

Dec.

4. Conclude with these or similar words:

- Merciful God, you hear our prayers and know our needs. Look kindly upon the situations we bring before you. Send your spirit of judgment and perseverance upon the people who face these decisions. May they make these decisions according to the vision and values of Jesus. And may their decisions make them holy, healthy, and happy.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, our friend and savior. Amen.

Invite the students to take their index card home and continue praying for that situation.



## Concept D: Virtue and Character

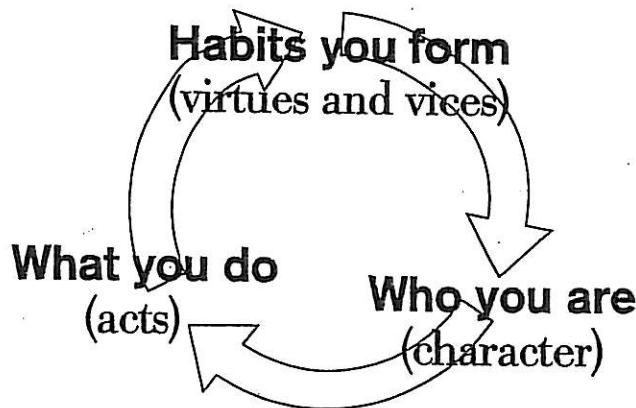


## Review Questions: Virtue and Character

Read

**Question.** What is character? What are virtues and vices? Diagram the character cycle and describe how it works.

**Answer.** Character is the kind of person you are, with all your good habits (virtues) and bad habits (vices). Your moral acts (such as joining classmates in ridiculing another) become a habit you form (in this case, a vice) which, in turn, shapes your character (you are becoming a mean person). The meanness in your character then makes it easier and easier to perform other mean actions. And the cycle continues. Virtues or vices are developed from repeated moral acts that become part of one's character and shape one's later actions.



**Question.** Name the theological virtues and the cardinal virtues.

**Answer.** Theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity; cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance



## Text Activity: Virtue and Character

### Activity 10

How would you answer this question: *What kind of person are you, and what kind of person do you want to become?*

## Additional Activities: Virtue and Character

### Self-Evaluation on Personal Maturity

This activity is intended to help the students evaluate their personal growth toward becoming a person who is morally mature, that is, a person who is holy, happy, and healthy—a person who embraces life fully.

Handout 12-B

1. Distribute handout 12-B, "A Maturity Checklist." Read the instructions with the students and encourage them to be as honest and objective as possible when filling out the checklist. Emphasize that no one in the class will see the results of their work; it will be inserted into their journal. This is to be a self-evaluation, not a reflection of what others think about them. Stress that they can gain much from the exercise if they take it seriously. While the students are completing the checklist, copy the list of qualities from the handout onto the chalkboard.

2. When the students have finished the checklist, ask them to identify the three qualities that they think present the greatest challenges to most teenagers. Invite them to approach the chalkboard and make a check mark beside those three qualities. Then tell them to choose one quality of their three original choices that they believe is the *most* difficult for teenagers to achieve, and to circle their check mark.

3. Invite the students to share any observations they have about the qualities that received the most checks, the most first choices, no checks, or any other interesting features of the exercise. Add your own observations and ask these questions:

- Why are some qualities more difficult to achieve than others?
- What stands in the way of achieving these qualities?

4. Close the activity with the following ideas, presented in your own words:

- The ultimate goal of personhood is to become fully alive—that means being holy, healthy, and happy. Jesus was a model of someone who was fully human and fully alive, and Jesus calls each of us to this kind of life of virtue.
- A person who is holy, healthy, and happy is morally mature. Morality has to do with the set of values and principles that guide an individual's choices about what kind of person she or he is becoming. These values and principles point to the meaning that life has for that individual.
- To be morally mature from a Christian perspective means always opting for goodness and for fullness of life. It means recognizing that no one is totally independent and that just about every decision a person makes affects other people—people who are near to us as well as people on the other side of the world—and, in fact, all of creation.

