

God's Salvation: Law and Grace

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part III, Section 1, Chapter 3

Parent Handout for Sacramental Preparation

The Big Question: *How does God help us live a good life?*

The moral law shows the path → we cannot follow it alone → grace makes holiness possible → the Church guides us

The Moral Law

God's fatherly instruction showing us the path to happiness and holiness (CCC 1949-1974):

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| Natural Law | Written on every human heart. Basic moral truths that all people can know through reason (e.g., "do good, avoid evil"). |
| Old Law | The Ten Commandments. External commands that prepared God's people for the coming of Christ. |
| New Law | The Law of the Gospel. The grace of the Holy Spirit working through faith and love. Interior transformation, not just external compliance. |

Grace: God's Gift That Makes Holiness Possible

Key Insight: *We don't earn God's love by being good. We receive God's love, and that love transforms us to be good.*

Types of Grace (CCC 1996-2005)

| Sanctifying Grace | Actual Grace | Sacramental Grace |
|---|--|---|
| The permanent gift that makes us holy, received at Baptism. Makes us children of God. | God's help in specific moments to do good and avoid evil. Given as needed throughout life. | Special help given through each sacrament, fitting us for that sacrament's purpose. |

Justification: Made Right with God (CCC 1987-1995)

- **Forgiveness:** Our sins are washed away
- **Transformation:** We are made inwardly holy, not just declared righteous
- **Adoption:** We become children of God, able to call Him Father
- **Ongoing:** Justification grows as we cooperate with grace throughout life

The Church, Mother and Teacher

The Church guides us in living the moral life (CCC 2030-2051):

- The Church has authority from Christ to teach on faith and morals
- The Magisterium helps us apply moral principles to new situations
- The precepts of the Church provide minimum structure for spiritual growth

The Precepts of the Church

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
2. Confess sins at least once a year
3. Receive the Eucharist at least during the Easter season
4. Observe days of fasting and abstinence
5. Provide for the material needs of the Church

These are the minimum — the floor, not the ceiling — for a life of growing holiness.

Living by Grace at Home

Practical ways to help your family access and grow in grace:

- **Regular family prayer** — opens us to receive actual grace
- **Frequent sacraments** — especially Reconciliation and Eucharist
- **Teach reliance on God** — “Let’s ask God to help us be patient”
- **Celebrate growth** — notice and praise progress in virtue
- **Model dependence** — let children see you turn to God when you struggle

Questions for Reflection

1. How do you balance teaching your children rules with helping them develop an interior desire to do good?
2. How do you help your children understand that God’s love isn’t something they earn by good behavior?
3. What role do the sacraments play in your family’s spiritual life?

Key Catechism References

- **CCC 1949-1986:** The Moral Law
- **CCC 1987-2029:** Grace and Justification
- **CCC 2030-2051:** The Church, Mother and Teacher

*Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us
to respond to His call and to live as His children.
— Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1996*