

***Making Good
Moral Decisions***

Personal Reflection

- **Handout #1, “How Do I Decide?”**
 - **Fill-in individually**
 - **For your eyes only, will not discuss**
 - **Rank in order of how you most frequently to least frequently make decisions (or mark it N/A)**

Making Good Moral Decisions

- Your responses give you an idea how you approach decision making
- We make decisions every day
 - Some are easy, but some are difficult and the consequences are great
- This session provides information about and an opportunity to practice good moral decision making

Personal Reflection

- **Handout #2, “Finders Keepers”**
 - **Fill-in individually**
 - **For your eyes only, will not discuss**

Six Levels of Moral Maturity

1. “Spanking” level – to avoid punishment
2. “Lollipop” level – to get a reward
3. “Good boy/girl” level – to get approval
4. “Play-by-the-rules” level – keep the rules
5. “Conviction” level – to do the right thing
6. “Love” level
 - What type of love? Romantic love?

The Four Loves

Four Greek words for English “love”:

1. “Storge”

- Love between **family** members
 - e.g., parents for their children
- **Committed, often sacrificial love**
 - e.g., parents often willing to do most anything, even unto death, for the good of their children
- **Unconditional, willing to forgive**

The Four Loves

2. “Philia”

- Love between good **friends**
 - Also called “platonic” love
- Chosen love
 - We choose whom we will befriend
 - Usually on basis of shared interests
- More conditional and less sacrificial than storge
 - Philia less willing to overlook faults and frequently forgive

The Four Loves

3. “Eros”

- **Romantic/sexual love**
 - Passionate feeling of romantic attraction felt between a man and a woman
 - Root of English word “erotic”
 - Associated with infatuation and lust
- **We do not choose this type of love**
 - We cannot decide what we will feel
 - We just “fall in love”
- **However, we should control what we do in response to these feelings**

The Four Loves

4. “Agape”

- Acts of **charity** and service for others
 - Including those we may not know or like
- Unconditional and unselfish
 - Does not expect anything in return
- Agape is a committed love that acts only for the good of another
 - Unlike eros, agape is not a feeling
 - Rather, like philia, agape is a chosen love
 - Like storge, agape can be sacrificial love
- Agape is self-giving love

The Four Loves

4. “Agape”

- Word used most often in the New Testament to describe Christian love
 - Love Jesus showed for us on the cross
- Agape is God's divine love made visible in our works of service
 - Holy Spirit is source of agape love
- Agape is the type of love that Christians are called to show in their lives by acts of charity for others
 - Especially poor and disadvantaged

The Four Loves

Not Chosen

Eros
(romantic
love)

Storge
(love of
family)

Chosen

Philia
(love of
friends)

Agape
(self-giving
love)

Conditional

**Not
Conditional**

Personal Reflection

- **What type of “love” is Kohlberg’s Moral Maturity Level Six?**
 - **Agape!**
 - **Helping someone in need, out of unselfish concern for their welfare**
 - **“The Golden Rule”**
- **Handout #3, “Kohlberg’s Six Levels of Moral Maturity”**
 - **Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg**
 - **Simplification**

Six Levels of Moral Maturity

What will people say?

What would make someone else happy?

What will I get out of it?

What should I do?

Who's going to make me?

What would Jesus do?

What will happen if I don't?

How will it look?

Six Levels of Moral Maturity

How would I like to be treated?

Do I have to?

What can I do to help?

Everybody else is doing it.

What is the right thing to do?

Is there a law against it?

My parents say I have to.

For you, anything!

Reflection/Discussion

- Refer Handout #2, “Finders Keepers”
 - Listed in order of Kohlberg's levels
 - On what levels do you currently most often operate? Any insights to share?
 - Think of one or two moral decisions you made this week. On what level did you make these decisions? Share?

Making Good Moral Decisions

Handout #4, “SODAS For Everyone”

S – Situation

O – Options

D – Disadvantages

A – Advantages

S – Solution



Small Group Discussion

- **Handout #5, “Decisions, Decisions, Decisions”**
 - **Make decisions using the SODAS method**
 - **Do in small groups of 4 or 5**
 - **Record all SODAS steps on paper**
 - **Incorporate teachings of Jesus and the Church into options and solutions**
 - **Report results to entire class**

Christian Morality

- **Christian morality begins with positive vision of who we are and who we are called to be:**
 - **We are created by God in His own image and likeness**
 - **We have been redeemed by God's only Son, our brother, Jesus Christ**
 - **We are temples of the Holy Spirit who guides and inspires us**
 - **We are embraced by the Catholic community**
- **Therefore, there are some things that we do, and some things we do NOT do.**

Christian Morality

- Need to find out what God and the Church may have to say
 - What is a sin and what is not
- Where can we find specific guidance on what God and the Church teach is right and what is wrong?
 - Bible & *Catechism of Catholic Church*
 - We must have an informed conscience
- Fr. Larry Richards: why avoid sin



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