

Unit Two SECTION D: MORAL DECISION-MAKING

PART ONE: THINKING ABOUT MORALITY

Syllabus Objectives	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term ‘morality’ • understand that morality is a human phenomenon which has been the basis of much thought and reflection since ancient times • be aware of the importance of personal and communal values and their expression in secular and religious law codes. <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that a person can be a moral person independent of religious belief or affiliation. <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify morality as a human phenomenon. <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to dialogue constructively with legal and religious traditions.
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Topic: 1.1 The meanings of morality

Procedure

Description of content:

- *morality as a natural human phenomenon*
- *the thinking of ancient civilisations about morality*
 - *the Hebrews*
 - *the Greeks*
 - *the Romans*

Review course content covered in relation to what it means to be moral and the thinking of the Greeks i.e.

- Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section A Part 1.2
- Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section F Part 1

Write the term MORALITY on the chalkboard and brainstorm the students understanding of it.

Or Make a Vox pop of answers to the question: What is Morality?

/ Listen to The Moral Life Network cassette tape on notions of morality (Side 1 unit 2)

Buzz: What are the different answers given to the question - What is Morality?

Note on the chalkboard feedback and conclude that morality can be defined in many different ways, some of which are more simple than others e.g. morality is concerned with what is right and wrong, or good and evil etc.

Buzz: Do any of these answers give rise to other questions?

Take feedback and note on the chalkboard the questions the students suggest that could arise from the answers given e.g.

- How do we know what is right and wrong?
- Is something right if it causes pleasure?
- How do we know that something is good?
- Does evil exist?
- Why do we choose to do wrong when we know it is wrong?
- Is morality about actions or character?
- How do we become good people?
- Do we need religion to be moral?
- What is the relationship between what is good for me and for others?

How do I approach difficult moral decisions?

Etc.

Video Assignment: View an episode of a popular soap story or film depicting a concrete situation in which a person acts in a way that is agreed to be morally good.

Discuss: What is good about the person (the moral agent in the story) and his / her actions?
What might motivate the person to act in this way (e.g. concern for those in need etc.)?
Why was the person willing to make personal sacrifices (i.e. comfort, safety) to help others?
Why did the person act morally?
Etc.

Take feedback and conclude by making reference if necessary to the following points:

- human beings have free will - they can therefore make moral choices
- human beings tend to seek or aspire to what is good;
- human beings are social, and therefore act in a way that reflects awareness of others;
- human beings have the capacity of reason, which enables them to reflect upon what is good and to act in accordance with this reflection, rather than acting on instinct.

Group work: Divide the students into three groups and give each time to research the chief moral concerns in one of the following Hebrew, Greek and Roman civilisations.

Take feedback from each group

Discuss: What similarities are there between the moral concerns of the Hebrew, Greek and Roman civilisations and those of people today?
What differences are there between the moral concerns of the Hebrew, Greek and Roman civilisations and those of people today?

Outcomes:

- give three examples from modern culture which show that morality is a natural human phenomenon
- identify one of the chief moral concerns of each of the following ancient civilisations: Hebrew
- Greek and Roman.

Topic: 1.2 Why be moral?

Procedure

Description of content: • *personal and community values*

Brainstorm: Why be moral?

Take feedback and note on the chalkboard the reasons given in students' answers to this question.

Taking each reason noted on the chalkboard discuss the following questions:

- Does this reason show an awareness of a consequence for the person?
(If so note P beside the answer on the chalkboard)
- Does this reason show an awareness of a consequence for the community?
(If so note C beside the answer on the chalkboard)
- Does this reason show an awareness of a consequence for the both the person and the community? (If so note P & C beside the answer on the chalkboard)

or **Written Assignment / Role play:** Review the episode of the soap story or film seen earlier asking the students to imagine what would happen in the story if the person acted in a way that is immoral.

Take feedback from the students on how they imagine the story would have unfolded or give students time to prepare a role-play of the situation with the person behaving immorally.

Discuss: How did the situation change because the person behaved immorally?
What were the consequences of the person's immoral behaviour for themselves?

What were the consequences of the person's immoral behaviour for others in the story?
 Present students with the following definition:

*A value is
 a desired quality or characteristic of thought and behaviour
 which is considered good, important and worthwhile.*

Buzz: What are your values?
 What quality or characteristic of thought / behaviour do you desire?
 What do you consider good, important and worthwhile for yourself and others?

