33]

Ask the learners about times when they had to ask their minds and hearts for help when making a choice. Allow time for sharing.
- 5 **Informing our Conscience:** If we find that still we don’t know what to do, we need to ask the people we trust - parents, teachers, ministers - to help us see what is best. God has also given us various guides to what is good. Remind the learners of the Beatitudes, **the** Works of Mercy, the Great Commandment (the Law of Love), and the Ten Commandments. We also ask God in prayer to help us when we make difficult choices.

- 6 **Examination of Conscience:** In the Catholic Church, before celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, people make an examination of conscience to see in what ways they have sinned. This is something we all need to do from time to time. As conscientious children of God we need to look into ourselves to call to mind the things that have happened to us during the day, and what choices we made. Perhaps we'll discover that we have been doing God's will all along. Perhaps we'll realise that we have been making the wrong choices. You could conclude the lesson in a time of quiet reflection, inviting the learners to make such an examination using the questions on the worksheet. 📖 ➔

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 **Scenes:** Invite learners to get into groups of four or five and act out the situations in the worksheet 📖 ➔. The class discusses the responses given at the end of each scene. Which responses would be good and appropriate? Why? Which might not be good?
- 8 **Assuming Responsibility:** When we listen to what our conscience tells us we assume responsibility for our actions. The more decisions we make, the more responsible we become. In the story of the Fall [Genesis 3], Adam and Eve disobey God and eat of the forbidden fruit. If you look carefully at the story you'll see that neither Eve nor Adam assume responsibility for their actions. Ask learners to think of the dialogue that goes on in the passage and say whether they can point to where and how they avoid responsibility. After they shared bring these points to their attention:

Adam says, "The woman you gave me made me ..."

Eve says, "The snake tricked me..." Neither of them assumes responsibility and neither of them sees the damage done or ask for God's forgiveness.

Listening to Our Conscience

Making Choices

It was Friday and the day of the big Math's test. Sarah felt nervous just thinking about the fractions, even though she could do most of them on her worksheet yesterday. As Ms. Green was passing out the papers, she noticed that Sarah seemed anxious. She smiled and said: "Sarah, keep calm and do your best." Sarah froze! It seemed like the whole test was on fractions. She glanced at Peter, who was working quickly, and she could see the answers clearly. Sarah knew it was wrong to copy from Peter, but she felt unsure of herself.

What choice should Sarah make? Why?

Just three more weeks and he would be ten years old. Keith was deciding who to invite to his birthday party. Mom suggested that he invite the whole class, so no one would feel left out. Keith wasn't sure if he wanted to invite Raymond. No one in the class liked to play with Raymond, and everyone always teased him about the way he talked. If Keith asked Raymond to come, maybe his other friends would not want to come to the party.

What choice should Keith make? Why?

Examining Our Conscience

When we examine our conscience, we may ask ourselves questions like these:

How have I shown love for God?

- Does God come first in my life, or are other things more important to me?
- Have I used God's name with respect, or have I sometimes said God's name in anger?
- Have I remembered to pray to God?
- Do I go to church on Sundays and take part in the celebration? Have I missed Mass for a good reason?

How have I shown love for others?

- Have I cared as Jesus cared about the poor, the hungry, and those who are mistreated or oppressed in any way?
- Have I obeyed and been respectful to the adults who are responsible for me?
- Do I share my things with other, or have I been selfish? Have I taken other's things without permission?
- Have I been truthful and fair or have I lied and cheated?

How have I shown love for myself?

- Have I taken care of my body by eating properly, getting rest, and not doing anything that could harm me?

SCENE ONE

Chuck and Angelo sit with their backs against a large tree near the edge of an asphalt tennis court. Mario is sprawled on the ground near their feet.

Angelo: Look who's coming!

Mario: (*raising himself on one elbow*) You mean Richard?

Angelo: Yeah, Richard.

Chuck: Tell him to get lost! He's a lousy player. Let's wait for somebody else.

Angelo: Oh, man, he can't catch, he can't pass, he can't kick. He can't even stay on his feet! (*All laugh.*)

Chuck: Well, he's almost here. Let's laugh at him until he leaves.

Angelo: Good idea!

Mario: (*standing up*) No, that's not a good idea.

Chuck: What do you mean? We got to get rid of him, Mario.

Angelo: Yeah, he's no fun to play with - he's just fun to laugh at.

Mario: ...

