



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG – SECRETARIAT FOR EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The *Catholic Morality* course outline presents an overview of basic concepts in moral theology as well as more specific moral issues that students educated in the Catholic Faith should know. The course has been purposely named “Catholic” so as to help reinforce to the students that not all communities in the Christian tradition share the same moral teaching and understanding as the Catholic Church. It is important to remember in teaching this course that the basic reason why a follower of Jesus tries to live a morally upright life is to demonstrate in a concrete way a positive response to God’s love and God’s gifts. Basic teachings derived from Catholic social teaching are included throughout this morality course outline.

While the topics in the outline are presented in a specific order, that order does not need to be followed exactly. It is strongly suggested, however, that a teacher cover the basic concepts before dealing with specific moral issues. It is the goal that all the material referenced herein be covered during eleventh grade. Teachers are therefore asked to use the outline and not a textbook as the framework for planning the course. This is to ensure that topics not covered in a particular text would still be covered in the course.

The outline is referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to help teachers in preparation for their presentations. The numbers on the right hand side of the page refer to paragraph numbers in the catechism. Please remember that it is not intended that students be taught directly from the catechism. The language and explanations used in the catechism often need to be simplified or otherwise adapted before being presented to a student.

The scripture citations suggest passages that somehow complement a specific topic in the outline. Teachers are encouraged to use scripture for student prayer and reflection. This will help students become more familiar and comfortable with the scriptures and the important role they play in the life of the Church and as followers of Jesus Christ.

CATHOLIC MORALITY

PART I. FUNDAMENTAL MORAL CONCEPTS

A. WHAT IS MORALITY

- who we ought to be and how we ought to live

(1700)

Deut. 30: 11-14

1 Tim. 6: 11-14

1. Moral Person

1 Thess. 4: 1-2

2. Immoral Person

B. MORAL NATURE OF THE HUMAN PERSON

1. Created in the image and likeness of God

(1701)

Gen. 1: 26-27

2. Gifted with intellect and free will

(1704 – 1705)

1 Cor. 6: 12-14

3. Needs of the human person

a. Union with God

(27)

Rom. 8: 22-23

b. Meaning and fulfillment

(1718)

Eph. 1: 3-14

c. Interdependence

(1879)

1 Cor. 12

d. Achievement

Gal. 6: 14

4. Influences on the human person

a. Family

(2204 – 2206)

b. Religion

c. Peers

d. Media and technology

e. Society & Culture

C. MORAL FOUNDATIONS

1. Moral behavior is a response to God

John 15: 9-11

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| | Phil. 4: 4-9 |
| a. God has revealed His plan for life and authentic freedom through His Son Jesus | Gal. 1: 11-12 Heb. 1: 1-2 |
| b. Good moral behavior is a positive response to divine revelation | 1 John 3: 1-3 |
| c. Showing kindness and love to others is a real way of responding to God's love for us | 1 John 4: 7-16 |
| 2. Jewish roots of Christian morality | |
| a. Covenant | (2059 – 2060) Ex. 19, 24 Deut. 5: 2 Deut. 26: 16-19 |
| b. The Decalogue | (2056 – 2074) Ex. 20: 2-17 Deut. 5: 6-21 |
| 3. Moral teachings of Jesus Christ | |
| a. The Sermon on the Mount | (1965) Matt. 5: 3-12 |
| b. The all-embracing Law of Love | (1972) Matt. 7: 12 Mark 12: 28-35 1 Cor. 13: 1-13 |
| 4. The counter-cultural nature of Christian morality | John 17: 14-19 1 John 2: 15-17 |
| D. CONSCIENCE | |
| 1. Conscience as a subjective norm of morality | |
| a. Definition | (1778) |
| b. Types of Conscience | |
| 1) Informed (correct) | (1783) Psalm 119: 105 |
| 2) Erroneous (deformed) | (1790 – 1794) |