Take feedback from students and note their answers on the chalkboard.

Or *Personal Assignment:* Finish the following sentences:

- _____What's most important to me is
- _____In 10 years time I hope to
- _____Everyone should
- _____I'm against
- _____I'm all for
- _____I'm convinced that
- _____With a gift of €1000 I would
- _____If I could have three wishes I'd like

Take feedback from students.
 Present students with the following statements:

<p>PERSONAL VALUES <i>are those that influence the morality of the individual</i> e.g. loyalty to friends; the pursuit of excellence; compassion etc.</p>	<p>COMMUNITY VALUES <i>are those that influence the moral attitudes and conduct of communities</i> <i>such as religious groups, families, societies</i> e.g. the promotion of education; the protection of a clean and safe environment; care for the marginalised, equality etc.</p>
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Review what students have written in the assignments above.

Discuss: Which of these are personal values?
 Which of these are community values?
 Are any of my personal values different to those of the communities to which I belong?
 e.g. if one of my personal values is securing a healthy and happy life for myself and
 some of my friends value going out on a Saturday night and getting drunk, there may
 be conflict between personal values and peer group/community values.

Auction Game: Divide the class into groups

Brief: Imagine each group is setting up a new community (e.g. class; club; neighbourhood; etc.) Each group can decide what values there will be in their community so that it will be a good place for them. The difficulty is that only 12 different values are available and no two groups can have the same values. The problem of dividing up the values is to be solved by holding a values auction, with each of the 12 values being sold to the highest bidder. Each group has €1000 to be used in purchasing the values. During the auction each group can buy as many values as it can afford until its funds are gone, at which point the group must withdraw from the auction.

Display the following value cards for all groups to see and give students time to plan a strategy for the auction. Value Cards:

HONESTY	POWER
WEALTH	FREEDOM
HAPPINESS	RESPECT
PEACE	LOVE
HEALTH	JUSTICE
BEAUTY	WISDOM

To start the auction choose one of the above value cards and ask:

Who will give me €10 for this value? Who will give me €20? Keep the price going up until the bidding stops. Then close the auction saying sold and give the highest bidder the value card. Keep the auction going until all the values are sold or the groups have run out of funds.

Debriefing - Ask each group to report on the following questions:

- What values did you end up with?
- Are these the values you wanted to have in your community?
- How did you decide on the values you wanted in your community?
- What type of community do you think you will have with the values you have bought?
- Would you like to be in such a community? Why? Why not?

Description of content: • *the expression of personal and communal values in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and similar charters*

Review course content covered in relation to Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section F and Section H

Present overhead of a charter that expresses values e.g.

- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21)
- The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (www.un.org)
- Declaration Toward A Global Ethic (www.uni-tuebingen.de)
- Etc.

Written Assignment: Values

Name of Charter:

PERSONAL VALUES	COMMUNITY VALUES

Give students time to complete the assignment by noting where personal and community values are expressed in the charter.

Take feedback from the written assignment asking students to explain how personal and community values are in the parts of the charter they identified.

Discuss: Do we need to consider the values of the community when stating our personal values?
Do we need to consider personal values when stating the values of the community?
How does this charter show the connection between personal and community values?

Outcomes:

- Give an example of a personal value
- Give an example of a community value
- Outline the difference between personal values and community values
- Name two charters that express personal and community values
- In the case of each one, give three examples of how personal and community values are held in balance.

Resources which teachers have suggested include:

Teach Me Your Ways – The Light of the World Series 3 – S. Kirwan & L. Garland Chapter 3.

Topic: 1.3 The common good and individual rights* (Higher Level only)

Procedure

Description of content:

- understandings of “the common good”
- the expression of “the common good” in civil law
- the balance between “the common good” and individual rights

Brainstorm students on their understanding of the common good

Take feedback and if necessary present students with the following definition:

“the common good” may be defined as that which is best for the whole community / society

or Research Assignment: Give students time to look up definitions of “the common good” from documents such as Gaudium et Spes and Pacem in Terris (available on www.vatican.va) etc.