Discuss the possible responses of Mario listed below. Which might be good and appropriate? Why? Which might not be good?

- "Richard has enough trouble. I am not going to laugh at him".
- "Yes, I guess you guys are right. Let's get rid of him."
- "Hey guys, it's lousy to make fun of anyone."
- "If you want to hurt him, go ahead. I am not on. "

SCENE TWO

Matshepo, Kim, Mandy and you are talking after school.

Mandy: Tebogo is such a cow. I can't believe it.

Kim: Oh, she's the one who sang, all right. Then she avoided me the rest of the day.

Matshepo: How can you be sure?

Kim: I saw her watching us, and when she took her paper to Mrs Collins, the teacher looked right at me while Mandy was still talking.

Matshepo: Okay, what else?

Mandy: Right after that, Mrs Collins compared our papers and asked us to stay to see her at break.

Kim: Yeah, and then the way Tebogo avoided us.

Matshepo: Hey, if that's the way she wants to be, she can have it. Give her silent treatment. I think we should not ever talk to her again.

Mandy: That sounds like a very long time!

Kim: Well, I agree with Matshepo. We should ignore her and get other kids to do the same.

You: ...

Which response would you make?

- "Hey, I don't think we want to do that, after all we did cheat".
- "I disagree. I don't think Tebogo told on us."
- "It looks like she told on us. That's not a friend."
- "I cheated! and I feel awful. I won't pick on her".

(Scenes are adapted from JA Flanagan. 1992. *Kids 'n Values*. Liguori Publications)

LESSON 27: Living Gospel Values

AIM

To help learners understand that the values we adopt determine the meaning and purpose of our lives. To help them appreciate that a life lived with Gospel values is a response to God's love. (11.1.12, 11.6.4)



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bibles (4)
- * Copies of the worksheet (4)(9) ⇨
- * Drawing, colouring, painting materials (6)

OUTCOME

Learners understand how the values they hold shape the life they lead.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Scenarios:** Ask learners what they would do or say in the following situations and why:
 - A friend invites you to the movies but you have a project to hand in tomorrow and you haven't finished doing it.
 - You have a netball/soccer practice after school for the match tomorrow, and your science teacher asks for volunteers to help in the science laboratory. You just love to work in the laboratory.
 - Susie and you go to the shop. She is light-fingered and puts things in her pocket when no one is looking.
 - Your friend has come to the party with her new Nike outfit. The others are jealous and gang up against her. You like the girl.

As the learners give their responses, jot down the main points on the board.

- 2 **Priorities and Values:** Explain that priorities are the things that are more important, more urgent or fit better with what we want to do. Our priorities reflect what we value in our lives. Ask the learners to think what the priorities were in the examples above, and what values were expressed.

For example, in the first instance, if deciding to do the project was the priority, the value being expressed would be responsibility. Attending the sports practice shows the values of cooperation and fidelity.

- 3 **Values at Home:** Our first experience of values and priorities comes from home. Our parents pass-on their values to us. Not all families live by the same values and priorities. Some families might stress responsibility, and others tolerance. Ask the learners to think of one of the priorities their family has and what value it reflects. (Help them to identify the value. Examples of values: freedom, honesty, peace, respect, simplicity, unity)
- 4 **Gospel Values:** What is the most valuable thing in the world? Children might respond to this question in many different ways. Let them look up the following verses -[Matthew 13:44-45]. In the Good News of Jesus, God shares with us an answer to this question. To live in the kingdom of heaven is the thing of greatest value. To live in the kingdom means to live in God as Jesus did, sharing his values. These values we call gospel values, and we find them expressed in the teaching and actions of Jesus. Hand out the worksheet, and ask the learners to look up the references in their Bibles and complete the table. ⇨ Here is a key:

Mark 12:28 – 34 love	Matthew 18:1 – 4 humility
Luke 4:1 – 4 integrity, strength	Mark 3:35 obedience
Luke 21:37 – 38 sharing	Mk 6:31 solitude
John 14:27 peace	Luke 12:22 – 23 trust
Matthew 15:29 – 30 compassion	John 16:13 truth

- 5 **Virtues:** Living the gospel values is no easy matter. We need to practise, just as the footballer, the musician, or the trapeze artist at the circus must, in order to become competent. Practice, as the saying goes, makes perfect. What we practise becomes second nature to us. It becomes a habit. Just so, in order to live the gospel values, we need to develop moral habits called virtues. The virtuous person finds it easy to do good because he or she has practised. ⇒ TO REMEMBER
- 6 **Fruits of the Spirit:** The Spirit of God helps us to develop the habits we call virtues. We receive the gifts of the Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation. If we make use of these gifts, they will bear fruit in virtues like the following: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Acquiring these virtues would be like buying the pearl of great price. Invite the children to design, draw, and paint or colour a necklace containing these nine jewels.


ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 **Values at school:** Schools have an identity. They have a set of values which reflect what is important for them. These values are normally stated in the School’s Mission and Vision Statements. Most Catholic schools have the name of a saint or the name of the founder or foundress. There is something very special about that person - values and virtues that make them worth following. What is special about the founder or foundress of your school? Ask the learners to find out what the Mission Statement of their school says. Working in groups, the learners use the questions below. They might need to interview some people, such as teachers, pupils, parents, the principal, or the RE coordinator:
- What sort of things does your school community consider important?
 - What are the priorities in your school?
 - What do people, other than the teachers and learners, value the most in your school community?
 - What are the things your class or your group are striving for?
- 8 **Values in your community:** Every country, city or town have priorities depending on the needs of the people living in it, and the conditions in which they work and live are particular to each one of them. If the community sits in a well-developed environment their priorities

will be different to those in an underdeveloped one. Ask learners to say why it is so. You could suggest that for an underdeveloped one their priorities would be bettering their life conditions, job opportunities, or housing. Set the following task:

If possible find members of the class who live in your district, area or suburb, and form a group. You might need to ask questions of your neighbours, and of course, the people you live with. What sort of things does the local community where you live seem to value?

- The environment?
- The elderly, the disabled?
- Young people?
- Leisure and recreation?
- Amenities (parks, movies, sports)?
- Business?
- Peace and quiet?
- Law and order?

- 9 **Charter of Values:** The learners read the South African Children’s Charter of Rights found on the worksheet. In groups, they draw up a charter of values for young people based on the rights and their corresponding responsibilities. Their charter should start with: “We the young people of the world, value...”  ⇨

TO REMEMBER

A virtue is a habit that guides our actions towards what is good.

Living Gospel Values

Look up each reference in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and decide what is important, or a value, for Jesus in the lines you've read. Write it down, in your own words, in the space provided.

Mark 12:28-34		Matthew 18:1-4	
Luke 4:1-4		Mark 3:35	
Luke 21:37-38		Mark 6:31	
John 14:27		Luke 12:22-23	
Matthew 15:29-30		John 16:13	

Read the charter below, and draw up a charter of values. Begin with: "We, the young people of the world, value.."

Children's Charter of South Africa

1. All children have the right to a loving and caring family, a proper home, clothing and health care.
2. All children have the right to a free, non-sexist education that respects their traditions and cultures.
3. All children have the right to be treated with respect, no matter what their culture, race, sex, language or religion.
4. All children have the right to be protected against labour that is harmful to their health and development.
5. All children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect.
6. All children have the right to play and to have access to adequate sports and recreational facilities.
7. All children have the right to be taught about human rights, sexuality, AIDS, child abuse and how to protect themselves.
8. All children have the right to express their opinions and have a say in matters affecting them and their futures.
9. All children who are orphaned, abandoned, homeless, exiled or refugees have the right to be placed in safe, secure families.
10. All children have the right to know their rights and their rights must be protected.

LESSON 28: Right Choices

AIM

To help learners understand and evaluate the motives behind the choices they make (11.2.6, 11.2.7, 11.5.2)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the relationship between freedom, choice and responsibility



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Copies of the worksheet (1)(2)(3)(4) ⇨
- * Bible (5)
- * Strips of paper, glue (6)
- * Bibles (7)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **What are the things that make me happy or unhappy?** Invite learners to think about the things that made them change the way they were feeling, that influenced their change of emotions in the past 24 hours. Guide them into realising that we react to influences - some things make us happy and others make us uncomfortable, upset and even disgusted. Ask them to do the exercise in the worksheet. ⇨
- 2 **What influences our choices?** When we make a choice, deciding whether an action is good or bad, whether or not to do it, there are many inner and outer factors that influence our decisions. Let the learners look at the list of influences in the worksheet that play part in making choices. ⇨
- 3 **Values and motivation:** Ask the learners to think of what has been discussed in LESSON 27 about values. Once they have commented, explain that whatever we choose as a personal value will influence our actions and the direction of our lives. Values have to be developed by choosing freely from different possibilities. Invite them to go once again to their worksheets and study the questions under *Values and Motivation*. ⇨
- 4 **Personal choices:** Ask the learners to call to mind any 'big' decision they may have made in their lives, and then to do the following:
 - Write down what this decision was.
 - Identify what value made them decide.
 - Apply the questions on the worksheet. ⇨

This is a first exercise in values clarification. Tell them that if their answers to the questions indicate that they made their choice in freedom, they considered the results of their choice, and were not afraid to show their choice, then what they chose points indeed to a personal value.

