

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Tenth Commandment: You Shall Not Covet Your Neighbor's Goods

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Jesus invites us to renounce our possessions for his sake and for the Kingdom of God (see Luke 14:33 and Mark 8:35).

- ◆ Embracing evangelical poverty helps us moderate our desire for the things of this world so that possessions do not block us from pursuing perfect charity. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 2545.)
- ◆ Jesus teaches that the rich already have their consolation in this world, while his disciples trust in the providence of God. (See CCC 2547.)

The Tenth Commandment prohibits greed and avarice, which is the passion for riches and the influence that often comes from wealth.

- ◆ Possessing things is not immoral, only the undisciplined desire to amass earthly goods without limit is. (See CCC 2536.)
- ◆ This commandment also forbids the manipulation of supply and demand so as to influence prices and therefore drive up profit. (See CCC 2537.)

Why is This Important?

Our bodies have certain needs, especially for food, shelter, and a measure of comfort and health. Material things contribute to satisfaction of these needs. This is how we are made by our Creator.

Everyone needs to eat to provide fuel for the body, but overeating can be a problem that inhibits or destroys health. In the same way, greed can lead to enormous problems. Our possessions can end up possessing us.

*"In Scripture, to see is to possess . . .
Whoever sees God has obtained
all the goods of which he can conceive."*

SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. Create a prayer space with a candle, an open Bible, and several items that have meaning for you (such as a picture, seashells, momentos). Provide name tags and refreshments.

Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Take time for introductions and conversation. Begin by singing or playing one of the suggested hymns for this session.

Engage

1. Choose one of the items from the table and share its significance for you. Encourage each person to think of a particular possession (or collection) of importance for them and to share the story of how they came to possess it.
2. Reflect and discuss:

Do you possess your possessions or do they possess you?

Do you ever feel there is something you "just have to have"?

Describe a time when you experienced envy. What do you lose by being envious?

Teach

Summarize Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ Everything we have is a gift from God. We are called to be good stewards of our gifts for the sake of God's reign, and to rejoice in the good fortune of others.
- ◆ Items, such as money, food, and clothing, are necessary for living. However, they are a means to an end; they are not an end in themselves.

Apply

Encourage participants to share what they understand to be the essence of the Tenth Commandment.

Pray

Reflectively proclaim Matthew 6:19–24.