Take feedback from the students and explain that what is termed “good” is not just about an individual seeking what is good for him / herself alone. It also involves taking into consideration what is good for others and how the good of society as a whole can be served.

Case study: Profile an example of Irish civil law
 e.g. Laws relating to driving - speed limits, limits on drinking and driving etc.
 Laws relating to the sale of alcohol
 Law banning smoking in places of work etc.

Discuss: How do these laws balance the rights of individuals with the rights of others?

Or Media study: Pick an example of Irish civil law e.g. the banning of smoking in pubs etc.

Following the debate in the media over a period of time e.g. a newspaper's letter section etc.

Review all the material gathered from the debate in the media identifying:

- a. Points which refer to the rights of individuals
- b. Points which refer to the common good

Take feedback when student s have completed the review of the debate in the media.

Discuss: How do this law balance the rights of individuals with the rights of others?

Finish the story - Assignment: Read the following situations and in each case finish the story outlining the decision the people involved should make that would best serve the common good.

<i>Situation A</i>	<i>Situation B</i>	<i>Situation C</i>
A police car is chasing a stolen vehicle through the streets of a large town in the afternoon. In their efforts to escape, the occupants of the car engage in very dangerous behaviour, moving from lane to lane at great speed. The police realise that there is a grave threat to public safety if these people escape, as they are known to have engaged in violent behaviour previously. They also realise that children will be coming out of a school further down the road in a few minutes time.	An individual feels that the taxes in this country are too high. He is already wealthy, but knows that the savings he would make by evading some of his taxes would help him pay off a loan he took out in order to expand his business. His business provides jobs for previously unemployed people. He figures that he has saved the state (and taxpayers) money by providing employment. He also knows that the country is facing recession, and that cutbacks are being made in the provision of healthcare and education.	A hurricane is heading towards a large city which needs to be evacuated in order to save lives. However, there is a danger that the large number of vehicles on the roads out of the city will cause traffic chaos, seriously slowing down the speed of the evacuation process. The government orders that, where public transport vehicles are serving a particular area for the purposes of evacuation, residents must use them, and leave their personal vehicles behind. Some people object to this, as they know their vehicle may be destroyed by the hurricane, and they would prefer the privacy of their own vehicle to a crowded bus/train.

Take feedback from students on how they would finish each story in each situation.

Discuss: How do you feel the common good would be best served in each situation?

Give reasons for your answer.

What are the advantages for the people involved in this way of finishing the story?

What are the disadvantages for the people involved in this way of finishing the story?

Outcomes:

- Give two definitions of “the common good”
- Give two examples of how “the common good“ is expressed in Irish civil law
- Give two examples of how Irish civil law attempts to balance individual rights with “the common good”

PART TWO: MORALITY AND RELIGION

Syllabus Objectives	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term morality • understand that morality is a human phenomenon which has been the basis of much thought and reflection since ancient times • be aware of the importance of personal and communal values and their expression in secular and religious law codes • be familiar with the ethical teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and the incorporation of these into the moral teachings of the Christian traditions • be familiar with the ethical systems of two religious traditions other than the Christian traditions <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that a person can be a moral person independent of religious belief or affiliation • be aware that a religious perspective on morality emerges from the traditions and belief of each religious tradition • recognise that the Christian tradition draws its inspiration for its moral teaching from several sources • have an understanding of the insight of religions into the implications of moral failure • understand that sin – moral failure from the perspective of the Christian tradition – has personal, social, and structural implications <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differentiate between morality and religion • identify and evaluate the values proposed by the variety of sources and traditions encountered <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to dialogue constructively with legal and religious traditions • awareness of the religious perspective on morality, in particular the Christian perspective and its influence on Irish society in the past and at the present time • awareness of and openness to the moral dimension of the issues of the day • personal moral dispositions
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Topic: 2.1 The relationship between morality and religion

Procedure

Description of content: - a contrast and comparison between the religious and moral person
- ethical systems proposed by two traditions other than Christianity

Present students with the following newspaper headline:

Passer-by rescues drowning person - Story on page 4

Group work: Divide students into five groups. Group 1 are asked to imagine that the passer-by was a Christian. Group 2 a Humanist. Group 3 a Muslim. Group 4 a Hindu. Group 5 a Buddhist. Each group is given time to research the basic principles of each ethical system and outline the story describing the motivation, intention, way of looking at the world (worldview), etc. of the passer-by in this incident written from their different viewpoints.

