

let's talk about truth

ten 45 min lesson plans based on the book:

"Ann Garrido dares to look truth in the face, and to preach about it!"

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LET'S TALK ABOUT

TRUTH

*A Guide for Preachers, Teachers,
and Other Catholic Leaders in a
World of Doubt and Discord*

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The following lesson plans are designed for use with high school students, though with adaptation could be used with middle school or university students. Suggestions for use in online classrooms have been added to each lesson. All references in the text to LTAT refer to pages in the book *Let's Talk About Truth*.

Handouts referenced in the lesson plans (and in some cases the Answer Key) can be found in the Appendix at the end. PPT slides referenced in the lesson plans can be found as a separate document.

prepared for use: Summer 2020

let's talk about truth

session 1 – the many ways we talk about truth

Advance Preparation: For this session you will need a Bible, candle and matches, a couple of newspapers

Exercise (10 min):

- Have each student write a sentence (or two) with the word "truth" or some variation of the word (i.e. "true" or "truthfulness") in the sentence(s).
- Have each student rewrite their sentence(s) to convey the same message but without using the word "truth." What word (or phrase) would they use as a replacement in the sentence while not changing the meaning of what they were trying to say?
- Share both the original sentence(s) and the re-writes in small groups of 4 or 5 students. Have students observe: Did everyone use the same word as a replacement word for truth, or was there some variety of terms?
- Have small groups share their replacement words with the class as a whole. List on board the variety of options that students came up with. (Often the list will include words like "reality," "fact of the matter," "love," "honestly" but the list your class comes up with might include others!)
- Note that the words we came up with are similar to one another, but also have some differences. Truth is an "umbrella word" that seems to hold a variety of meanings all at the same time. We use the word in many different ways.

Invitation to Listen to Scripture & Reflect (10 min):

- Note that for Jesus, truth was a very important concept. In the Gospels (which were first written in Greek), the word for "truth" was "*aletheia*." It appears 19 times. Jesus was also known to start his sentences with the Hebrew word "*amen*" which is closely related to the word for truth and is sometimes translated into English as "truly."
- Invite to listen to one passage from Gospel of John where Jesus uses word "truth" and see if we can figure out what he means by this.
- Light candle and read John 3:19-21.
- Note that in this passage, Jesus claims that those who "do truth" (or some translations will say "live truth" or "practice truth") will "come to the light."
- What word (perhaps from the list the students have already come up with) would the students choose to replace "truth" in this passage? In essence, what do they think that Jesus meant when saying this?
- Note that Jesus seems to speak of truth less as a noun and more of a verb—it is an action, a way of being in the world that helps us to enjoy life to the full.
- Note that Christians have long pondered what it means to "do truth" in the world and that this has become an important part of what our faith tradition wants to pass on to us.

Exercise (15 min):

- Transition: Why is it so critical that we study what our tradition has to pass on to us at this moment in time? Because we live in a world where truth is a hotly contested topic and there is a lot of confusion about what truth is and how it can be a means of “coming to the light.”
- Have students move back into small groups of 4-5 and give each group a newspaper. Ask each group to cut out 5 articles in which a question about truth is raised / involved. Indicate that when they share with the large group, they'll need to be able to articulate why they've chosen that article.
- In the large group, have each group share the headline / general gist of one of the stories they've chosen and how it is related to the topic of truth.
- Consider what it would look like to “do truth” in that situation. (Expect there will be a variety of responses and acknowledge that it is not always clear what “doing truth” in any particular situation should look like. It is often a source of disagreement, even among people of good will.) So what does our faith ask of us?