- 5 **Scripture:** There are many scriptural stories illustrating choices, and their consequences. Choose one from among the following to read. Ask the learners to identify the choice that the individual made, and what value their choice embodied.

Jesus [John 10:14-18]

Solomon [1Kings 3:4-15]

David [1Samuel 24:1-23]

Ruth [Ruth 1:1-17]

Mary [Luke 1:26-38]

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 6 For learners to experience an aspect of **making choices by influence**, divide them into groups and give them all strips of paper glued together to form rings. On the outside of each paper ring write one of the statements listed below. The person who is to wear the ring on his or her head mustn't see what is written on it.

- I am always right.
- I am a dumb kid.
- I am very bossy.
- I always know best.
- I am trustworthy.
- I'm the strongest.
- I can solve problems.
- I hate talking.
- Don't look at me.
- Don't bother me.

The rest of the group will treat them as the label they are wearing indicates. Give them a topic of discussion such as: 'There should be no homework at school.' Allow about 10 minutes for interaction. When time is up, the 'ring wearers' must say what they think their crown says by the way they've been treated and the attitude the rest had toward them.

- 7 Invite learners to read Matthew 5: 3-10. The gospel teaches us in the **Beatitudes** that we find happiness when we freely choose to do what is right, to do God's will.

Right Choices

What Makes Me Happy?	What Makes Me Feel Not So Good or Uncomfortable?
Things I do	Things I do
Things I say	Things I say
Things others do	Things others do
Things others say	Things others say

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR CHOICES

Reason or intellect - what I think and what my common sense tells me to do.

Feelings (emotions) - how I feel now or might feel later; fears and pressures I experience from within or outside myself.

Freedom - my ability to choose and to act in a self-determining way; my sense of personal responsibility.

Personal Values - what is important in my life, what I want my life and future to be.

Parents/Family - what they have taught me to do or expect of me; how they'll react to my decisions.

Friends - what my friends will think of my decision; my friends' support; peer pressure.

Authority figures (teachers, adult leaders) - what they have taught me; whether they'll approve or not.

Media (TV, movies, magazines, music) - what I see, read or hear described or portrayed as good or bad behaviour, as positive or negative values; moral or immoral behaviour of celebrities.

VALUES AND MOTIVATION

1. A value is real for me when I choose it in freedom. Ask yourself the following:

- a) Was I persuaded by another to do this?
- b) Was I convinced by another to accept this belief?
- c) Will I receive a reward or punishment for my choice?

2. A value is real for me when I consider the results of my choice. Ask yourself the following:

- a) Did I think of the pro's and con's of each situation?
- b) Am I willing to take responsibility for my choices?
- c) How will this affect me and the people around me?

3. A value is real for me when I am not afraid to show it. Ask yourself the following:

- a) Do I feel comfortable talking about my choice?
- b) Do I reconsider and decide to drop it?
- c) Do I worry about the way others will perceive my choice?

LESSON 29: Self-Discipline

AIM

To help learners understand the need for self-discipline, particularly in the face of peer pressure and media influence (**10.3, 11.6.3**)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the relationship between freedom, choice and responsibility.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bible (2)(8)
- * Copies of the worksheet (4)(6) ⇨
- * Newspaper and magazine adverts (11)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 **Running the Race:** Tell the following story:

Four children are running a race. They have to run 100metres and then jump over a hurdle. Then they have to go under a net and jump another 50metres in a sack. Finally, to reach the finishing post they have to go through a ring. This is what they did:

- *Teresa thought the race was too difficult, so she didn't try at all.*
- *Mark started the race, but fell over the hurdle and gave up.*
- *Johanna managed to do all the tasks and managed to reach the goal.*
- *Kagiso jumped over the hurdle, went under the net but fell down trying to jump in the sack, but didn't give-up and tried again.*

Invite the learners to discuss the actions of the four. "What would you have done if you were one of these children? How do you feel about what each child did?"