Titus 1: 15

- 3) Doubtful
- 4) Certain
- 5) Lax
- 6) Scrupulous

c. Role of conscience

1 Cor. 10: 23-30

1 Tim. 1: 18-19

2. Formation of conscience

(1782 – 1785)

a. Based on revelation

- 1) God has given us universal unchanging truths
- 2) The special primacy of Jesus Christ and His teaching

b. The role of the Church

- 1) Parents
- 2) Magisterium
- 3) Parish
- 4) School

Ex.20:12
Deut.5:16

(2032-2038)
1 Tim.3:15
Mt.16:18-19

c. The role of the individual

- 1) The age of reason
- 2) Stages of moral development

d. Decision making

Gal. 6: 4-5

3. Law and conscience

a. Law as an objective norm of morality

(1951)

Rom. 2: 12-16

b. Kinds of law

- 1) Divine
Deut. 5: 6-22
Ex. 20: 1-17
Mark 7: 12
- 2) Natural
(1954 – 1955)
Rom. 1: 19-20
- 3) Church
(2032)
 - a) Canon Law
 - b) Precepts of the Church
(2041-2043)
- 4) Civil
(1959 – 1960)

- c. Christian perspective on law
Rom. 12: 8-10
1 Tim. 1: 5-11

4. Conscience and freedom

- a. Christian understanding of freedom:
always being able to choose the good and avoid
evil
(1713)
Gal. 5: 13-14

- b. Internal threats to freedom
(1735)

- 1) Ignorance
(1790-1794)
- 2) Passions and appetites (e.g.,
concupiscence)
1763 – 1766)
- 3) Bad habits

- c. External threats to freedom

- 1) Oppression; peer pressure
- 2) Injustice
- 3) Prejudice

E. SIN AND FORGIVENESS

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| 1. The problem of evil and the reality of sin | Gen. 3: 1-24 |
| a. Sin as turning away from God | (1849 – 1850) Psalm 51: 4 |
| b. Types of sin | |
| 1) Original sin | (388 – 389) Gen. 3: 1-24 |
| 2) Personal sin | (1868) |
| 3) Social sin | (1869) |
| 2. Scriptural references to sin and repentance/conversion | Isaiah 1: 16-18 Hosea 14: 2-8 Luke 7: 36-50 John 8: 1-11 Rom. 7: 12-14 Acts 9: 1-22 |
| 3. Types of personal sin | |
| a. Mortal sin | (1855) 1 John 5: 16-17 |
| 1) Three conditions for mortal sin | (1857 – 1859) |
| a) Grave matter | |
| b) Sufficient knowledge | |
| c) Full consent | |
| b. Venial sin | (1862 – 1863) |
| c. Sins of omission | |
| d. Sins of commission | |
| e. The seven capital sins | (1866) |
| 1) Pride | 1 Tim. 6: 3-4 |
| 2) Avarice | 1 Tim. 6: 10 |

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| 3) Envy | Matt. 6: 25-34 |
| 4) Wrath | Matt. 5: 21-26 Eph. 4: 26-27 |
| 5) Lust | Matt. 5: 27-28 |
| 6) Gluttony | Luke 16: 19-31 |
| 7) Sloth | 2 Thess. 3: 11-12 |
| 4. The effects of sin | (1849 – 1850) |
| a. On a person's relationship with God | 1 John 2: 15-17 1 John 3: 4-10 |
| b. On a person's relationship with others | 1 Cor. 5: 9-13 2 Thess. 3: 6-16 |
| c. On the sinner | Rom. 7: 13-25 |
| 5. The forgiveness of sin | (1440 – 1442) |
| a. God's forgiveness | Rom. 3: 23-26 Rom. 5: 15-17 1 John 1: 5-10 |
| 1) Grace | (1996 – 1997) Gal. 2: 1-10 |
| a) Actual | (2000) |
| b) Sanctifying | (2000) |
| 2) Sacraments | (1443 – 1444) |
| a) Baptism | (1213 – 1214) |
| b) Penance and Reconciliation | (1423 – 1424) (1468 – 1469) John 21: 22-23 |
| c) The Holy Eucharist | (1393 – 1395) 1 Cor. 11: 23-29 John 6: 47-51 |
| b. Our personal acceptance of God's forgiveness | |