Introduce Three Ways We Honor Jesus' Command to “Do Truth” as Christians (10 min):

- Note that one way to frame what our tradition expects of us:
 - Seek truth – always try to figure out what is real in every situation and choose the best path forward from there (Circle words from the students' initial list that seem to belong in this category – eg. words like “really” “actually” “the fact of the matter”)
 - Speak truthfully – always be honest about what you know (and don't) (Circle words from students' initial list that belong in this category – eg. “honestly”)
 - Be true – be faithful to important relationships in your life (Ditto – eg. “loyalty” “fairness” “love” “faithful”)
- Note that under each of these categories, there are many questions we could raise. For eg.: How do I know what is real? What do I do when people disagree with me about the best way forward? What if I think being honest could hurt someone's feelings? Should I be loyal to friends who are making bad decisions?
- Invite students to name additional questions that they might have about truth and write these on board. (*They may or may not be able to suggest additional questions at this point; questions will probably surface more naturally once they get into the content in the weeks to come.*)
- Note that in the days/weeks to come we'll have time to dive into some of the sticky questions around truth that are so important to try and figure out in our contemporary world. We'll talk about what “seeking truth,” “speaking truthfully,” and “being true” mean from a Christian perspective.

Adapting for use on Zoom? Consider using annotate feature in place of writing on the board. Invite each student to bring a newspaper to class in advance to be able to do the small group exercise.

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session 2 – seek truth with bartimaeus

Advance Preparation: For this session, you will need a Bible and candle.

Exercise (15 min):

- Divide students into small groups of 4-5 and ask them to come up with their dream “virtual reality” machine. Give them a prompt with perhaps a few examples: “When I am inside of this machine,.... I can type into the keyboard a place name and it will be as if I am in Maui, or New York City, or...” Allow them time to come up with the features they would most want to see in a “virtual reality” machine.
- Report back to the large group.
- Group discussion:
 - Now I want you to imagine that such a dream machine does exist, would you want to be able to go into it?
 - What if you could go in, but never come back out again? Would you still do it? Why or why not?
 - Further optional prod: What if you could marry a virtual partner who would always be pleasant and attractive and loving and only said flattering things to you... or a real person who told you what they actually thought?
 - What would you gain? What would you lose? Why do you think that knowing “what’s real” is so important to us?
- Transition: A desire for the “real” or the “true” seems deeply wired into us as humans. *(Note: This exercise closely parallels the dilemma posed in a book called True to Life by Michael Lynch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 15). I am grateful for his unique insight into how to address the question of “seeing.”)*

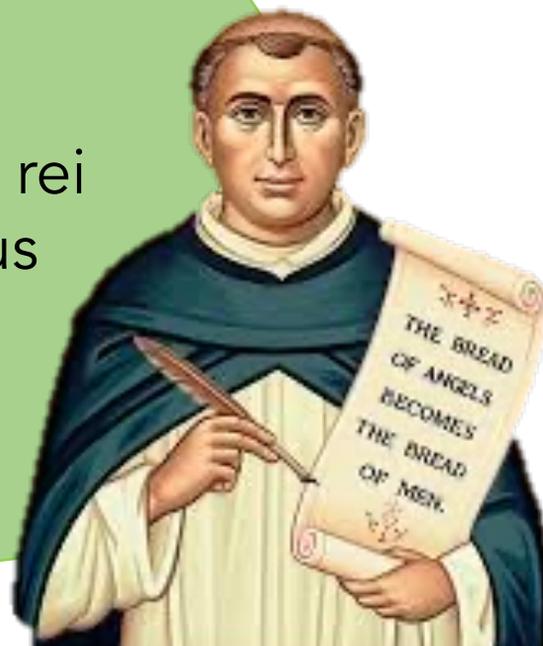
Scripture Reading and Reflection (10 min):

- Light candle and read Mark 10:46-52
- Points for discussion:
 - This is a story of physical healing, but in Christian tradition, physical healing has often served as a metaphor for other kinds of interior healing. We get a clue of this in the name Bar-Timaeus which comes from a Hebrew word “bar” (son of) and a Greek name “Timaeus.” Timaeus was one of the characters in Plato’s Dialogues—a character who wanted to understand the whole universe and used “sight” as a euphemism for “coming to knowledge.”
 - In this story from scripture, what do you suspect that Bartimaeus is really asking for? How does Jesus respond to his request? What do you think we are meant to understand from that? (for more detail on how to unpack this notion, see LTAT pp. 23-26)

