

# Catechist Handout- F1

## Cultivating Moral Intelligence

AFLAME  
with the  
Holy  
Spirit



Week 12 – January, 23 2022

### OBJECTIVES

1. Explore with teens the idea of **moral intelligence**. This is a relatively new concept coined in 2005 by Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel, Ph.D. They define moral intelligence as the capacity to understand right from wrong and to behave based on the value that is believed to be right.  
Furthermore, they see moral intelligence as
  - the “central intelligence’ for all humans” - a unique form of intelligence independent of both emotional and cognitive intelligence
  - ability-based, rather than trait-based and therefore
  - a skill that can be further developed with practice,
  - identified with four competencies integrity, responsibility, forgiveness, and compassion.
2. Explore with teens how Scripture and Church teachings provide the basic building blocks for constructing a consistent and comprehensive moral vision.
3. Help teens to begin crafting their own moral vision by
  - a. identifying the ethical issues they face,
  - b. becoming more aware of the values they hold
  - c. recognize where those values come from and
  - d. exploring fundamental moral principles found in scripture and Church teaching
4. Explore with teens the role the Holy Spirit plays in Catholic moral teaching

### OVERVIEW

4:00- 5:00- Mass

5:15-6:45pm – Small Group Lesson Plan

### LESSON COMPONENTS

- Community Building (5-10 min)
- Shared experiences by adults and teens (25-30 min)
- Catholic Teaching/Insight (20-25 min)
- Scripture & Prayer (20 min)
- Putting Faith into Action (5 min)
- Announcements (2 min)

### Community Builder

- If you have a regular activity you use to begin class, do that.
- If you are looking for an activity try this one

**Vote with your feet activity**

### CATECHIST RESOURCES

For an overview on **Moral Intelligence**, see **this interview with John Bradshaw**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd2yT7bHdbQ>

#### Articles

##### **The Moral Compass**

Short article directed at catechists from a Christian perspective. Access online at <https://www.vision.org/what-guides-our-moral-compass-410>

##### **The Moral Compass: Finding True North**

Short article, good points, written from a Christian perspective. Access online at <https://www.vision.org/ethics-and-morality-the-moral-compass-137>

##### **Moral Principles Are the Truly Big Ideas**

Short article providing catechists with good talking points on morality itself. Access online at <https://www.vision.org/importance-of-moral-values-and-principles-4997>

##### **THERE'S A CRITICAL NEED TO BUILD A MORAL COMPASS IN OUR TEENS: HERE'S HOW**

Article published by the Army and Navy Academy from an ethical perspective not necessarily religious in nature. You might want to email this article to the parents of your teens. Access online at <https://armyandnavyacademy.org/blog/theres-a-critical-need-to-build-a-moral-compass-in-our-teens-heres-how>

### Vote with your feet instructions

Start the activity by designating two sides of the room. One is “YES” the other is “NO”. You can write these words on the board if it will help teens remember.

Have a peer (or you as a Catechist) read off moral situations or dilemmas.

Teens should then “vote with their feet” by walking to “YES” or “NO”. Ask teens why they stood where they stood and what value they are advocating for by voting the way they did.

Pick about 2-3. Try to call on different teens each time to share their reasoning with the group.

### Scenarios you can poll (feel free to create your own) choose 2-3

1. Is lying to keep from hurting someone's feelings okay?
2. If you saw someone drop a \$50 bill on the ground, and no one else saw it, would you keep it for yourself?
3. You are out with friends and one of them shop lifts a small item. Your friend is not seen doing this by anyone but you. Do you let it slide?
4. You and your friends go to a party. The friend who is driving has a few drinks. You can see she has a buzz going but she is not drunk. Do you let her drive you home?
5. One of your close friends is dating a person they really like. According to your friend, they are a couple and have agreed to not see other people. You see the person your friend is dating hitting on someone else at a party. Do you tell your friend?
6. You catch your brother doing drugs. You confront him and he tells you to mind your own business. A month later, you overhear people talking about your brother getting wasted at a party. Do you say something to your parents?
7. You are out with friends and one friend starts saying nasty things about a person who is not there to defend him/herself. You know what your friend is saying is not true. Do you speak up and defend the person being trashed?
8. You pull out of your driveway, bump into your neighbor's parked car, and leave a dent. There are no witnesses. Do you tell your neighbor?

