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# Navigating Virtue and Vice: The Essence of Moral Action



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# Ice Breaker - Ethical Dilemmas



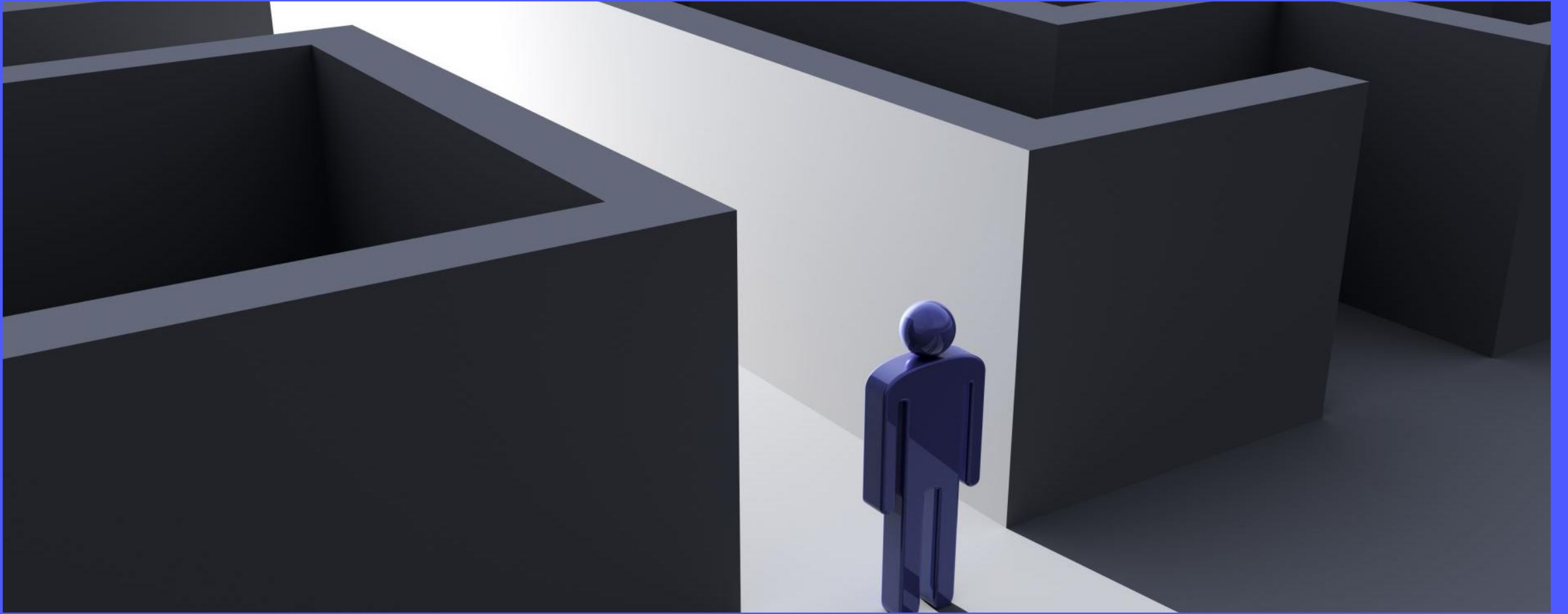
MORAL DILEMMAS IN  
SMALL GROUPS



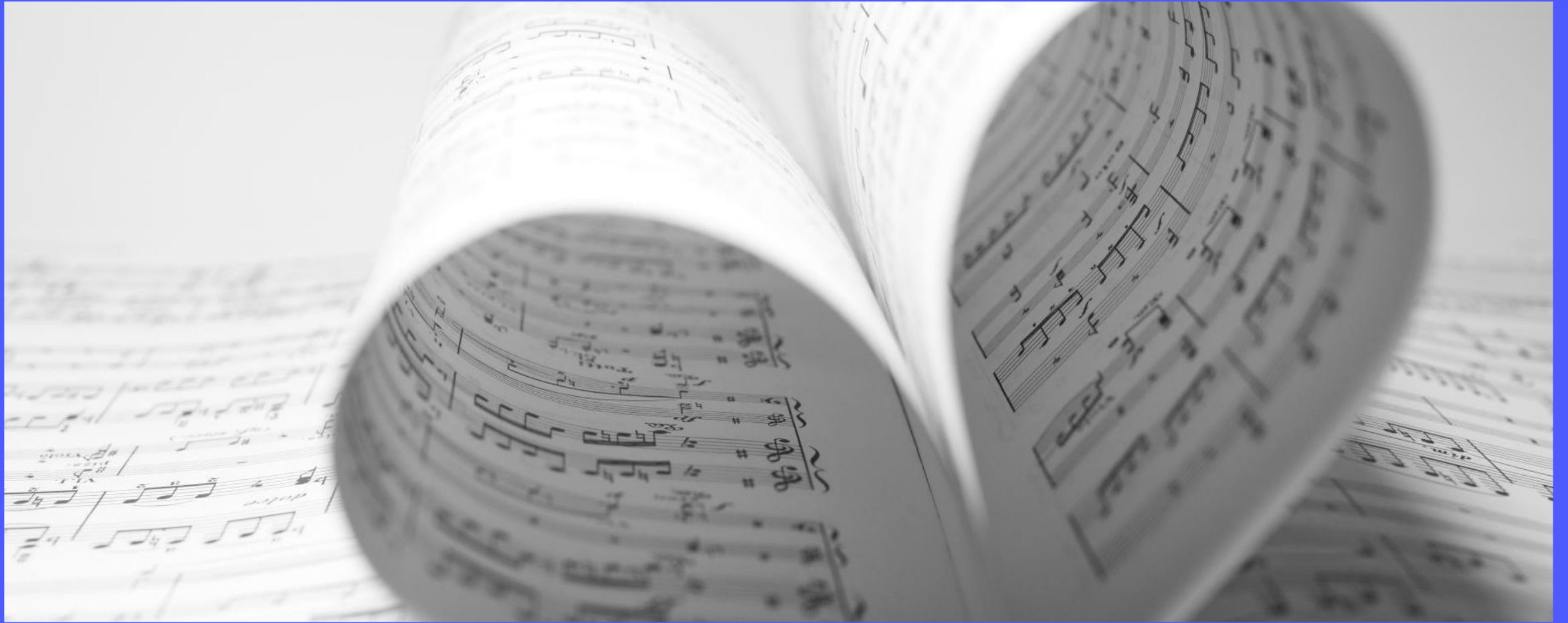
5 MINUTES TO  
DISCUSS



5 MINUTES TO SHARE  
YOUR THOUGHTS



**Ethical Dilemmas**



**Virtue**

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# Virtue – what is it?

habitual and firm disposition to do what is good

not merely an action

a stable quality that becomes central to a person's character and behaviour

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## **Virtue – goal**

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ultimate aim is to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5, 28)

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reflecting his goodness

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reflecting his holiness in daily actions

