Tell briefly or read the story of David and Bathsheba (using 2 Samuel 11-12), noting David's temptation, his adultery, his attempt to cover up his sin by the murder of Bathsheba's husband, and the accusation by the prophet Nathan. Stress David's true sorrow for his sins, and his obedience to his conscience once he recognized the wrong he had done.

King David of the Old Testament loved God greatly, yet he sinned seriously. Invite the students to reflect briefly on how they, like David, love God, and yet may sin.

Have the students read together the following psalm, written by David to express his sorrow for his sin: Psalm 51:1-8, 12-14.

V.   Ways to Foster Sexual Maturity

Recognizing and accepting our sexuality with its strengths and weaknesses is essential to our becoming mature people.   2333, 2332

Accepting our sexuality means learning to control our sexual urges. Indeed, the process of maturing includes using our sexual urges appropriately.   1954, 2339-40, 2342, 2344, 2520

A.   Sexual Activity and Love

Part of coming to maturity is understanding the relationship between sexual activity and love.   2346, 2360, 2332

- Sexual activity is inappropriate for the young adolescent. True love requires us to respect this fact.   2348-2350

- To say no to sexual intercourse before marriage will not lessen genuine love, but will help that love to blossom eventually into the commitment of marriage.   2350, 2391

- The love expressed in friendship *is* appropriate for the young adolescent and is a good preparation for the intimate sharing of life and love in marriage.   2347, 2350

B.   Resisting Temptations

Learning to resist temptation is a necessary part of Christian living. Setting limits — that is, determining what we will do and what we will avoid doing — can help us to resist the temptations of inappropriate

- Extramarital intercourse (adultery) betrays the trust and fidelity which are necessary foundations for marriage. By disrupting the community of life and love which a marriage is, adultery also threatens the well-being of the children.   2364-65, 2380-81

- Masturbation is morally wrong because it is not at the service of love and life according to the design of God.   2352, 2396

  N.B. At this age, masturbation can be a problem for some adolescents. The teacher should discuss it sensitively and cautiously. Although masturbation is objectively morally wrong, there are many factors which enter into the moral responsibility of adolescents in this regard. The Church recognizes that it is usually a symptom of more profound problems which cause sexual tension in the adolescent. Accordingly, the teacher should try to help the adolescents to move "toward integration, to be open and interested in others... advancing toward self-giving love." (Cf Educational Guidance in Human Love, #98-100).

- Homosexual *activity* is another misuse of God's gift. Human sexuality is designed by the Creator to enable a man and a woman to reproduce. Homosexual activity, that is, sexual activity between a man and another man, or between a woman and another woman, contradicts this reality.   2360, 2357-59

  N.B. When people are consistently attracted sexually to others of their same sex, we speak of their having a homosexual orientation. This orientation, in itself, is not sinful, and the person having this orientation is to be respected and loved as a child of God. However, such an orientation can sometimes lead to homosexual activity. It is this activity which is a misuse of God's gift.   2357-59

  Although each of us has a particular masculine or feminine identity, individuals often have traits or interests that society attributes to the opposite sex. This does not mean that the person is homosexual.

- The use of artificial means of birth control is a misuse of the life-giving dimension of sexual intercourse.   2370-71

- Abortion is the ultimate abuse of the life-giving dimension of sexuality. Instead of cherishing and protecting the life which God has created through the sexual union of the couple, the father and/or the mother decide to destroy that life.   2270-72

All morally good decisions are both good in their object and in their intention. 1755

The *circumstances,* including the consequences, do not make a bad action good or a good action bad, but they may increase or decrease the good or evil of the action. For example, Jesus points out that the widow who gave two small coins, which was all she possessed, was more generous than the rich people who gave large sums (Mark 12:41-44).
1754

Circumstances can affect the degree of responsibility one bears as well. For example, the responsibility of those who act out of fear or ignorance is less than that of those who make a deliberate choice, knowing what they are doing. 1754

E.   The Process of Making a Good Moral Choice

Throughout our lives, we will be faced with situations which require of us a moral choice. Sometimes, especially if we are in the habit of doing good, these choices may seem simple and we are able to make them without a great deal of reflection: We decide to tell the truth rather than to lie; we decide to be kind rather than to be cruel; we decide to be fair rather than to cheat. 1804, 1777

At other times, however, moral decisions can be complex and difficult, and the temptations to choose other than the good can be great. Having formed our conscience, we must listen to it as we utilize the following decision-making process:
- Reflect on all aspects of the situation and the various possible courses of action open to us.
- Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Recall God's law and the Church's teaching.
- Consider the consequences of the choice.
- Seek advice when necessary.
- Remember Jesus is with us and speak with him about the choice.
- Recall that our decision will affect our relationship with God and others. 1787-89

In utilizing this decision-making process, we must make every effort to arrive at a decision of conscience which is correct and certain.

- A decision of conscience is *correct* when it is in conformity with the will of God.

- It is *certain* when we have no serious doubt about the rightness of

Once we have confronted a situation that requires a decision and have followed a process of discerning God's will in that situation, making every effort to arrive at a correct and certain decision of conscience, then we are obliged to act in accordance with that decision.   1790, 1800

F.   Dealing with Temptation

Often we feel drawn to make selfish choices which are against the will of God: this experience is called "temptation."   2846-47

In itself, temptation is not a sin. Still, it is the responsibility of every person to recognize and avoid the persons, places, things and situations which might lead us into temptation.
2848

The gospel account of Jesus' temptations in the desert shows that the devil uses many means of tempting. Jesus is our model, because he turned away from what the devil offered and chose the will of God.   2849

G.   Failure to Choose the Good as God Sees It

Sin is deliberately choosing not to do God's will.

> Instead of respecting the property of others, for example, we cover it with graffiti or destroy it. Instead of recognizing people's rights to their own property, we steal it. Instead of safeguarding and respecting human life, we have abortions and commit murders. Instead of telling the truth we tell lies. Instead of honoring God's name, we use it to curse others or to express our anger. Instead of trusting in God's providence and care for us, we put our faith in superstitious practices. Instead of respecting and caring for our bodies, we abuse drugs and alcohol. Instead of respecting and obeying those in authority, we show contempt for them and disobey them.

In other words, instead of doing what God wants, we choose what we have convinced ourselves is good.   1847-50, 1871, 1707

Mortal sin is the complete turning away from God and God's law. This free, deliberate refusal to accept God's will causes a spiritual death or separation from God. A sin is mortal if the three following conditions are met:

*   The action is a grave evil in itself.

*   We have a clear knowledge of the action, that is, we fully