### Shared experiences by adults and teens (25-30 minutes)

⇒ Direct Teens back to **TH p. 1** and introduce the concept of **Moral Intelligence**. Many people reduce morality to following a set of established rules. Cultivating moral intelligence is a much more complex and holistic approach. Memorizing a set of rules does not teach you how to navigate making really tough choices or developing a personal, internalized moral vision.

Briefly go over the terms on **TH p.1**

⇒ Direct teens to the **Value Clarification Activity** on **TH p. 2**. This is not an easy activity. It forces them to make choices and prioritize in order to

### CATECHIST NOTES

**CATHOLIC MORALITY: LIFE IN CHRIST**-Part of the beginning Catholic Series. Helpful but a more centrist Catholic position than Holy Family. Access online at <http://www.beginningcatholic.com/catholic-morality>

**SHORT VIDEOS** to share with teens on morality

#### Matt Kelly Videos

##### The Best Way to Live

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Matthew+Kelly%2c+the+best+way+to+live&docid=608046929782594366&mid=C32CF190421EE2452F04C32CF190421EE2452F04&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

##### Your choices Matters

<https://vimeo.com/85628138>

#### TedTalk

##### The day before you die - Why doing what really matters is so important

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGfpC1gd6bQ>

You could show this before doing the Values Clarification Activity if you want. It is 16 minutes long.

**Teens will struggle with the Values Clarification Activity.** It is designed to make them think. It will take them a while to sort through all the choices. Make them aware that as we grow, evolve, mature our values shift. This is the reason it is a good practice to take inventory.

honestly reflect what values are currently driving their thoughts and actions. Encourage them to be honest and forthcoming with themselves. Have them follow the directions provided on **TH p. 2**.

### Catholic Teaching/Insight (20-25 min)

#### Catechist talking points

- The components of a moral compass (comprised of principles, values and beliefs), goals (including purpose and wants) and behavior (through thoughts, emotions and actions) interact together to form moral intelligence (at the top of **TH p. 1**)
- Virtues are those good habits of mind, heart, and action that enable us to choose and act well.
- Internalizing virtue isn't just about acquiring a set of habits. It's about gradually gaining wisdom — acting and then reflecting on what we've done, learning from our mistakes, and coming to a greater understanding of how to live a life shaped by such values as compassion, respect, and honesty.
- We learn by doing. We become just by doing just acts...brave by doing brave acts, etc. Action is about putting virtue into practice.
- Reflecting on our choices and actions cultivates moral intelligence. Experience alone does not foster growth; reflection on experience does.

#### Foundational Catholic Moral Teaching

- **Catholic morality is about the fullness of life:** "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)
- **The goal of moral living is personal happiness/contentment** and creating a common good all benefit from
- **Love of God and love of neighbor** are the source & summary of Catholic morality. We find the law of love spelled out in the Scriptures in the
  1. The Ten Commandments
  2. The teachings of the Prophets
  3. The Beatitudes
  4. The Pastoral epistles
- **What love requires** is the essence of all moral rules. The only things needed are those things which love itself makes necessary.
  - \*\*\* **It is important to recognize love sets the highest bar**
  - The goal of Christian morality is to love without limit
  - This might sound like an impossible goal, and you would be right. Christ's closest disciples couldn't believe that the demands of discipleship far exceeded human ability: **"When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, 'Then who can be saved?'" (Mt 19:25)**
  - So Christ reassures them, **"With men [and women] this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).**
- **God will give you the strength and ability to do more than you can believe is possible.** And the more you give, the more help God will give you. **We call this grace.**
- **It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the gift of grace.** The Spirit not only calls

### CATECHIST NOTES

It would be good for you and/or your peers to have personal examples that go with the talking points.

Many of the points on Catholic Morality are on **TH p. 3**

This is why Lennick and Kiel argue moral intelligence is ability-based not trait based.

'Fullness of life' refers to not simply surviving or coping but living fully in each moment and a life that is eternal. This is Christ's promise. Life is not without trial or hardship but it is rich, satisfying...

This is the problem with fixed moral standards. They define the most minimal standard - the least common denominator. This is why Paul claims he is free of the Law (The Ten Commandments) - free to be bound to the law of love.