- c. The forgiveness of others Matt. 6: 14-15
- 6. Choosing God and avoiding sin
 - a. Virtue (1803 – 1804)
 - 1) The Theological Virtues: (1812 – 1829)
 Faith, Hope and Charity Rom. 4: 16-22
Rom. 5: 1-5
Heb. 11
 - 2) The Cardinal Virtues: (1805 – 1809)
 Prudence, Justice, Fortitude,
 Temperance 1 Peter 5: 8-9
 - 3) Other virtues
 - b. Prayer (2631)
Col. 3: 5-17
Phil. 4: 4-7
 - c. Acts of penance (1430 – 1439)
Matt. 16: 24-27
2 Cor. 8: 8-15
 - d. Good works (2008 – 2011)
James 2: 14-26

PART II. LOOKING AT SPECIFIC MORAL ISSUES
 (Using the Decalogue as a Guide)

- A. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT- I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me. (2084)
Exodus 20:2-6;
Deuteronomy 5:6-10
 - 1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context Ex. 20: 2-6
Deut. 5:6-10
 - b. Applications in today’s world Matt. 22: 37
 - 2. Examples of violations of the commandment
 - a. Idolatry (2112-2114)
Mt.6:24; Eph.5:5

- b. Sins Against the theological virtue of Faith (2088-2089)
 - 1) Doubt
 - 2) Incredulity
 - 3) Heresy
 - 4) Apostasy
 - 5) Schism
- c. Sins Against the theological virtue of Hope (2091-2092)
 - 1) Despair
 - 2) Presumption
- d. Sins Against the theological virtue of Charity (2094)
 - 1) Indifference
 - 2) Ingratitude
 - 3) Lukewarmness
 - 4) Acedia
 - 5) Hatred of God
- e. Other offenses (2115 – 2117)
 - 1) Divination and magic
 - consulting horoscopes Lev. 19: 31
 - astrology Deut. 18: 9-12
 - palm reading Jer. 29:8
 - interpretation of omens and lots
 - phenomena of clairvoyance
 - recourse to mediums
 - 2) Irreligion (2118 – 2121)
 - a) Tempting God Luke 4: 1-12
 - b) Sacrilege
 - c) Simony Acts 8: 9-24
 - 3) Atheism and agnosticism (2123 – 2128)
 - 4) Cults

- B. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Exodus 20:7
Deuteronomy 5:11 (2142)
 - 1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context Ex. 20:7
Deuteronomy 5:11
 - b. Application in today's world Matt. 5: 33-34

2. Examples of violations of the commandment
 - a. Improper use of God's name (2143 – 2146)
Psalm 29: 2
 - b. Blasphemy (2148)
 - c. Taking false vows or oaths; perjury (2150 – 2152)
James 5: 12
 - d. Foul language Eph. 4: 29

- C. THE THIRD COMMANDMENT- Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day. Exodus 20:8-11
Deuteronomy 5:12-15
 1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context: Sabbath (2168 – 2172)
Ex. 20:8-11
Deut. 5:12-15
 - b. Application in today's world: the Lord's Day (2174)
Matt. 28: 1
 2. Examples of violation of the commandment
 - a. Missing Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation (2180 – 2182)
 - b. Failing to pray (2744 – 2745)
 - c. "Keep holy the Lord's Day" (2184 – 2188)

- D. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT- Honor your father and your mother. Exodus 20:12
Deuteronomy 5:16
 1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context (2199 – 2200)
Ex. 20:12
Deut. 5:16
 - b. Application in today's world
 - c. Nature of the family (2201 – 2206)
 - d. Responsibility of parents and children (2214 – 2231)
 2. Examples of violations of the commandment