When each group has completed the exercise, take feedback from students and compare the stories.

Discuss: How can we distinguish one story from the other, as the action is the same in all?

What is the difference between a religious and a moral person?

Take feedback and conclude explaining how a person who is not religious can be moral, but what underlies his / her good action differs from that of the religious person, whose morality is shaped by their religious worldview. Similarly, a person can be 'religious', in the sense of believing in God, praying, etc., but (s)he can also do wrong.

Written Assignment:

Outline the basic ethical code of one religious tradition you have studied other than Christianity.

Description of content: - morality since the Enlightenment: changes in the understanding of morality in two of the following: the morality of slavery; the morality of war; the morality of capital punishment; the morality of child labour.

Research Assignment: Give students time to research the history of the morality of two of the following issues: slavery; war; capital punishment; child labour.

When students have completed their research take feedback.

Discuss: How has the understanding of the morality of this issue changed in the course of history?

Outcomes:

- state the similarities and differences between a religious person and a moral person
- outline the basic principles of the ethical systems of two religious, non-Christian traditions
- identify moments of change in the development of morality since the Enlightenment.

Topic: 2.2 Morality and the Christian tradition

Procedure

Description of content:

- *the context of the Covenant and the Decalogue*
- *the ethical vision of the preaching of Jesus*
- *the idea of “right relationship” and the law of love in this preaching*

Review course content covered in relation to the ethical vision of Jesus i.e.

- Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section B Part 2
- Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section B Part 3

Review the religious, cultural and social context of the Covenant and the Decalogue

“The spirit and the letter of the law” - review the preaching of Jesus (e.g. Matthew 5 to 7) and explain how this was a key principle in the ethical vision in Jesus’ preaching.

Review Jesus’ parables / miracles and identify examples that show his understanding of “right relationship” and the law of love.

Read a Gospel account of one of Jesus’ parables / miracles.

Discuss: What does this show us about Jesus’ view of right and wrong?

Scripture Assignment: Imagine this parable being told in a modern day setting.

What present-day issues do you think Jesus would focus on?

What do you think he would say in such a parable?

Description of content: • *Christian perspectives on the relationship between religion and morality*

e.g. The Roman Catholic understanding of natural moral law:

Human beings, using their capacity to reason, can reflect upon human experience and human nature in order to see what is good, even without divine revelation.

Discuss: How does this understanding of natural law show that human beings, whether or not they are religious, can come to know what is good?

Does this mean that a person’s morality is independent of their religious faith?

Written Assignment:

1. Jesus of Nazareth spent his adult life sharing a vision for ethical living. You have been asked to write an article for a teenage magazine in which you are to describe these ethical teachings. Write the article suitable for your age group and include in it the following ideas:
 - a. Jesus’ moral vision
 - b. Jesus’ understanding of right relationship
 - c. Jesus’ understanding of the law of love.
2. The relationship between religion and morality in Christianity has been described as reason informing faith and faith informing reason. Explain what this means in your own words.

Outcomes:

- briefly outline the religious, social, and cultural context of the Decalogue and Covenant
- state five of the key principles in the ethical vision in Jesus’ preaching
- give an account of Jesus’ understanding of “right relationship”
- give an account of Jesus’ understanding of the law of love
- state the perspective of one Christian tradition on the relationship that exists between religion and morality.

Topic: 2.3 Religious perspectives on moral failure

Procedure

Description of content: • *the Christian understandings of sin and reconciliation*

- *personal and social sin and the relationship between them*
- *the concept of structural injustice*
- *the perspectives of one tradition, other than the Christian traditions, on moral failure.*

Reflection exercise: Write the word SIN on the chalkboard.

Invite students to reflect on: What does this word bring to mind?

Invite students to describe in words or drawings what the concept of sin brings to mind.

Take feedback on the students' reflection by placing the words or drawings on display for all to see.

Discuss: What do we have in common in our understanding of the word "sin"?

How do we differ in our understanding of the word "sin"?