This is why The Church teaches we cannot save ourselves - only God can save us.

The Holy Spirit is the animator, the source of our inspiration, the advocate, and guide.

us to holiness, but sanctifies us (makes us holy) and gives us the grace we need to respond to gospel call to love.

## Scripture & Prayer (20 minutes)

### Galatians 5:16-26

#### MSG translation

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

#### Catholic Youth Bible (NABRE) Translation

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the

## CATECHIST NOTES

The Galatians text is the source of identifying the '**Fruits of the Spirit**'.

I have provided you with **two (2)** translations of this text. One is from the **MSG** or Message Bible and one is the **CYB** (NAMBRE) translation the teens have been given.

In this text Paul differentiates the '**FLESH**' from the '**SPIRIT**'. This distinction is rooted in the Platonic philosophy. Paul's use of the language of the Greek speaking Christians of his time has led to a number of problems in understanding the texts.

Today Catholic theology is leaning to a more holistic sense of the world and letting go of many of the dualities of the past (that arose from Platonism).

Scriptures Scholars prefer the **CYB** translation, seeing it as more accurate, more refined translation. They critique the Message translation critique as sacrificing an accurate translation for a readable one. However in this case it might be helpful.

Feel free to work from either or both translations. **The MSG translation is on TH p. 4.**

If you choose to use the CYB translation, explain before reading the text that for Paul **the flesh** represents all that is in opposition to God's Kingdom. Evil is not rooted in the created world - God created it and it is good. Our bodies are not the source of sin any more than our minds or spirits are. Sin is rooted

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; Idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

### Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with Paul's basic premise that living out of selfishness leads to one kind of life and embracing the teachings of Christ lead to another?
2. If unbridled self-centeredness produces violence, greed, hunger, war, jealousy, envy, suspicion, mistrust, broken relationships, resentments, addiction... why do so many choose selfishness over love?
3. Do you agree with Paul that we are truly free to choose what kind of life we want to live? Why or why not?
4. Why does Paul draw such a hard and fast boundary? Why does he say one cannot live with one foot in each of these worlds?
5. What makes choosing the way of love so difficult?
6. What have you found helps you choose to step away from selfishness?

### Fruits of the Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit

**The Gifts of the Spirit** are given to help us live the gospel - Knowledge, understanding, wisdom, right judgement, courage, reverence, wonder and awe in God's presence.

**The Fruits of the Spirit** - the benefits that come from living the Gospel. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, forbearance, gentleness, faith, humility, chastity and self-control.

**If we want to know if the fruits of the Spirit are evident in our lives, the first place we need to look is how we treat others.** What do our families, friends, teammates, co-workers, neighbors say about us?

### Putting Faith Into Action (5 min)

- ⇒ Have the teens fill out the boxes on TH p. 8 **OR**
- ⇒ Have the group decide on an action they will do together

### Announcements

Our next class session on February 13<sup>th</sup> will be the **"Your Questions"** large-group and Lesson Plan. Please use sheets of paper, post-its or notecards to write down your classes questions and turn them into Teen Faith at the end of this class! Questions can be directed at Fr. Terry, Dr. Peg or others.

### CATECHIST NOTES

in our failure to be in relationship with God.

Take some time at the beginning of the discussion to talk about the difference between

**Self-care** - the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness

**Self-centeredness** - being preoccupied with oneself. Does not necessarily connote a lack of concern for others

**Selfishness** - lacking consideration for others, a preoccupation with one's own personal profit or pleasure at the expense of others.

← **The Fruits of the Spirit** - the benefits that come from following Christ. **TH p. 4**

Depending on which translation of Galatians 5: 16-26 one uses the number of gifts vary from 7, 9, or 12.

Catholics generally refer to 12

**Chastity** is the responsible use of sexuality - **all** Christians are called to love chastely.

**LESSON PREPARATION NOTES:**

Is there something I want to pick up or go over from last week's class?

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My community building activity this week will be

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What parts of the lesson will the Peer Ministers lead/facilitate?

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Do I need anything from the Faith Office prior to class?

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Other

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**CATECHIST NOTES**

Things I will need for class this week:

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The Key Ideas/Objectives for this week are

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Things I need to consult Mel about

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