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# Virtue – types

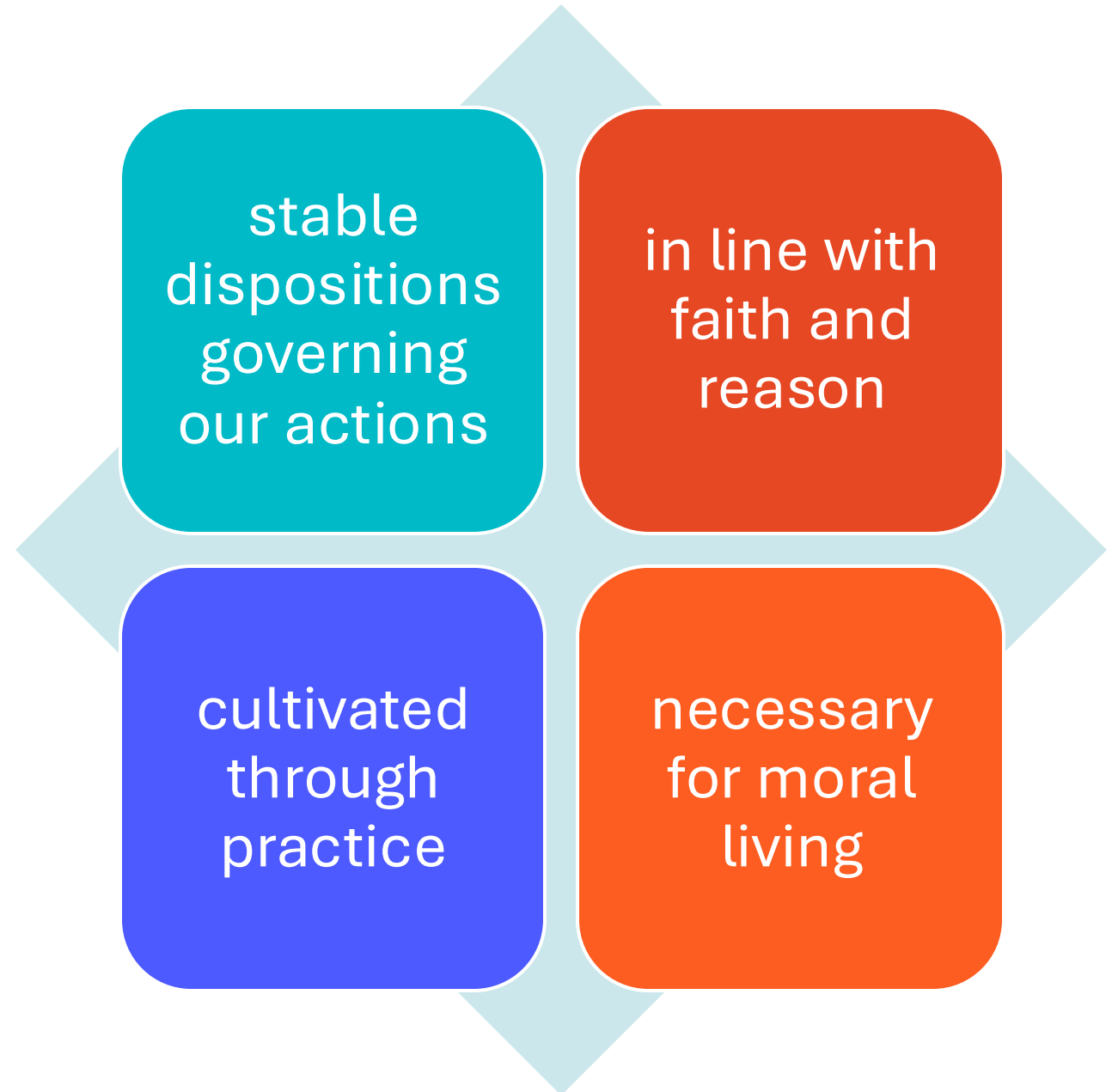
**human  
virtues**

**theological  
virtues**

**cardinal  
virtues**

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# Virtue – human virtues



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**Virtue –  
theological  
virtues**

given to us by God

instilled in the  
soul of the faithful

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# Virtue – theological virtues