Note: An excellent preparation for your work with this activity would be to use the handout for a personal and prayerful evaluation of yourself. In addition, analyze each item and consider to what extent it is basic to maturity. You will then be much more comfortable with, and personally involved in, the topic before sharing it with your students.

*Read*

## Character Formation

This is a journal-writing activity to help the students reflect on how their character is being formed.

Instruct the students to copy into their journal the following quote by an anonymous author and its accompanying questions and tasks. Tell the students to do the tasks and write their reflections.

- Plant an act; reap a habit.  
Plant a habit; reap a virtue or a vice.  
Plant a virtue or a vice; reap a character.  
Plant a character; reap a destiny.
- What habits do you have that you consider to be virtues? vices? Make a list for each category and leave room to add other virtues and vices as you think of them.
- What habits would you like to develop? What "acts" do you need to do to begin forming these habits?
- Read a biography about someone whom you admire, or interview an adult whom you respect. Then, in your journal [or as a homework assignment], write about the acts, habits, virtues, and character of that person.

Reap



## Concept E: Our Final Destiny

You don't do it to earn heaven  
You ~~don't~~ do it to find Jesus



## Review Questions: Our Final Destiny

**Question.** What are the four last things? What is the Catholic understanding of them?

**Answer.** The four last things are death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Catholic belief is that every human being at death faces God as the person he or she has finally become. This facing God is called judgment (in this life we cannot understand what this facing God will be like). Catholic Tradition calls the experience of the eternal absence of God hell. Hell is not a place that God condemns a person to, but is a condition that the person has basically chosen as a consequence of his or her life choices. If the person chose during life to become open to God's love, and has drawn near to God, then at death that person will be united with God and enjoy perfect happiness eternally. This is heaven, and we cannot possibly imagine what it will be like.

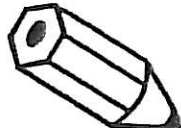
Read

**Question.** What is purgatory?

**Answer.** Catholic Tradition holds that some condition of purifying must happen for those who are turned toward God at death but are not yet ready for total union with God because of obstacles they carry from life. This purification is called purgatory. We do not know how this purifying takes place, but Catholic teaching holds that our prayers for those who have died can help those who at death were not yet ready for union with God.

# A MATURITY CHECKLIST

DO THIS!



Listed below are some of the qualities that a mature person will possess to some degree. None of us possess all these qualities fully, but together they represent a standard by which we can evaluate the person we are and the person we are becoming. Read each statement and put a check in the column that most accurately describes how well developed this quality is in you. Be honest. No one will see this sheet but you.

|   | Is a real strong point | Is doing pretty well | Is okay | Needs improvement | Needs a lot of work! |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. capacity to accept failure   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 2. balance between thoughts and feelings, so that neither controls me totally               |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 3. respect for the past, present, and future  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 4. ability to recognize the uniqueness in all people  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 5. sense of humor   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 6. compassion—the ability to identify with other's feelings                                 |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 7. love for children  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 8. appreciation of beauty   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 9. ability to meet others without suspicion   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 10. ability to recognize the splendor of the commonplace—acceptance of some routine in life |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 11. enthusiasm and excitement   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 12. ability to draw the best out of people  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |

A Maturity Checklist, *continued*

|   | Is a real strong point | Is doing pretty well | Is okay | Needs improvement | Needs a lot of work! |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 13. openness to mystery—realizing I don't know it all   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 14. acceptance of the need for authority  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 15. perseverance  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 16. ability to forgive others   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 17. belief that people are basically good at heart  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 18. capacity for worship—ability to sense the sacred part of life                                     |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 19. capacity for silence and solitude   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 20. ability to adapt to change  |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 21. commitment to physical well being   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 22. ability to recognize that my actions affect other people—those close to me and those I don't know |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 23. capacity for trusting and being trusted   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 24. acceptance of personal responsibility   |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |
| 25. desire to make a difference in the community and in the world                                     |                        |                      |         |                   |                      |