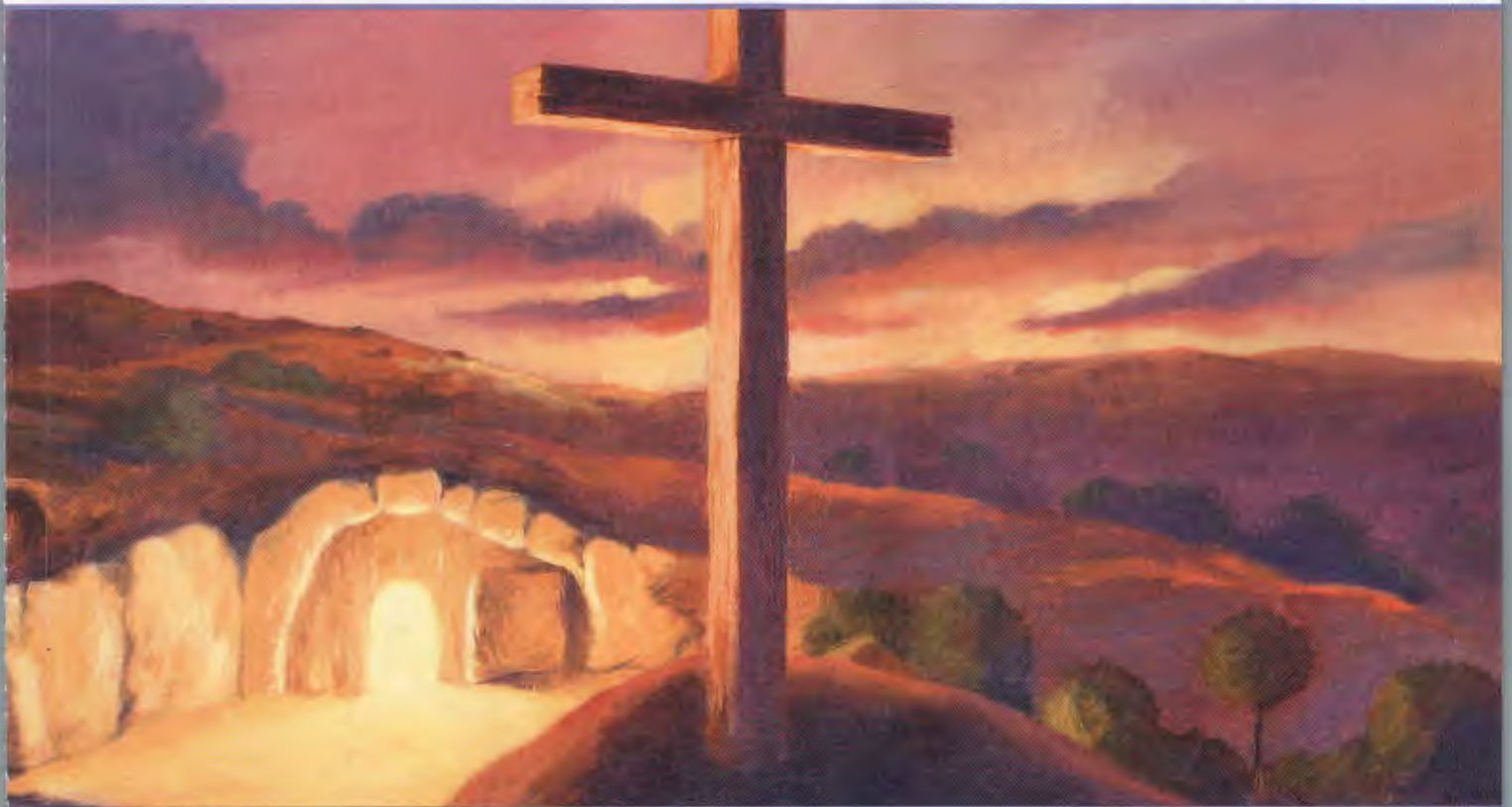


ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 7

Jesus Christ and the New Testament

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Our Sunday Visitor

Being Virtuous

Let Us Pray

Leader: Holy God, you are the source of all faith, hope, and love. These are three gifts you give us so that we can be happy and holy. May your Spirit be our strength and our guide as we strive to love you completely in all we do and say.

“The LORD is just and loves just deeds;
the upright will see his face.” **Psalm 11:7**

All: Lord, we belong to you.

Scripture

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.”

Colossians 3:12–15

Have you ever thought...