2 **The Race of Life:** All of us are running the race of life and we too have to face obstacles to reach our goal. Invite learners to think on some of the things that prevent us from reaching our goals - laziness, selfishness, people teasing, too many people telling us what to do, being confused, fears, the media, and outside pressures. You might read what Paul says about this: [1 Corinthians 9:24-25]. However, in life we do not run against one another, but together: we can all be winners!

3 **Famous Sportsmen and Women:** Ask the learners to name some well-known sports people. What is it that they admire about any of these people? When we look at famous sports people we usually only see their fame and popularity. We don't realise how much hard work has gone into making them the famous people they are, the amount of training and discipline that went into it. They must discipline their minds and bodies. Most probably there are times when they feel discouraged, tired and feel like giving up. It is on the strength of their will power that they persevere.

4 **Peak Performance:** To give the learners some idea of what qualities sports people, musicians, artists, and any others who excel at something need to develop, invite them to read the section *Brilliance is Created in the Mind* on the worksheet. ⇨

5 **Developing Our Will Power:** Training ourselves to do what is best for us will make us stronger. When we discipline ourselves we produce better results in our work as well as in our relationships. Discipline is hard work. It sometimes seem so much easier to drop everything and take the easy way out. Invite learners to tell of an experience they had where they had to use their will power. Having the conviction and the will power to stand

up for what is right will help us to see that we don't always have to do what the crowd does. We can choose.

6 Follow the Leader: The choices we make, and our views and values are often influenced by other people, particularly those who are important to us. Ask the learners to go to their worksheets and fill in the chart.  ⇨ Peer group pressure plays a strong part in decision making. The group normally sets out to try and influence the decisions about to be made. It is natural not to want to be left out, and difficult to resist a group decision that we are not comfortable with.

7 Choice and Consequence: Learners, in groups, are given the following scenarios, one per group. The peer group has decided to:

- Vandalise the call-box.
- Do the shopping for an old neighbour.
- Break a street light with a stone.
- Play near the railway line.
- Set off the school alarm as a joke.
- Do a sponsored run for charity.
- Scratch cars' paint in the parking lot.

Ask the groups to trace the possible consequences of the decision. As individuals, would they follow the decision of the peer group, or go against it? Explain that it is when we think of the consequences of our actions that we show responsibility.

8 To conform or not to conform: Read Romans 12:2. Establish with the class when is it fine to conform and when it is not right to conform. Discuss the scenarios dealt with above. Ask them, in the light of what they have done today, what God is saying to us?

9 Conclude the lesson by **praying** for the will power to make the right choice in the face of peer pressure.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

10 Media influence: Explain that it is important to be critical when watching television, listening to the radio, or reading newspapers and magazines. We need to be aware of the message and role models portrayed. For example, the 'good guy' in the film who uses violence to protect the community against the 'bad guys' becomes the hero, therefore the viewer will be on his side and will be happy when he 'kills' the trouble makers. Ask them the following questions:

- Is it right for the 'good guy' to use violence?
- Is violence the best way to solve differences and conflicts?
- Who is your hero? And why have you chosen him/her as your hero?

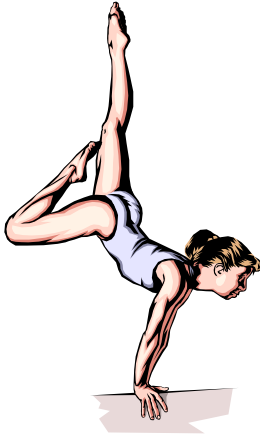
Give them time to answer the questions and allow time for discussion.

11 Advertising: Collect samples of newspaper and magazines advertisements. Distribute them among class groups, asking the learners to decode the hidden message of the advert.

Running the Race

Brilliance is created in the mind

CONDITIONS FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE



- mentally relaxed
- physically relaxed
- confident and optimistic
- focussed on the present
- highly energised
- extraordinarily aware
- in control
- undistracted



Follow the Leader

The choices we make, our values and our views are influenced by other people. Fill in the chart. Analyse which are the strongest influences on your choices and views.

In your choices of...	Who or what has influenced you most?
Clothes	
Music	
Food	
How you spend your free time	
Books you read	
Programmes you watch	
In your views about...	Who has influenced you most?
Sport	
School	
Environment	
War	
The law	
Religion	