Investigating the Tough Questions (20 min):

- Transition: Invite students to recall some of the tough questions about seeking “sight”/“truth” that they raised during the last session. At this point, let’s focus in on a couple questions that perhaps the Bartimaeus story raises for us.
- “What does it even matter if I know what is real?”
 - Key concept to introduce: the importance of the “objectivity” of truth (see LTAT pp. 20-22 for further specifics)
- “But if it turns out that I could be wrong, then why even seek truth to begin with?”
 - Key concept to introduce: the problem of skepticism as a way of life (see LTAT pg. 27-29 for further specifics)
- “Who is to judge who’s right?”
 - Key concept to introduce: the problem of relativism as a way of life (see LTAT pgs. 33-37 for further specifics)
- Transition: If we don’t want to become overly skeptical or entirely relativistic, what other options do we have? We’ll discuss that next time.

veritas est
adaequatio rei
et intellectus



Adapting for use on Zoom? You may want to ask students to record thoughts from their initial small group discussion to record their design using the annotate feature and then take a screen shot to share with whole group when returning to main room.

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session 3 – seek truth with the magi

Advance Preparation: For this session, you will need a Bible and candle, copies of the “Exercise in Reason” handout. Note that the Answer Key for the “Exercise in Reason” handout follows the handout. Do not distribute this part to students, obviously.

Recall: (5 min)

- Recall that in the last session introduced three terms helpful in conversations around truth: objectivity, skepticism, relativity
- Invite students to help you come up with descriptions for each term in their own words. For example:
 - **Objectivity** – the awareness that reality “is what it is” whether we like it or not, and that there is always more to reality than we will know at any moment in time
 - **Skepticism** – the belief that just because we can’t know everything, we can’t know anything
 - **Relativism** – the belief that just because someone believes something it must somehow be true
- Transition: We ended last time with a quandary: But if I acknowledge that I can’t know everything and there is always more to know, and that I might be wrong about what I know.... How do I avoid sinking into the mire skepticism and relativism? What keeps me on the road to truth?

Scripture Reading and Reflection (10 min)

- Recall last session’s reading about Bartimaeus and how his desire for sight brought him to Jesus. Today we’ll hear another (probably familiar) story about people looking for Jesus. Can see whether this story, too, gives us clue about what the pursuit of truth looks like.
- Light candle and read Matthew 2:1-12
- Points for discussion:
 - Introduce magi as early iteration of an astronomer – someone who closely observed the skies and tried to make sense of the patters of the stars and planets. Within Middle Eastern culture, the “rising of a star” indicated the birth of a powerful new ruler.
 - What was their response to their observation? Where did they first seek the new “king”? Why do you imagine that they went to the palace first? How do they figure out the information they need for the last stage in their journey? How does this path replicate the path of scientists throughout history? (the testing of a hypothesis, sometimes finding out that their first assumption was wrong, open to new information until they find what they are looking for)
- Note that scripture and science here are working hand in hand. While not all scientists are keen on faith, science itself is not opposed to faith. The two work hand in hand. Science and faith are both ways of progressing in truth. Both value reason as a tool for the journey.

Small Group Exercise (15 min)

- Transition: We're going to talk more about that last point in a moment, but first let's do an exercise.
- Handout "[Exercises in Reason](#)" sheet. Break students into groups of three or four. Make the groups as "diverse" as you are able given your classroom. Give ten minutes to work out the scenarios on the sheet.

Investigating the Tough Questions (15 min)