- a. Lack of obedience and respect for parents or guardians (2216 – 2217)
Lev. 19: 32
Mark 7: 8-13
Eph. 6: 1-2
Col. 3: 20
 - b. Lack of obedience and respect for proper authorities
 - 1) Those placed in charge (2234)
 - 2) Civil authorities (2235 – 2242)
- E. THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not kill. Exodus 20:13
Deuteronomy 5:17
- 1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context (2258)
Ex. 20: 13
Deut. 5:17
 - b. Application on today's world Matt. 5: 21-22
 - c. Evangelium Vitae (Gospel of Life)
 - 2. Respect for human life
 - a. Murder (2268 – 2269)
Gen. 4: 8-16
 - b. Suicide (2280 – 2283)
Rom. 14: 7-8
 - c. Abortion (2270 – 2275)
Psalm 139: 15
 - d. Euthanasia (2276 – 2279)
 - e. Capital punishment (2267)
Luke 23: 39-43
 - f. Self-defense (2263 – 2265)
 - g. Scientific research (2292 – 2296)

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| 1) Genetic research | (2294-2295) |
| 2) Fetal research, cloning, embryonic stem cell research and cloning | (2294-2295) |
| h. Alcohol and drug abuse | (2290 – 2291) |
| i. Eating disorders | |
| j. Abuse of the body | |
| 1) Body piercing and cutting | |
| 2) Athletic abuses: -steroids -excessive weight loss or gain | |
| 3. Respect for dignity of persons | |
| a. Scandal | (2284 – 2287) Matt. 18: 6 |
| 4. Safeguarding peace | (2302-2306) |
| a. Promotion of peace | Matt.5:9 Col.3:12-17 |
| b. Economic and social justice as components of a peaceful society (see also G-4) | |
| c. War | (2307 – 2317) |
| 1) Just War Theory | (2309) |
| 2) The arms race | (2315 – 2316) |
| 3) Weapons: conventional and non-conventional | (2314) |
| F. THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not commit adultery. | Exodus 20:14 Deuteronomy 5:18 |
| 1. Explanation of the commandment | |
| a. The original context | Ex. 20:14 Deut.5:18 |
| b. Application for today: basis for Christian sexual morality | (2336) |
| 2. Distinction between sex and sexuality | (2332 – 2333) |
| 3. Sexuality and human relationships | (2360) |

- a. Purposes of sexual intercourse (2361 – 2363)
 - 1) To bring forth new life (2364 – 2365)
Gen. 2: 24
Matt. 19: 4-6
 - 2) To express and deepen the union (2366 – 2367)
between husband and wife (Gen. 1: 28)
- b. Characteristics of a Christian sexual relationship (2364 – 2370)
1 Cor. 13: 1-13
Eph 5: 25-28
 - 1) Exclusive
 - 2) Committed Matt. 19: 6
 - 3) Faithful Mark 10: 9
 - 4) Open to new life: issues of artificial (2366-2373 and 2399)
contraception and direct sterilization
- c. Universal call to chastity and integration (2348 – 2350)
1 Cor. 7: 1-11
 - 1) Meaning of chastity
 - 2) Offenses Against Chastity
 - a) Adultery (2380 – 2381)
Jer. 5: 7-9
Mark 10: 11
 - b) Fornication (2353)
1 Cor. 6: 9-10
 - c) Masturbation (2352)
 - d) Homosexual activity (2357 – 2359)
Rom. 1: 26-27
1 Cor. 6: 9-10
 - e) Pornography in relation to (2354)
chastity (see also E-3-d)
 - f) Prostitution (2355)
1 Cor. 6:15-16

