



Intermediate Grades 4-6 Lesson Plan

"I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20

Purpose:

1. Students will be able to define the word *virtue* and understand the meaning of that word.
2. Students will start to recognize where they can go to develop virtue in their lives.
3. Students will be able to identify the seven virtues and put them into practice.
4. Students will begin to realize the importance of practicing virtue.

Supplies:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
2. *Catholic Encyclopedia* [article on Virtue](#)¹
3. Dictionary
4. **Intermediate Grades Assignment**
5. ***Fishers of Men Supporting Documents***

Activity #1: What is Virtue?

1. Have the students look up and write down the definition of the word *Virtue* using several different sources (see Supplies section).
2. Ask a few students to share with you their definition of virtue.
3. Use those definitions to begin your discussion by breaking down each part of the definition.
 - a. For example, "a moral excellence" could be broken down into: moral – being governed by set rules and expectations; excellence – exceeding normal levels; the best possible. So, virtue as "moral excellence" would mean that one has the ability to follow set rules and expectations to the highest degree without falter.
 - b. Make sure that all students understand the definition of virtue before you move forward.

Activity #2: How do we get Virtue?

1. Choose two or three students in your class to be blindfolded. Have each of those three people choose three people who will be their guides. All other students will be distracters. Move the desks around in your room to create a maze that the person will have to navigate blindfolded.
2. Choose a starting and ending point for the maze and have the distracters stand where they will be out of the way and put the blindfold on one of the three students. Ask them to start walking slowly through the maze. The guides must stay out of reach of the walker.
3. The guides should give directions to the traveler to help him/her navigate their way through the maze without touching any desks.
4. The distracters should give directions or make other noises to keep the traveler from reaching the end successfully.
5. You, as a teacher, may choose what happens to each child if he/she touches one of the obstacles in the maze (e.g., start over, put their hands together in prayer to be set in the right direction by the guides, just keep going, etc.)

¹ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15472a.htm>



6. At the end, return the room to its original order and have the following discussion:
 - a. What roles did each person have in this game? How did those roles relate to your real lives? (Answers should be somewhere along the lines of: traveler – each one of us trying to make right decisions; guides – the people and institutions who help us make the right decisions; distracters – the people, things, and institutions who try to steer us off the right path)
 - b. Who are the guides in your life? (Answers will vary but should include people like parents, teachers, priests, Church, God, etc.)
 - c. Who or what are the distracters in your life? (Again the answers will vary but may include friends, TV, video games, etc.)
 - d. Why were you blindfolded? (Many times we don't know the right decisions to make and we have to depend on the help of people around us to guide us.)
 - e. What does this game have to do with virtue? (Refer back to your conversation about the definition of virtue and explain that in the world today, there are many things that try to keep us from being excellent people, that often times we have several different directions that seem possible, but there is only one right way to go. Often times we don't have the ability to see the right decision and we have to get help from the people around us. Sometimes those distractions are so loud or tempting that we get led off the right path and into trouble or pain (actual physical pain may have occurred during the game if the student ran into the desk just right) and we have to learn from our mistakes.
 - f. So, we gain virtue in different ways: learning from other people and learning from our own lives.

Activity #3: What are the virtues?

1. The Catholic Church recognizes seven virtues, divided between moral and theological virtues.
 - a. Moral Virtues
 - i. Prudence – taking time and making right decisions
 - ii. Justice – treating others and yourselves as you are meant to be treated
 - iii. Temperance – taking and using only what you need
 - iv. Fortitude – standing up for what you believe in and facing your fears despite its effect on your well-being
 - b. Theological Virtues
 - i. Faith – belief in God and the goodness of His creation
 - ii. Hope – belief in a future beyond this world with God
 - iii. Charity – the outward expression of the love God gives us
2. Discuss these virtues with their basic definitions. Then, as an assignment, have the students take home a list of these virtues and look for ways in which they can practice these virtues or ways in which they see others exemplifying them. By the end of the week have them write a few paragraphs about their experience with at least one of these virtues (see **Intermediate Grades Assignment**). Make sure the essay includes which virtue they put into practice (or saw put into practice), how they put that virtue into practice and the results of them practicing that virtue (i.e., did they feel better? did the other person feel better? how could the situation have ended differently? Etc.).



Activity 4: How do these virtues help?

1. The more we practice these virtues the stronger our relationship with God becomes and the stronger our relationships with those around us become. We start to recognize the things of this world for what they are and start to make better decisions regarding our life. Eventually, we start to recognize that by making right decisions, our lives become better and we find happiness in doing good. We also recognize who we can trust to be our guide and the best guide we have is God. When we allow God to lead us, we can do extraordinary things. This video shows just one of those extraordinary things.
2. Watch the video *Fishers of Men*.
3. Discuss the ***Fishers of Men Supporting Documents***.

Further Suggestions

1. Spend more time on discussing each of the virtues in depth throughout the school year. The more knowledge the students have about these virtues, the more likely they are to recognize when they are being used and the more likely they are to use them.
2. Introduce the students to saints who exemplified these virtues. (See our **List of Web Resources** and **List of Saints and Blesseds** for places to find information on saints.)
3. Create lesson plans around the stories found in *Loyola Kids Book of Heroes* (ISBN: 082941584X) by Amy Welborn.
4. Find prayers or have the students develop prayers to increase in these virtues. Say these prayers throughout the year at the beginning or end of each week.
5. View religious based movies such as *The Sound of Music* which exemplify the use of the cardinal virtues and discuss the different situations in which major characters use or don't use these virtues.