- How do we “put on love”?
- How can the virtues help us become the people God created us to be?



Getting Started




In this chapter, you will study and identify virtues and understand the importance of becoming the person God has created you to be, by living the virtues in your daily life.

Catholic Faith Words

- virtue
- Theological Virtues
- Cardinal Virtues

In the space next to each symbol, explain why that symbol is used to represent that virtue. In the second chart, share something you know about each of the Cardinal Virtues.



The Theological Virtues		
Virtue	Symbol	Explanation
Faith		_____ _____
Hope		_____ _____
Charity		_____ _____

The Cardinal Virtues	
Virtue	Description
Prudence	_____ _____
Justice	_____ _____
Temperance	_____ _____
Fortitude	_____ _____

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Good and Holy

How do you grow to be the person God made you to be?

The freedom God gives us is meant to be used for doing good. Living a good life requires practice and self-discipline. The truth is, it's not always easy.

Our Truest and Best Selves

God shares his love completely with you. Your response should be just as strong and focused. By responding to his love, you can discover and strengthen your truest, best self.

Many things contribute to who you are and who you can become, such as your individual talents, gifts, and uniqueness;

the way you typically relate to others; and how you learn from life experiences and from others.

These things together can be a powerful force to reach your ultimate goal: to be good and holy, to be loving and welcoming, to become more like God, and to one day be with him forever.

But what does being good and holy look like? Saint Paul tells us that we are to help one another strive for those things that are most worthwhile in life.

Scripture

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Philippians 4:8

Go to the Source

Read *Philippians 4:13* and think about the ways God gives you the strength that you need, just as he gave it to Paul.

- **If Saint Paul were writing to you and your friends, how do you think he might word his message differently?**

Helping Habits

Saint Paul's list is pretty challenging. In specific situations, it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly what is true, honorable, and just. All kinds of positive and negative pressures and assumptions can be at play. Some situations require us to really think through how the final outcome will impact everyone.

The virtues help us do this. A **virtue** is a good spiritual habit that strengthens you and enables you to do what is right and good. Virtues develop over time with our practice and openness to God's grace. Virtues guide our conduct and emotions. Faith, hope, and charity (love) are the **Theological Virtues**. They are gifts from God that help us believe in him, trust in his plan for us, and love him as he loves us. We have to respond to God's gift and live out the virtues for them to be strong in our lives.

- **Faith** means believing in God and all that he has revealed to us and believing in all that the Church proposes for our belief.
- **Hope** is a desire, strengthened by trust in Jesus' promises, to do God's will, and achieve eternal life and the graces to make this desire come true.
- **Charity** means we love God above all else, and our neighbors as ourselves.

The Theological Virtues make the human, or moral, virtues possible. These virtues guide the way we act and feel. They help us live according to our conscience, control our passions, and deal with how we respect others and ourselves in light of our faith.

Moral virtues don't automatically appear within us. They grow when we learn about them and are intentional about practicing them, even in the face of struggles. God's grace helps us cultivate virtue. In this way, the virtues that we are growing get strong inside us.

Catholic Faith Words

virtue a good spiritual habit that strengthens you and enables you to do what is right and good

Theological Virtues gifts from God that help us believe in him, trust in his plan for us, and love him as he loves us; they are faith, hope, and charity

DEFINE AND DESCRIBE

Imagine you are writing a dictionary entry for the term virtuous. Write your entry here.

virtuous (adj.)

Now describe how a virtuous person would act. A virtuous person...



Moral Virtues

What are the Cardinal Virtues?

If someone asked you what the word *cardinal* meant, how would you answer? You might say it's a bird, or a name for a bishop in the Church, or maybe even a shade of red.

The Church uses *cardinal* to describe the four most important moral virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. They are called the **Cardinal Virtues**. All the other moral virtues can be grouped under them. The word *cardinal* comes from the Latin *cardo*, which means “hinge,” or “that which something turns on, its principal point.” So other moral virtues—such as patience, piety, gratitude, abstinence, and truth—flow from one of the four Cardinal Virtues.

We develop the moral virtues by responding to God's help in our lives and through our own efforts. As we learn more about life and how we should respond to different situations and as we practice the virtues in our daily lives, these moral virtues can grow inside us.

Modesty and Chastity

God created both males and females in his image and likeness. Both share in equal dignity, and are unique to each other. The gift of human sexuality comes from God, and it is part of his plan for humans to share in his creative abilities.