01

Faith – belief  
in God and  
accepting his  
revelation

02

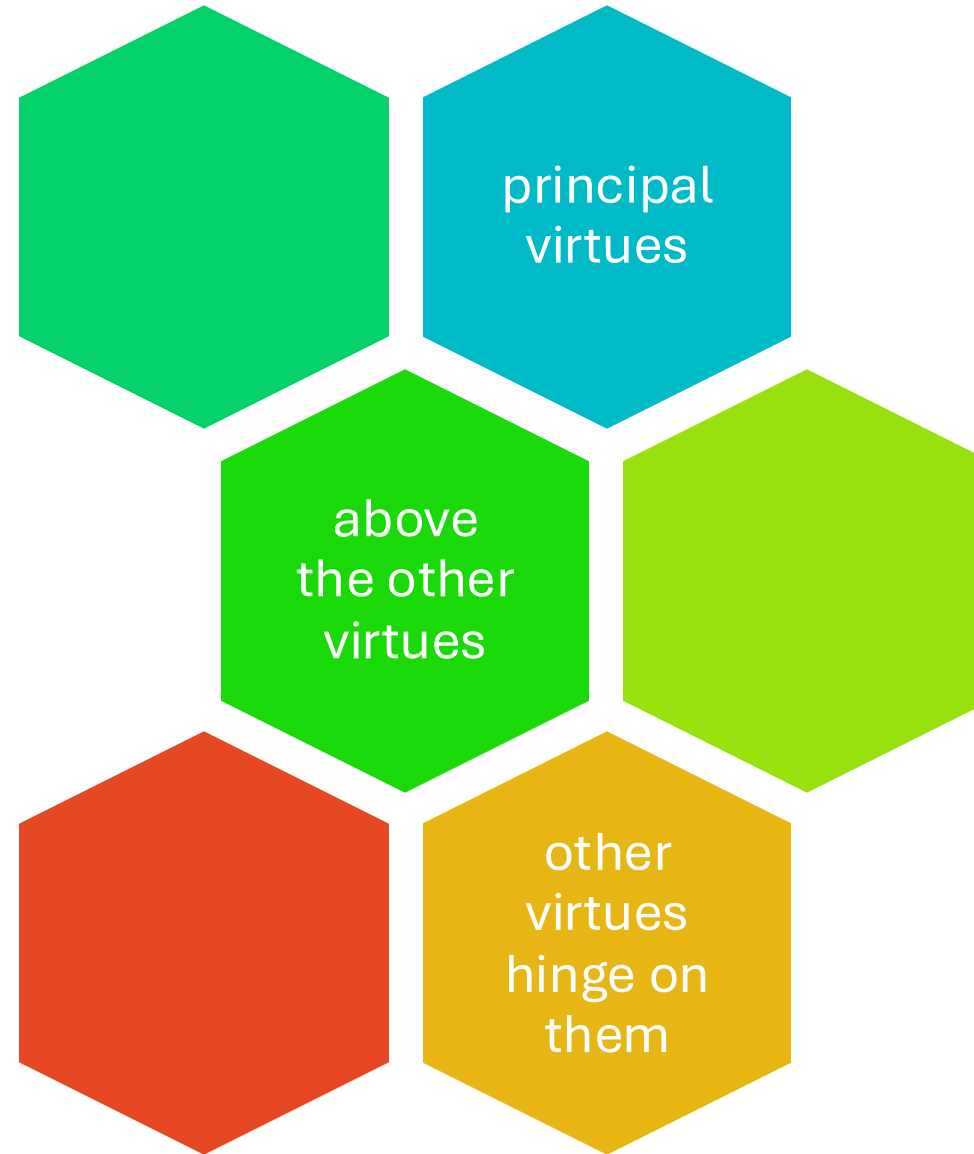
Hope – trust in  
God's  
promises

03

Charity –  
loving God and  
others – the  
greatest virtue

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# Virtue – cardinal virtues



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# Virtue – cardinal virtues

essential for a  
virtuous life

praised in  
scriptures

foundational to  
a moral living

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# Virtue – cardinal virtues



guide our interaction with others



the foundation of our relationship with God

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# Virtue – cardinal virtues

**prudence** – ability to judge correctly and choose the best option

**justice** – giving everyone what is his/her due; ensuring fairness

**fortitude** – courage in facing difficulties; standing firm in convictions

**temperance** – moderation in everything, particularly desires and pleasures

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## Virtue – role in life



guide our conduct



bring together reason and faith – ensure our actions are aligned with God's will and purpose



shape our moral character

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## **Virtue – cultivation**

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through practice and  
conscious choices

---

forming good habits and  
persevering in them

---

God's grace also plays a  
very important role

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# Virtue – challenges

sin

vice

cultural  
influences –  
promoting values  
contrary to virtues

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# Vice



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# Vice – what is it?

the opposite  
of virtue

can become  
deep-seeded

may be very  
difficult to  
eradicate

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# Vice – what is it?

the habitual and firm disposition to do what is evil or wrong

it is a deeply ingrained tendency to choose what is wrong over what is right

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# Vice – capital vices

roots of other sins

hence “capital”

understanding them helps students  
to see the underlying causes of their  
actions

