

## PART THREE: MORAL PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES

<b>Syllabus Objectives</b>	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term ‘morality’</li><li>• be familiar with the ethical dimensions of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and the incorporation of these into the moral teachings of the Christian traditions</li><li>• have a knowledge of a variety of moral theories and the implications of their application.</li></ul> <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recognise that personal moral development is an integral part of growth towards adulthood, and that the development of conscience is an important element of this</li><li>• have an understanding that moral maturity calls for ongoing individual and community dialogue.</li></ul> <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• compare and contrast some traditional moral theories and their application in the modern world</li><li>• engage in the process of conscience development</li><li>• identify and evaluate the values proposed by the variety of sources and traditions encountered</li></ul> <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an appreciation of the seriousness of the task of moral decision making for the adult in society</li><li>• an awareness of and openness to the moral dimension of the issues of the day.</li></ul>
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### Topic: 3.1 Morality in a pluralist society

#### Procedure

*Description of content:*

- *examples and sources of moral conflict and debate*
- *fundamentalism and relativism as opposites.*

Present students with the following statement:

*Pluralism holds that there are many different views or schools of thought within society and that all groups have a right to carry out their cultural and religious practices*

or Brainstorm: What is a pluralist society?

Take feedback and if necessary explain that this describes a society in which many different beliefs and practices exist.

Discuss: How could there be moral conflict in a pluralist society? Give examples.

Take feedback and explain that this can lead to moral conflict, when the values of one group clash with the values of another. e.g.

- ! Pro-life and pro-choice groups in the abortion debate
- ! Pro- and anti-hunting groups
- ! Etc.

Discuss: What is the source of conflict in the example you have given?

Take feedback and conclude referring to the source of conflict in each case

e.g. abortion debate

- pro-life groups believe that the unborn human being must be protected from harm
- pro-choice groups believe that it is up to a woman to decide whether or not she wants to have a child.

e.g. pro / anti-hunting debate

- anti-hunting groups believe that hunting is cruel and unnecessary and that the life of all animals is valuable
- pro-hunting groups believe that some animals (foxes etc.) are pests and should be hunted, or that hunting is a source of social enjoyment for rural communities, and therefore valuable.

Brainstorm: What is fundamentalism? Give examples or read Student Work: Genesis on Trial Section J Part “2 Topic 2.4 or view extracts from the film “Inherit the Wind”.

What is relativism? Give examples.

Take feedback and if necessary present students with the following statement:



4	(from the Greek telos meaning 'end') This maintains that moral judgements are based entirely on the effects produced by an action. An action is considered right or wrong in relation to its consequences.
5	This maintains the rightness of an action does not depend solely on its consequences since there may be certain features of the act itself that determine whether it is right or wrong e.g. the nature of the act itself, motive etc.
6	This maintains that the most important thing is to live in right relationship with the world around us, with ourselves and with God. Anything that would damage these relationships is seen as wrong.
7	This maintains that human beings, using their capacity to reason, can reflect upon human experience and human nature in order to see what is good, even without divine revelation.

Take feedback and if necessary correct answers as follows: 1= hedonism; 2 = utilitarianism; 3 = virtue ethics; 4 = teleological ethics; 5 = deontological ethics; 6 = right relationship; 7 = natural law.

Or Case Study: Read Handout: *Socrates in Prison* (Adapted from M. Palmer – Moral Problems)

Assignment: Make a list of the arguments employed by Socrates and Crito.  
To what extent are they teleological, deontological or a mixture of both?

Or Who Am I? - Role-Play:

Pick one of the issues mentioned earlier i.e. the abortion debate, the hunting debate etc.

Ask students to imagine they are taking part in a talk show and have been asked to represent the views of one of the above moral theories on the issue.

Students are instructed to-

- Pick one of the above and write it on the top of a page that can be folded over.
- Without using this word prepare a paragraph outlining what they think someone with this view would say on the morality of the issue.

Select a number of students to form a fish-bowl group for the talk show discussion on the issue. The rest of the students observe this group and at the end of the discussion identify who was representing which moral theory. The participants in the role-play then reveal the moral theory they were trying to represent.

The whole class then discuss the accuracy or inaccuracy of the way the chosen moral theories were represented in the role-play.

*Outcomes:*

- state as a question or as a statement in three of the following, the basic guiding principle when making moral choices:
  - deontological ethics
  - modern perspectives on natural law
  - right relationship
  - virtue ethics
  - teleological ethics
  - utilitarianism
  - hedonism
- \*write a brief description of each of these three moral philosophies/theories.