Take feedback and conclude by explaining that a person's understanding of sin is shaped by their religious vision. e.g. a person who sees God as -

- the maker of laws and the granter of salvation may see sin as 'the breaking of God's law'
- a loving parent figure might see sin as the failure to love in return

Sin creates a distance and lack of harmony because what I have done is contradictory to my moral vision, and damages my relationship with those I claim to love and have concern for.

Present students with the following statements:

<i>Personal sin can be understood as any wrong chosen freely by an individual which has consequences for him / herself and / or for those directly affected by the wrong (s)he does</i>	<i>Sin can be social because the actions of an individual can have social consequences and because society itself can choose to do wrong</i>
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Discuss: Which of the words or drawing displayed above describe personal sin?

Which of the words or drawing displayed above describe social sin?

Which of the words or drawing displayed above describe both personal and social sin?

Take feedback and explain a number of ways in which personal and social sin are related e.g.

- the greed of individual people can be reflected in a society which ignores the needs of others
- the pursuit of wealth by individual people can develop into the widespread exploitation of poor workers in developing countries

Buzz: What is structural injustice?

Take feedback and conclude by explaining that social sin can take the form of structural injustice, when something wrong is supported by the official, organised structures of society (e.g. racism).

View relevant extracts from the film Cry Freedom or

Research Assignment: Look up references to structural injustice and the relationship between personal and social sin in church documents e.g. Roman Catholic encyclicals / pastoral letters etc.

Interview members of a non-Christian tradition, to research their understanding of moral failure / sin, and how this stems from their understanding of God.

Written Assignment:

1. Define the following: a) personal sin b) social sin.
2. War and drug-taking are two issues where both personal and social sin come into play. Discuss how personal sin and social sin play a part in one of these issues.

Outcomes:

- Explain the understanding of sin and reconciliation in one Christian tradition
- Define personal sin; social sin
- Give a contemporary example of the relationship between the two
- Define and give an example of structural injustice
- Take one non-Christian religious tradition and outline briefly its understanding of moral failure
- Present the similarities and differences that may exist when compared with the Christian understanding outlined above.

Resources which teachers have suggested include:

- Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org) & Antislavery International (www.antislavery.org).
- Trócaire (www.trocaire.org)
- Structural injustice - Roman Catholic encyclicals / pastoral letters (www.vatican.va.)

PART THREE: MORAL PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES

Syllabus Objectives	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term ‘morality’• be familiar with the ethical dimensions of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and the incorporation of these into the moral teachings of the Christian traditions• have a knowledge of a variety of moral theories and the implications of their application. <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise that personal moral development is an integral part of growth towards adulthood, and that the development of conscience is an important element of this• have an understanding that moral maturity calls for ongoing individual and community dialogue. <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare and contrast some traditional moral theories and their application in the modern world• engage in the process of conscience development• identify and evaluate the values proposed by the variety of sources and traditions encountered <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an appreciation of the seriousness of the task of moral decision making for the adult in society• an awareness of and openness to the moral dimension of the issues of the day.
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Topic: 3.1 Morality in a pluralist society

Procedure

Description of content:

- *examples and sources of moral conflict and debate*
- *fundamentalism and relativism as opposites.*

Present students with the following statement:

Pluralism holds that there are many different views or schools of thought within society and that all groups have a right to carry out their cultural and religious practices

or Brainstorm: What is a pluralist society?

Take feedback and if necessary explain that this describes a society in which many different beliefs and practices exist.

Discuss: How could there be moral conflict in a pluralist society? Give examples.

Take feedback and explain that this can lead to moral conflict, when the values of one group clash with the values of another. e.g.

- ! Pro-life and pro-choice groups in the abortion debate
- ! Pro- and anti-hunting groups
- ! Etc.

Discuss: What is the source of conflict in the example you have given?

Take feedback and conclude referring to the source of conflict in each case

e.g. abortion debate

- pro-life groups believe that the unborn human being must be protected from harm
- pro-choice groups believe that it is up to a woman to decide whether or not she wants to have a child.

e.g. pro / anti-hunting debate

- anti-hunting groups believe that hunting is cruel and unnecessary and that the life of all animals is valuable
- pro-hunting groups believe that some animals (foxes etc.) are pests and should be hunted, or that hunting is a source of social enjoyment for rural communities, and therefore valuable.

