

Doctrinal Session

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

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

A person's intention is an essential element in evaluating the morality of an action.

- ◆ The intention of a person is revealed by the first or primary goal or aim of the activity (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1752).
- ◆ A good intention (helping a neighbor) does not make intrinsically evil behavior (lying) into something that is good. In other words, the end does not justify the means (see CCC 1753).

Passions or feelings are, in themselves, neither good nor evil.

- ◆ Love is only good when it attaches itself to a good action. One can, conversely, love or desire something which is evil (see CCC 1768).
- ◆ For the Christian, charity and divine beatitude are the apex of human feeling (see CCC 1769).

Why Is This Important?

At the core of our being is the desire for happiness. God alone fulfills this desire.

We are often tempted to go our own way in the pursuit of happiness. But the purpose of the moral teaching of the Church—grounded in and permeated by the law of Christ—is to guide us into the proper exercise of human freedom so that we arrive at true happiness with God.

*God himself formed man from the dust . . .
He trained him for
adoption and salvation
through his word . . .*

SAINT CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange chairs in a circle. Place a lighted candle and open Bible on a table in the center of the circle. Provide name tags and refreshments.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive. Take time for introductions as the session begins.

Engage

1. Proclaim Genesis 2:9,16–17, then ask the participants to discuss:

What is the mood or feeling in the Genesis passage?

What choice is presented to Adam and Eve?

What does the passage tell us about God's gift of freedom to us?

2. Gather some insights before continuing with the Insight section of the participant handout.

Teach

1. Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:
 - ◆ The world is engaged in a struggle between good and evil. Through Baptism, we are strengthened in our ability to choose the good; however, the reality of evil persists.
 - ◆ God created us with the ability to make choices. He gave us free will. God's Son, Jesus, showed us how to choose the good by loving God and our neighbor. By following Christ's teaching and example, we can find true happiness.
2. Explore the For Reflection questions.

Apply

Encourage the participants to respond to the following questions:

What insight did I gain from today's session?

How am I challenged to live the message of this teaching?

Pray

Sing or listen to a recording of "The Summons" (John Bell, GIA Publications).