

Freedom and Responsibility

Preparation for the Session

This session has parts that will take place at different times. You will gather with your child for Part 1: Invite. Your child will then work independently on Part 2: Discover, and you will read that section of the chapter on your own as well. Finally, you will come together again later in the week for Part 3 to review and complete the In Summary & Live section.

In this chapter, your child will cover the following objectives:

- Discuss the interrelationship of the soul, intellect, and conscience in following the moral law
- Contrast mortal and venial sin and their effect on the sinner's relationship with God
- List and explain the elements that determine the morality of an action
- Explain how the circumstances of an action can increase or decrease its moral goodness
- Relate the formation of a good conscience to the need to learn and practice new skills
- Explore the steps needed to make a good moral decision

Parents, Consider This: *Have you ever said to your son or daughter, "Did you think before you did that?" It can be very frustrating how often children speak or act without thinking through the consequences of their actions. Younger adolescents are still prone to making impulsive decisions, particularly when pressured by peers. The language you use in helping your son/daughter to think through the various consequences of his/her actions should always be framed inside the "language of faith." Talking about our choices and their consequences as a response to our relationship with Jesus will help your child connect his/her faith to everyday life.*

Children at This Age: *When it comes to moral decision making, your child has many competing voices in her/his life. Often, popular culture gives one message (especially through television, music, movies, and video games), while you and the Church may be presenting quite another. It's important for your daughter/son to understand that only God knows what is best for her/him, because God made her/him. Research has shown that when making decisions about risky behaviors, it will help your child to think about her/his bigger life goals and how a particular decision might make that goal closer or make the goal less possible. Discuss with your child the importance of making decisions based upon being and living as a disciple of Christ.*

PART 1: Invite

Turn to Page 211,
Freedom and Responsibility

Make sure you have a Bible, writing tools for both of you, and some paper.

Find a quiet place to be with your child. This is a sacred time—a time when you will be present to each other and to the Lord. You may want to light a candle as you begin.



Let Us Pray Together make the Sign of the Cross. Have your child take the role of leader and read aloud the prayer. Both of you respond with the part marked “All.”

Say: Because of free will, we have the ability to choose to follow God’s will or to act against it. Listen for God’s voice to speak to you today about the responsibility that comes with the freedom to choose.



Guide your child through the Preparing for God’s Word ritual you learned in the Introduction Session.

- Proclaim the Scripture in the Parchment Paper box on the page.
- Maintain several moments of silence.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?

Invite your child to respond and also share what you heard.

Say: God the Father gave us the gift of free will, and with that comes the great responsibility to live a moral life by following Jesus’ teaching and actions.

Now, look at the *Have you ever thought...* box.

Invite your child to respond to the questions found in the box in the Student Book, also listed here:

- Why did God create us with the freedom to choose? (*so that we could be free to choose to respond to him, because love is a decision*)
- How are freedom and responsibility connected? (*If we are free, then we have to own the consequences of our choices.*)

Ask what else your son/daughter might wonder about God’s Word and what it means to us today.

Turn to Page 212,
Getting Started

Read the first paragraph.

Ask your child to give you a definition of *freedom*. Write it in the chart. (*Note: These directions are different from the ones in the book.*) Do the same for *responsibility*. Listen carefully to your child as his/her answers will tell you much about how he/she perceives these important parts of his/her own character.

Preview the Catholic Faith Words at the top of the page. Ask your child what she/he thinks the words mean. The definitions can be found in the glossary at the end of the Student Book.

Turn to Page 213

Direct your child to complete the two parts of the activity. Recall something like this that may have happened when you were your child's age, and write about it on a separate sheet of paper. When you are both finished, share your situations with each other. Remember to emphasize that doing what is God's will is the best answer for your child's own happiness now and his/her eternal goal of Heaven.

PART 2: Discover

Direct your child to independently complete pages 214–219. Have him/her highlight the main sentence in each paragraph while reading through the text. This includes completing all on-page activities. Ask your child to write any questions he/she might have about a Catholic Faith Word in the margins of the text. You can review these when you gather again to complete the session.

Be sure to read these pages as well. Doing so will give you insight into chapter topics and will help you engage your child in later discussions.

PART 3: In Summary & Live

Turn to Page 219,
In Summary

When you return, review the “In Summary/Catholics Believe” section. Read aloud the bullet points.

Ask: Are these beliefs only for Catholics? Do you think other people follow them, too? Do you think all Catholics follow them?

Discuss your child's responses.

Turn to Page 220

Direct your daughter/son to silently read Our Catholic Life.

Parents, Consider This: *“Repeating the same actions and expecting a different result is the definition of insanity,” says Albert Einstein. While we may agree wholeheartedly, most of us generally fail to apply this concept to our spiritual lives. A daily examination of conscience helps us to identify where we are repeating the same harmful actions, the actions that do damage to our relationship with God and others, our sins. Talk with your child after he/she reads the Our Catholic Life section about the importance of this practice and consider recommitting yourself to making this a daily practice in your own life.*

Read the story of Blessed Aloysius. Discuss his understanding of the need to speak for the freedom of others.

Point out the Practice activity. Discuss the four resources for developing your conscience when facing a moral dilemma. Cut out or copy this section and hang it in your child’s room or on the refrigerator as a reminder to your whole family about the responsibility of making good choices.

Conclude the session by praying the Hail, Holy Queen on Page 384.



To access and send an eAssessment to your child, go to the Student & Family section of aliveinchrist.osv.com.