Brainstorm: What is fundamentalism? Give examples or read Student Work: Genesis on Trial Section J Part “2 Topic 2.4 or view extracts from the film “Inherit the Wind”.

What is relativism? Give examples.

Take feedback and if necessary present students with the following statement:

4	(from the Greek telos meaning 'end') This maintains that moral judgements are based entirely on the effects produced by an action. An action is considered right or wrong in relation to its consequences.
5	This maintains the rightness of an action does not depend solely on its consequences since there may be certain features of the act itself that determine whether it is right or wrong e.g. the nature of the act itself, motive etc.
6	This maintains that the most important thing is to live in right relationship with the world around us, with ourselves and with God. Anything that would damage these relationships is seen as wrong.
7	This maintains that human beings, using their capacity to reason, can reflect upon human experience and human nature in order to see what is good, even without divine revelation.

Take feedback and if necessary correct answers as follows: 1= hedonism; 2 = utilitarianism; 3 = virtue ethics; 4 = teleological ethics; 5 = deontological ethics; 6 = right relationship; 7 = natural law.

Or Case Study: Read Handout: *Socrates in Prison* (Adapted from M. Palmer – Moral Problems)

Assignment: Make a list of the arguments employed by Socrates and Crito.
To what extent are they teleological, deontological or a mixture of both?

Or Who Am I? - Role-Play:

Pick one of the issues mentioned earlier i.e. the abortion debate, the hunting debate etc.

Ask students to imagine they are taking part in a talk show and have been asked to represent the views of one of the above moral theories on the issue.

Students are instructed to-

- Pick one of the above and write it on the top of a page that can be folded over.
- Without using this word prepare a paragraph outlining what they think someone with this view would say on the morality of the issue.

Select a number of students to form a fish-bowl group for the talk show discussion on the issue. The rest of the students observe this group and at the end of the discussion identify who was representing which moral theory. The participants in the role-play then reveal the moral theory they were trying to represent.

The whole class then discuss the accuracy or inaccuracy of the way the chosen moral theories were represented in the role-play.

Outcomes:

- state as a question or as a statement in three of the following, the basic guiding principle when making moral choices:
 - deontological ethics
 - modern perspectives on natural law
 - right relationship
 - virtue ethics
 - teleological ethics
 - utilitarianism
 - hedonism
- *write a brief description of each of these three moral philosophies/theories.

PART FOUR: MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Syllabus Objectives	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term ‘morality’• be familiar with the ethical dimensions of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and the incorporation of these into the moral teachings of the Christian traditions• have a knowledge of a variety of moral theories and the implications of their application <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be aware that a religious perspective on morality emerges from the tradition and beliefs of each religious tradition• understand that sin - moral failure from the perspective of the Christian tradition - has personal, social, and structural implications• recognise that personal moral development is an integral part of growth towards adulthood and that the development of conscience is an important element of this• have an understanding that moral maturity calls for ongoing individual and community dialogue <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare and contrast some traditional moral theories and their application in the modern world• engage in the process of conscience development• identify and assess the values proposed by the variety of sources and traditions encountered <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• appreciation of the seriousness of the task of moral decision making for the adult in society• ability to dialogue constructively with legal and religious traditions• awareness of the religious perspectives on morality, in particular the Christian perspective and its influence on Irish society in the past and at the present time• awareness of and openness to the moral dimension of the issues of the day
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Topic: 4.1 Towards moral maturity

Procedure

Description of content:

- *growing in morality from childhood to adulthood*
- *sources of moral principles: family, peers, culture, media, religion spirituality etc.*
- *the issue of freedom*
- *the meaning of virtue*
- *from principles to action: personal moral responsibility.*

Review course content covered in relation to moral development i.e.

- Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section F Part 3

Discuss: How do young children decide what is right or wrong?
Does this change, as children get older?

Review an overview of moral theorists e.g. Lawrence Kohlberg

Discuss: What id meant by “moral freedom”?
What id meant by “virtue”?

Review the characteristics of a morally mature person.

Written Assignment:

1. Trace the moral development of a person using the work of one theorist that you have studied. In your answer, refer to the different stages in a person’s moral development.
2. a. List four influences on a person’s moral development.
b. With regard to each of those you picked, state how they might influence the making of a moral decision.

