The Dignity of the Human Person

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part III, Section 1, Chapter 1

The Big Question: *What does it mean to be human, and how do we live accordingly?*

We are made in God's image → called to beatitude → equipped with freedom, conscience, and virtue → yet wounded by sin

The Beatitudes: The Path to True Happiness

Matthew 5:3-12 — Jesus reveals what authentic human flourishing looks like:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit
2. Blessed are those who mourn
3. Blessed are the meek
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

1. Blessed are the merciful
2. Blessed are the pure in heart
3. Blessed are the peacemakers
4. Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness

What Makes an Action Good or Bad?

The Church teaches that every human act has three components. All three must be good for the act to be morally good (CCC 1750-1761):

Component	Question	Example
Object (The What)	What action is being done?	Sharing a toy with a sibling
Intention (The Why)	Why is the person doing it?	To show love vs. to get praise from parents
Circumstances (The How/When/Where)	What factors affect the action?	Freely vs. only when forced by a parent

Forming Conscience

Conscience is the interior voice that calls us toward good and away from evil (CCC 1776-1782). It must be formed—it's not automatically correct.

Sources for Forming Conscience:

- **Sacred Scripture** — God's Word reveals His will
- **Church Teaching** — The Magisterium guides us in truth
- **Prayer** — Listening for the Holy Spirit's guidance
- **Wise Counsel** — Seeking advice from faithful people

The Virtues: Habits That Help Us Do Good

Cardinal Virtues (Acquired through practice)	Theological Virtues (Gifts from God)
Prudence — Knowing the right thing to do	**Faith** — Believing in God and His revelation
Justice — Giving others what they're owed	**Hope** — Trusting in God's promises
Fortitude — Courage to do what's right	**Charity** — Loving God and neighbor
Temperance — Self-control and balance	

Family Examination of Conscience

Use these questions for family reflection, adapting language for your children's ages:

Love of God

- Did I make time for God today in prayer?
- Did I participate at Mass with attention and reverence?
- Did I use God's name respectfully?
- Did I put other things (screens, activities, possessions) before God?

Love of Family

- Did I honor and obey my parents/respect my children?
- Was I patient and kind with my siblings/spouse/children?
- Did I help with chores and responsibilities cheerfully?
- Did I share with others or was I selfish?

Love of Neighbor

- Was I kind to classmates, coworkers, and friends?
- Did I tell the truth or did I lie?
- Did I say hurtful things about others or gossip?
- Did I take anything that wasn't mine?
- Did I forgive those who hurt me?

Care of Self

- Did I take care of my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- Did I practice self-control with food, screens, or other pleasures?
- Was I grateful for my blessings or did I complain?

Questions for Reflection

1. Our culture offers many definitions of happiness. How do the Beatitudes challenge or confirm what you teach your children about what makes a good life?
2. How do you help your children develop their conscience at home? What challenges do you face?
3. Which virtues does your family practice well? Which need more attention?

Key Catechism References

- **CCC 1700-1709:** Man: The Image of God
- **CCC 1716-1729:** Our Vocation to Beatitude
- **CCC 1730-1748:** Freedom and Responsibility
- **CCC 1749-1761:** The Morality of Human Acts
- **CCC 1776-1802:** Moral Conscience
- **CCC 1803-1845:** The Virtues
- **CCC 1846-1876:** Sin

Remember: You are the primary teachers of your children in the faith.
The parish supports the beautiful work you're already doing at home.