Your sexuality is more than whether you are biologically a male or female. It includes the way you think and feel, the way you pray, the way you are inclined to act, and the interests you have. The virtue of chastity helps you express your sexuality and show love in the right way for your state of life. Jesus is our model of chastity, and we are called to be chaste and to respect our own sexuality and the sexuality of others.

Catholic Faith Words

Cardinal Virtues the four principal moral virtues—prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude—that help us live as children of God and from which the other moral virtues flow. We strengthen these good habits through God's grace and our own efforts.



Chastity is not a lack or a denial. Rather, it is through chastity that we include our sexuality in a beautiful and meaningful way with all the other elements of who we are. Everyone who is baptized is called to chastity, even though Catholics have different states in life—married, single, ordained and consecrated religious. For women and men religious, this means living a celibate life.

Chastity requires discipline. It won't happen overnight. It involves a long process of growth and maturity. Inner peace and wholeness are the fruits of this process.

The virtue of modesty also helps you respect your sexuality. It helps us to dress, talk, and move in appropriate ways. Modesty is about decency. It's about being discreet in the way you dress, the things you say (or choose not to say), and the way you handle curiosity about sexual matters. It also means that we treat our bodies and the bodies of every other person with great respect.

Extreme tattooing and body piercing are forms of disrespect toward one's body. Self-mutilation and disfigurement for the purpose of shocking others would be sinful. When the human body is so intentionally deformed, it shows disrespect for God's creation.

Place a check mark by which of the Cardinal Virtues would help you the most. Draw a star next to the one you find easiest to live by, and an X by the one that is hardest.



The Cardinal Virtues

- Prudence:** being wise, careful, and sensible and making correct decisions on what is right and good helps you
 - to be aware of what's really going on in a situation
 - see ahead to the consequences of actions
- Justice:** giving God and others what is due to them as children of God helps you
 - act fairly and respect the rights of others
 - promote equality and harmony among groups of people
- Fortitude:** showing courage, having strength to get through difficult times, and not giving up helps you
 - resist temptation and be consistent in your choices and attitudes
 - overcome obstacles to doing good
- Temperance:** balancing your thoughts, actions, and feelings so that your desires don't rule your life helps you
 - enjoy all good things in moderation
 - practice self-control

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NAME AND EXPLAIN

For two of the Cardinal Virtues, name a person who you believe exemplifies that virtue and why.

Virtue	Person	How They Exemplify the Virtue
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

A Life of Virtue

Why should you try to live a life of virtue?

People have dreams for themselves and where they want their lives to go. Some people want to be explorers and travel to distant lands. Some people want to be great teachers, influencing others. Dreams are important. They fuel our lives. They provide the motivation for what we learn and how we grow.

Keys to Excellence

In a similar way, striving for excellence is fueled by virtues. They are powerful keys that help to open the doorway into a faithful, reasonable life of excellence. In that sense, they help us to follow the Ten Commandments, Jesus' Beatitudes, and his New Commandment to love one another as he has loved us.

There are some behaviors that do not build up excellence in our life. The Eighth

Commandment has identified some that damage our character and integrity:

- **lying:** deliberately saying false things by which we intend to deceive others
- **slander or calumny:** false words or even attitudes that maliciously injure others
- **revenge:** words or actions that return injury to another whom we perceive as having harmed ourselves
- **not living up to our promises:** behavior that shows that we are not worthy of another's trust

These behaviors are sinful. They hurt the person doing them and others. They are signs that a person is not interested in pursuing what is good and beautiful in life.

These behaviors are opposite of the virtue of truth, by which a person shows that he or she is true and honest in words and actions. Truth helps people avoid being deceitful, hypocritical (saying one thing but doing another), or disguising their true intentions.





The Blessing of Children in the Church of the Saviour of Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg, Russia

A Challenge

Pursuing the good life by striving for excellence within ourselves and in our behavior does not necessarily mean that we will have it easy or that life will be comfortable. Just the opposite!

Because society does not always believe as Catholics do, you may end up frustrated that people don't get it. You may be tempted to "sit down and go with the flow." You may have to stand up for things or act in ways that your friends or acquaintances don't understand or agree with. Sometimes this will cost you. You may be laughed at or ignored because of it.

Does this sound like the life of someone you know and have learned about? Jesus faced all of these things, but we know that he was happy in the truest sense of the word. He is our model for living a life of excellence. Living a life of virtues brings true inner peace.