Outcomes:

- name a moral theorist and give an account of the stages in personal moral development presented in his/her theories

- state the key sources of moral principles and explain how they can impact on moral decision making
- describe what is meant by “moral freedom”
- give two examples of virtue and show how these can be applied in a contemporary setting
- describe the characteristics of a morally mature person.

Topic: 4.2 Conscience

Procedure

Description of content:

- *what is conscience?*
- *how is conscience developed?*
- *what is an informed conscience?*
- *the role of religion in the informing of conscience*
- *the absence of conscience*
- *conscience in action*
 - *the relationship between conscience and religious authority*
 - *the relationship between conscience and the civil authority.*

Brainstorm: What is conscience?

Take feedback and note students’ suggestions on the chalkboard.

Present students with the statement:

Conscience is about what I feel is right or wrong

Discuss: Is there anything inadequate about this description of conscience?

Take feedback and explain that it does not take into account the idea that -

- there is an objective right / wrong
- conscience needs to be informed
- religious traditions can contribute to the moral decision making of an individual
- conscience can be mistaken if it is not properly informed, or is based excessively on feelings

Present an issue that involves a moral dilemma e.g.

- View an extract from a film / play on the issue – Capital Punishment in “Dead Man Walking”; Conscience in “A Man for All Seasons” etc.
- Follow a debate on a moral issue in the newspapers – Stem Cell Research in Sample Lesson Plan Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section J Part 4

Discuss:

- What would a person who is morally immature consider the right thing to do in this situation?
- What would a person who relied on feelings alone consider the right thing to do in this situation?
- What would a person whose conscience was inadequately informed consider the right thing to do in this situation?

Written Assignment: Write about an ethical issue of your choice under the following headings

- a. conscience b. civil law c. religious authority

Outcomes:

- give two different descriptions of conscience
- describe the development of conscience
- define “informed conscience” and identify the ways in which people inform their conscience and evaluate the necessity of informing conscience
- explain the role religion can play in informing conscience
- explain the differences between amoral, immoral and moral immaturity
- taking an issue from the contemporary context illustrate the difference that may exist between the demands of conscience, religious authority, and civil authority

Topic: 4.3 Decision-making in Action * (Higher Level only)

Procedure

Description of content:

- *the process of moral decision-making OL students choose ONE example. HL students choose TWO examples. Examples can be chosen from:*
 - *political and economic questions*
 - *the moral dimension of relationships and sexuality*
 - *issues of medical ethics*
 - *violence*
 - *crime and punishment*
- *moral choices and analysis of their possible outcomes*
- *the dialogue between religious traditions, civil law, and personal conscience in these examples*
- **application of the variety of moral theories in 3.2 to the two examples chosen. (Higher Level only)*

Review identifying stages in moral decision-making e.g.

- Identify the issue / action involved
- Consider the intention, reason or motivation for making the decision, and the rightness/wrongness of this intention, reason or motivation.
- Reflect on the moral values (including those which have religious sources) that are important to the person, and how these values can inform the decision
- Inform conscience from various sources of authority
- Reflection on the sort of person (s)he wants to be, and how this might inform the decision (e.g. an honest, compassionate person, and not a dishonest, self-centred person);
- Consideration of the consequences of the decision for the person and others (this might include the consequences for the person's character, as well as more concrete consequences)

Written Assignment: 'A good decision should involve.....'

How would you finish this statement and what would you go on to say. Write a speech on the process of moral decision making that a morally mature person would follow. You may use a current moral issue that you have studied to illustrate your answer. At the end of your speech, write one sentence in which you define what, in your understanding, characterises a morally mature person.

Outcomes:

- suggest a process a morally mature person would follow when making a serious moral decision
- taking one/two examples from
 - political and economic questions
 - the moral dimensions of relationships and sexuality
 - issues of medical ethics
 - violence and war
 - crime and punishment
- apply the decision-making process
- *outline the position of two religious traditions on this issue
- outline the civil law on this issue
- list the conscientious considerations that may influence a person's decision
- show the different possible outcomes a morally mature person may arrive at
- explain the reasons for these differences
- *taking three of the moral theories in 3.2, apply each of the three to one of the examples above, showing the various outcomes that may be determined by each of these theories.