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| g) Rape | (2356) |
| h) Polygamy | (2387) |
| i) Incest | (2388) |
| | Leviticus 18:7-18 |
| j. Cohabitation | (2390-2391) |
| k. In Vitro Fertilization | (2376-2377) |
| l. Petting | |
| G. THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not steal. | Exodus 20:15 Deuteronomy 5:19 |
| 1. Explanation of the commandment | (2401) |
| a. The original context | Ex. 20:15 Deut. 5:19 |
| b. Application for today | |
| 2. Right to private property | (2403) |
| 3. Respect for persons and their goods | (2407) |
| a. Theft | (2408) Eph. 4: 28 |
| b. Vandalism | (2409) |
| c. Cheating | (2409) Lev. 19: 35-36 Deut. 25: 13-16 |
| d. Excessive Gambling | (2413) |
| e. Promises and contracts | (2410) Deut. 24:4-18 James 5: 4 |
| f. Slavery | (2414) |
| g. Prejudice and social or cultural discrimination | (1929-1938) Matt.5:43-48 Matt.25:40 Gal.3:26-28 |
| h. Respect for the integrity of creation | (2415 – 2418) Gen. 1: 28-31 |
| 4. Social doctrine of the Church | (2419 – 2425) |
| a. Important encyclicals | |
| 1) <i>Populorum Progressio</i> (On the Progress of Peoples) | |

- 2) Rerum Novarum
- 3) Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concerns)
- b. Economic activity and social justice (2426)
 - 1) Importance of human dignity (2427 – 2428)
 - 2) Access to employment and a just wage (2433 – 2434)
Deut. 24: 14-15
James 5: 4
 - 3) Access to housing and health care
- c. Justice and solidarity among nations (2437 – 2442)
 - 1) Immigrants and refugees (2241 & 2433)
- d. Concern for others
 - Tobit 4: 7-11
Matt. 6: 2-4
Matt. 25: 31-46
 - 1) Preferential option for the poor (2444 – 2445)
Luke 6: 20-25
 - 2) Spiritual Works of Mercy: (2447)
 - Instruct the ignorant
 - Counsel the doubtful
 - Console the sorrowing
 - Bear wrongs patiently
 - Forgive all injuries
 - Admonish the sinner
 - Pray for the living and the dead
 - 3) Corporal Works of Mercy: (2447)
 - Feed the hungry
 - Give drink to the thirsty
 - Welcome the stranger
 - Clothe the naked
 - Comfort the sick
 - Visit those in prison
 - Bury the dead
- H. THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Exodus 20:16
Deuteronomy 5:20

1. Explanation of the commandment (2464)
 - a. The original context Ex. 20:16
Deut. 5:20
 - b. Application for today Matt. 5: 33-37

2. Importance of truth (2467 – 2470)
 - a. Lying (2482 – 2487)
Sirach 7: 13

 - b. False witness and perjury (2476)
Proverbs 19: 9

 - c. Respect for the reputation of others Sirach 21: 28
James 3: 5-10
 - 1) Rash judgment (2477 – 2478)
 - 2) Detraction (2477, 2479)
 - 3) Calumny (2477, 2479)
 - 4) Gossip (2480)

 - d. Keeping secrets and confidences (2489)
Sirach 27: 16

 - e. Proper use of computer and other technology

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. (2514)
Exodus 20:17
Deuteronomy 5:21

1. Explanation of the commandment
 - a. The original context Ex. 20: 17
Deut. 5:21
 - b. Application for today Matt. 15: 17-20

2. Chastity and purity (2517 – 2519)
 - 2 Tim. 2: 22
 - 1 John 3: 3

 - a. Modesty (2521)

- 1) In thought (2523)
- 2) In word (foul language) James 3: 9-10
- 3) In clothing and actions (2522)
1 Peter 3: 4
- b. Lust (2351)
Matt. 5: 27-28
- J. THE TENTH COMMANDMENT- You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. Exodus 20:17
Deuteronomy 5:21
- 1. Explanation of the commandment (2534)
- a. The original context Ex. 20:17
Deut. 5:21
- b. Application for today Matt. 6:19-21
- 2. The pull of greed (2536)
1 Tim. 6:10
1 Peter 2:11
- a. Avarice
- b. Covetousness
- c. Envy (2538)
Gen. 4:3-7
- d. Detachment from material possessions: living simply (2544 – 2547)
Matt. 6:25-34
Luke 14: 33