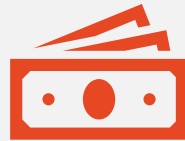
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# Vice – capital vices



**pride** – excessive belief in one’s own abilities; leaving no space for God’s grace



**avarice** (greed) – excessive desire for wealth and material possessions



**envy** – sadness at another’s good fortune; a desire to have it for oneself

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# Vice – capital vices



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# Vice - development

through repeated sinful  
actions which  
strengthen vice and  
weaken virtues

weakening of  
conscience making it  
harder to see difference  
between good and evil

need to control them as  
soon as one is aware of  
them

# Vice - effects

1

**spiritual** – relationship with God is weakened; losing grace

2

**personal** – lead to unhappiness, anxiety and lack of satisfaction; prevent us from becoming better


3

**social** – bring about injustices, inequality and a breakdown of the community

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# Vice – teaching strategies

age-appropriate language – avoid being over technical or abstract



use real-life examples – help students understand the practical implications of vice and how it effects their lives

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# Vice – teaching strategies

use positive reinforcement – focus on virtues and of benefits of living a virtuous life



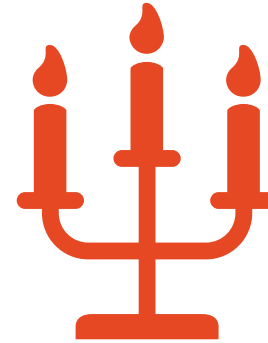
use empathy and compassion – approach topic from their point of view; create a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable discussing their struggles

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# Helping Students to Overcome Vice



**awareness** – encourage students to be aware of encroachment; examine themselves regularly; identify areas where vice may be taking over



through **prayer** and the **sacraments** – provide us with grace to resist temptation

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# Helping Students to Overcome Vice



- **cultivate virtue** – best way to overcome vice is to cultivate virtue; cultivate humility to overcome pride
- **accountability** – seeking accountability from trusted adults;
- **seek direction** - talking to someone about struggles helps one stay on track

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# The Moral Action

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# The Moral Action - components

what makes an  
action good or bad?

which components  
are necessary?

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# The Moral Action - components

3 fundamental  
components:

the **object** -  
the action itself

the **intention** -  
the aim/end

the  
**circumstances**

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# The Moral Action - components

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the Object

---

the specific action being performed  
must be good or morally neutral

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actions that are intrinsically evil, that  
is, always wrong regardless of  
intention and circumstance

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# The Moral Action - components

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the Intention

---

the purpose or motive for which an action is performed

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a good intention can diminish the guilt of a bad action, but cannot make it good

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an evil intention can make a good action bad

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# The Moral Action - components

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the Circumstances

---

when, where and how

---

can increase or decrease the moral  
goodness or evil of an action

---

cannot change the fundamental nature of  
the act

---

increase and decrease the person's  
responsibility

---

# The Moral Action - components

for a morally good action  
all three components  
must be good

if one is evil/bad, then all  
the action is morally bad  
to some degree

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## A Morally Good Action

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object/act is good in  
itself

---

**AND**

intention – motive is  
morally good

---

**AND**

surrounded by good  
circumstances

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# A Morally Bad Action

object/act is bad in itself

OR

intention – motive is morally evil

OR

surrounded by bad circumstances which increase evil of the act

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# Role of Conscience



ESSENTIAL TO MAKE MORALLY  
GOOD JUDGEMENTS AND ACTS



MUST BE WELL-FORMED FOR  
MORAL DECISION MAKING

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# Case Studies in Groups

*Vignettes for Discussion*

25 minutes in groups

5 minutes to present how you felt

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# Case studies in groups

*Start wrapping up!*

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# Case studies in groups

*How did you feel?*



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# Reflection and Action Planning



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# Reflection and Action Planning

anonymous

sheets will be collected

take photo to remember what  
you wrote

5 minutes

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**3-2-1**

**Summarizer**

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**Write down:**

- 3 facts that you learned
- 2 questions you would like to ask
- 1 personal connection with what you already know