

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Freedom in Christ, Part II

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Free will, and thus the ability to shape our lives, is often exercised in relationship to others.

- ◆ Our freedom makes us responsible moral agents, to the extent that we voluntarily choose a particular behavior or course of action. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1734.)
- ◆ Our freedom is limited and faulty due to the effect of Original Sin, which taints the world. (See CCC 1739.)

Christ liberates us from the alienating and debilitating effects of Original Sin.

- ◆ In communion with Christ, we are put in touch with the truth that makes us free. (See CCC 1741.)
- ◆ The grace of Christ is not opposed to the exercise of freedom, since the promptings of his grace direct us toward that which is truly good and enables us to be coworkers with Christ in the world. (See CCC 1742.)

Why is This Important?

The laws, norms, and guidance set by God are applied to every part of the human act: the object, the intention, and the circumstances. We abuse our freedom when the sole calculus for choosing to do this or that resides in our self-gratification or because it promotes our own narrow interests and enjoyment of earthly goods. In other words, the freedom we have from God is not meant only for our own aggrandizement but so that we might gravitate toward the truth and God's kingdom.

*Living the right way
surely means, then,
to learn Christ.*

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange chairs in a circle, with a candle and an open Bible as the focal point. (Have name tags and refreshments available.)

Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Take time for introductions.

Engage

1. Begin with the Insight section of the participant handout. Have participants share their responses to the questions in pairs.
2. Brainstorm similar scenarios. Record them on a large sheet of paper. Opposite each scenario, write the choices to be made.
3. Invite the participants, in pairs, to choose one scenario and its choices, and discuss the criteria they would use in making a decision.
4. After their sharing, gather feedback. Allow time for questions and observations about how difficult it is to make certain choices.

Teach

1. Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Explain to the participants that our Catholic moral tradition provides criteria more demanding than what society may offer.
2. Explain the three basic elements of a moral decision (the object, the intention, the circumstances). Ask the pairs to apply these elements to the scenarios they discussed.

Apply

Encourage the participants to share their insights from this session and reflect on how they might be challenged to live differently.

Pray

Pray the serenity prayer as the closing prayer: *God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.*