PART FOUR: **MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

Syllabus Objectives	*Knowledge* • be familiar with the variety of meanings of the term 'morality' • 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 • have a knowledge of a variety of moral theories and the implications of their application *Understanding* • be aware that a religious perspective on morality emerges from the tradition and beliefs of each religious tradition • understand that sin - moral failure from the perspective of the Christian tradition - has personal, social, and structural implications • 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 • have an understanding that moral maturity calls for ongoing individual and community dialogue *Skills* • compare and contrast some traditional moral theories and their application in the modern world • engage in the process of conscience development • identify and assess the values proposed by the variety of sources and traditions encountered *Attitudes* • appreciation of the seriousness of the task of moral decision making for the adult in society • ability to dialogue constructively with legal and religious traditions • awareness of the religious perspectives on morality, in particular the Christian perspective and its influence on Irish society in the past and at the present time • awareness of and openness to the moral dimension of the issues of the day

Topic: 4.1 Towards moral maturity

Procedure

Description of content: • *growing in morality from childhood to adulthood*
• sources of moral principles: family, peers, culture, media, religion
spirituality etc.
• the issue of freedom
• the meaning of virtue
• from principles to action: personal moral responsibility.

Review course content covered in relation to moral development i.e.
* Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section F Part 3

Discuss: How do young children decide what is right or wrong?
                Does this change, as children get older?

Review an overview of moral theorists e.g. Lawrence Kohlberg

Discuss: What id meant by "moral freedom"?
                What id meant by "virtue"?

Review the characteristics of a morally mature person.

Written Assignment:
1. Trace the moral development of a person using the work of one theorist that you have studied. In your answer, refer to the different stages in a person's moral development.
2. a. List four influences on a person's moral development.
   b. With regard to each of those you picked, state how they might influence the making of a moral decision.

Outcomes:
* name a moral theorist and give an account of the stages in personal moral development presented in his/her theories

- state the key sources of moral principles and explain how they can impact on moral decision making
- describe what is meant by "moral freedom"
- give two examples of virtue and show how these can be applied in a contemporary setting
- describe the characteristics of a morally mature person.

Topic: 4.2 Conscience
Procedure

Description of content: • *what is conscience?*   • *how is conscience developed?*   • *what is an informed conscience?*   • *the role of religion in the informing of conscience*   • *the absence of conscience*   • *conscience in action*   – *the relationship between conscience and religious authority*   – *the relationship between conscience and the civil authority.*

Brainstorm: What is conscience?
Take feedback and note students' suggestions on the chalkboard.
Present students with the statement:

> *Conscience is about what I feel is right or wrong*

Discuss: Is there anything inadequate about this description of conscience?
Take feedback and explain that it does not take into account the idea that -
- o there is an objective right / wrong
- o conscience needs to be informed
- o religious traditions can contribute to the moral decision making of an individual
- o conscience can be mistaken if it is not properly informed, or is based excessively on feelings

Present an issue that involves a moral dilemma e.g.
- View an extract from a film / play on the issue – Capital Punishment in "Dead Man Walking"; Conscience in "A Man for All Seasons" etc.
- Follow a debate on a moral issue in the newspapers – Stem Cell Research in Sample Lesson Plan Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section J Part 4

Discuss:
- What would a person who is morally immature consider the right thing to do in this situation?
- What would a person who relied on feelings alone consider the right thing to do in this situation?
- What would a person whose conscience was inadequately informed consider the right thing to do in this situation?

Written Assignment: Write about an ethical issue of your choice under the following headings
            a. conscience   b. civil law   c. religious authority

Outcomes:
- give two different descriptions of conscience
- describe the development of conscience
- define "informed conscience" and identify the ways in which people inform their conscience and evaluate the necessity of informing conscience
- explain the role religion can play in informing conscience
- explain the differences between amoral, immoral and moral immaturity
- taking an issue from the contemporary context illustrate the difference that may exist between the demands of conscience, religious authority, and civil authority

Topic: **4.3 Decision-making in Action * (Higher Level only)**
Procedure

Description of content:
• the process of moral decision-making OL students choose ONE example. HL students choose TWO examples. Examples can be chosen from:
> *– political and economic questions*
> *– the moral dimension of relationships and sexuality*
> *– issues of medical ethics*
> *– violence*
> *– crime and punishment*
• moral choices and analysis of their possible outcomes
• the dialogue between religious traditions, civil law, and personal conscience in these examples
*• *application of the variety of moral theories in 3.2 to the two examples chosen. (Higher Level only)*

Review identifying stages in moral decision-making e.g.
- Identify the issue / action involved
- Consider the intention, reason or motivation for making the decision, and the rightness/wrongness of this intention, reason or motivation.
- Reflect on the moral values (including those which have religious sources) that are important to the person, and how these values can inform the decision
- Inform conscience from various sources of authority
- Reflection on the sort of person (s)he wants to be, and how this might inform the decision (e.g. an honest, compassionate person, and not a dishonest, self-centred person);
- Consideration of the consequences of the decision for the person and others (this might include the consequences for the person's character, as well as more concrete consequences)

Written Assignment: 'A good decision should involve……..'
How would you finish this statement and what would you go on to say. Write a speech on the process of moral decision making that a morally mature person would follow. You may use a current moral issue that you have studied to illustrate your answer. At the end of your speech, write one sentence in which you define what, in your understanding, characterises a morally mature person.

Outcomes:
- suggest a process a morally mature person would follow when making a serious moral decision
- taking one/two examples from
  > – political and economic questions
  > – the moral dimensions of relationships and sexuality
  > – issues of medical ethics
  > – violence and war
  > – crime and punishment
- apply the decision-making process
- *outline the position of two religious traditions on this issue
- outline the civil law on this issue
- list the conscientious considerations that may influence a person's decision
- show the different possible outcomes a morally mature person may arrive at
- explain the reasons for these differences
- *taking three of the moral theories in 3.2, apply each of the three to one of the examples above, showing the various outcomes that may be determined by each of these theories.