DISCUSS

Talk with a classmate about two of the four behaviors that do not build up excellence, listed on page 242. Think of examples of those behaviors and discuss how someone your age could stand up to or address this behavior.

IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

We are called to strive for what is right, just, holy, and gracious.

- The virtues are good spiritual habits that strengthen us and help us make good moral decisions and guide our emotions and conduct. The Theological Virtues make the moral, or human, virtues possible.
- The Cardinal Virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance can help us respect ourselves and others and act with integrity.
- Learning about and practicing the virtues can help us live truthful, faith-filled lives.

Our Catholic Life

The virtues are important habits that give us strength and make it easier for us to do the right things. You can learn more about **virtuous living** by studying Catholic teachings, Scriptures, and the lives of the Saints, and from the good examples of family members, leaders, mentors, and friends who exemplify virtuous living. Charity, or love—the Theological Virtue that directs us to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves—may be easiest to see in other people from day to day, but the virtues of faith and hope can be seen, too, sometimes when we least expect it. Make a commitment to practice more of the Virtues in a disciplined way for a period of time to help develop the “muscles” to make this virtue part of your life.



➤ How can you show the Theological Virtues to yourself and others this week?

People of Faith

Saint Margaret Ward, d. 1588

Father Watson was a priest imprisoned during a time when Catholics in England were persecuted. Margaret Ward, a Catholic, helped him escape by smuggling a rope into the prison, but she was arrested when authorities traced the rope back to her. Even under torture, she refused to tell where Watson was hidden. At her trial, she was told that if she asked for forgiveness and joined the Church of England, she would be pardoned. She refused, saying she had done nothing wrong and that it was against her conscience to join a Protestant church. The Church celebrates Saint Margaret’s feast day on **August 30**.



For more, go to aliveinchrist.osv.com

IDENTIFY

Examine the list of virtues and practices below. How well would you rate yourself (on a scale of 1 to 10) in practicing each virtue? Think about things you could do to become more virtuous.

Gratitude



Prudence



Fortitude



Truth



Abstinence





Act of Hope and Love

Leader: God, come to my assistance.

All: Lord, make haste to help me.

Leader: Glory be to the Father
and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

All: as it was in the beginning
is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Leader: A reading from the Letter to the
Ephesians.

Read Ephesians 6:10–20.

Leader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: God, source of our faith, hope,
and love,
give us the strength to be the people you
call us to be,
a witness and light for all to see.

All: O God, relying on your almighty
power and your endless mercy and promises,
we hope to gain pardon for our sins,
the help of your grace, and life everlasting,
through the saving actions of Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Redeemer.

O God, we love you above all things,
with our whole heart and soul,
because you are all good and worthy
of all love.

We love our neighbor as ourselves
for the love of you.

We forgive all who have injured us
and ask pardon of all whom we have injured.

O God, we love you because you are
supremely good and worth loving;
and because we love you,
We are sorry with all our hearts for
offending you.

Lord, have mercy on us sinners, Amen.



Sing or play "I Love You, Lord"

 Go to aliveinchrist.osv.com for an interactive review.

A Work with Words Circle the letter of the choice that best completes the sentence.

1. A ___ is a good spiritual habit that strengthens you and enables you to do what is right and good.

a. virtue	c. Sacrament
b. discipline	d. reparation

2. When we attempt to indirectly correct the damage done by sin, we are making amends or ____.

a. forgiveness	c. reparation
b. virtue	d. justice

3. The ___ Virtues are the four most important moral virtues.

a. Theological	c. Lost
b. Divine	d. Cardinal

4. The virtue of ___ helps us to dress, talk, and move in appropriate ways.

a. modesty	c. prudence
b. chastity	d. both a and c

5. The virtue of ___ helps us express sexuality in the right way for our state in life.

a. modesty	c. chastity
b. fortitude	d. prudence

B Check Understanding Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Then rewrite false statements to make them true.

6. Theological Virtues help us live as children of God and gain life everlasting with God.
True/False

7. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and charity are four of the most important moral virtues.
True/False

8. Temperance is showing courage, having strength to get through difficult times, and not giving up. **True/False**

9. Your sexuality affects the way you think and feel about things and the way you are inclined to act. **True/False**

10. The Tenth Commandment identifies lying, slander, and revenge as sins that damage our character and integrity. **True/False**

C Make Connections On a separate sheet of paper, write a one-paragraph response to the question: We should think about things that are true, honorable, just, and pure. Think about some movies, music, and magazines. How do they encourage virtue?

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