

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION: FREE WILL

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A • February 15, 2026

Loving God,  
every day is full  
of choices.

Help me use  
the gift of free will  
to obey your Commandments  
and to choose to say and do  
what is pleasing to you.  
Amen.



### Sunday Word

**Sirach 15:15-20**

**Psalms 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34**

**1 Corinthians 2:6-10**

**Matthew 5:17-37**  
**or 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37**

The above readings are available at  
[usccb.org/bible/readings](http://usccb.org/bible/readings).

### To Help You Remember



1. God has set choices before us but has not given us the freedom to act unjustly or to sin.
2. Paul writes of the wisdom of God—mysterious, hidden, and known by God before the ages.
3. Jesus says that those who break the Commandments and teach others to do so are least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who obey the Commandments and teach others to do so are greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Key Teaching: Free Will

God gives us the freedom to choose how we are going to behave (or not behave), whether we are for or against something, and whether we will or will not get involved in specific actions. We call this the gift of *free will*.

This freedom to choose means that we may at times choose to do wrong. However, that is not the reason God gives us the gift of free will. The gift of free will helps us to grow in our ability to make choices that obey God's Laws. By using the gift of free will in this way, we grow in faith and holiness.

## Faith Word



### free will

Free will is the part of every person that gives him or her the ability to choose to love and serve God and others as he has created us to do, or to choose not to love and serve God and others.

## Making Good Choices

Here are four tips to help you make good choices. Practice them every day!

1. **Learn what the Church teaches** about good and bad choices.
2. **Pray to the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit helps us know, do, and say what is good, and avoid what is against God's Laws.
3. **Read God's Word in the Bible.** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand its message about what is good.
4. **Be still.** Look into your own heart. God has written his Law on your heart. Listen to what God is saying to you.

## With My Family



### We Listen

Two of the themes in today's readings are God's Commandments and God's wisdom. The First Reading and the Gospel remind us to choose to follow the Commandments. In the Second Reading, Saint Paul tells us God's wisdom has been given for our glory.

### We Believe

Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai. We call this the Mosaic Law. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. Jesus is the only one who could perfectly keep the Law (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 578). Jesus also gives us a new Law, the Law of Love.

### We Live As Disciples

Jesus' disciples sometimes have to make tough choices. We can choose to follow the Commandments and do good. Or we can choose to do something else. God's gift of free will allows us to make decisions on our own. God does not force us to do anything. Sometimes the choices between good and bad are hard to make. Talk with your family about a time when you had to make a tough choice.

### We Pray

In the OCIA, there are prayers called *minor exorcisms* that are petitions asking God for help. With your family, pray this part of a minor exorcism:

Lord Jesus Christ, when you climbed the mountain to preach, you turned your disciples from the paths of sin and revealed to them the beatitudes of your kingdom.

Help us to put into practice your commands of love. Amen.

*Based on Prayers of Exorcism 94D and 94C  
Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*