- Ask: How was it that you arrived at the same answers to these questions. You come from different homes / are different genders / etc... yet arrived at same conclusions. If asked the answer to the same dilemmas to high schoolers from another country, good chance would also arrive at same conclusions. What makes that possible?
- Ask: What is "reason"? Do a "word cloud" of words that students associate with the word "reason." (Possible prods: When someone says, "Be reasonable" or "Use your reason" what do they mean? What are they assuming you can do?)
- Lift up reason as a human capacity (As Christians, we would say "God-given" capacity) that enables us to learn from our encounters in the world and put them together in our mind in a way that makes sense of the world and helps us figure out how to live in it. Without reason, it would be very difficult to move together in any direction. What would we be left to appeal to when making an argument?
- Note that people who practice reason will still sometimes find out they've been wrong, but they have the capacity to shift their thinking based on new discoveries. They don't remain stuck on the wrong path. Reason keeps them moving in the direction of truth. (For more specifics on the importance of reason, see LTAT, pp. 37-38)
- Highlight the relationship between reason and science, with science as an ongoing concerted effort to perfect our reasoning capacities. (See esp. LTAT, p. 37)
- And yet as the discussion on the last scenario from the handout suggests... reason doesn't always give us a crystal clear sense of what to do with the information that we are putting together. It often suggests a path forward about what it a good next action would be, but more is involved in fashioning judgments about how to live in this world. That is where we will head in the next session.

Adapting for use on Zoom? Be sure to have a scanned version of the "Exercises in Reason" handout to post in the chat box before sending students into breakout rooms. Use annotate feature to create word cloud for "reason" in closing section of the class.

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session 4 – seek truth

Advance Preparations: Before this session begins, you will need copies of the “Fact or Judgment?” Handout and the “Renewing the Mind” Handout for the students. You will also need the Ladder of Inference slide handy (or a way of drawing it easily). Note: when you make copies of the “Fact or Judgment?” Handout, do not make copies of the accompanying Answer Key that follows the original.

Recall & Transition (5 min):

- Recall that we've been talking about “seeking truth” as an important part of what it means to “do truth” as a Christian. We've talked about how God has created a world that is intended to be known through our senses and through reason. (It is not as if God has created the world as a great joke on us.)
- At the same time, as we looked at those small scenarios related to reason in the last session, we can acknowledge that our use of reason—which has the capacity of bringing people of very different backgrounds into harmony with one another—begins to bleed over into areas of “judgment” when we are no longer talking only about whether something “is” or “isn't” but whether this option is “better” than that one; whether one should or shouldn't. (e.g. from earlier scenario: Is the amount of time saved worth the additional cost in gas?)

Small group exercise (10 min):

- Handout “Fact or Judgment?” sheet and break students into groups of 3 or 4.
- Have students put the statements on the sheet into two categories and discuss their results with the class as a whole.
- Ask: How could they tell the difference between a fact and a judgment? What helped them in their discernment, since the language we use to express both are so similar.
- Note that judgments / opinions / conclusions can still be “true” or “not” but we have to discern that in a different way than we discern facts. (See LTAT, pp. 49-51)

Introduce Ladder of Inference (10 min):

- Transition: We might wonder why, when we all live in the same world, would we often arrive at such different perspectives on what is going on and what we should do about it. How do we arrive at the judgments we hold?

- Draw on the board an illustration of the ladder of inference (based on the work of Argyris and Schon) found on pg. 52 (or use a copy of the available slide labeled “Ladder of Inference”). Walk students through the steps of how the brain arrives at a judgment using the information available on pp. 51-55 of LTAT.

Group Reflection (5 min):

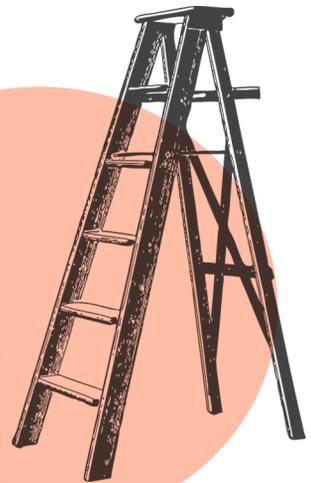
- This exercise raises the question: If everyone has such different backgrounds and different life experiences, how can we ever discern whether one person’s opinion / judgment is more worthy than another’s? Wouldn’t it be best if we just said, “All opinions are equal; you have your opinion and I’ll have mine?” We’ll talk more about that in our next session.
- Handout “**Renewing the Mind**” as a pre-read for Session 5 and ask that they read it before returning. [Option: have students listen to two short podcasts from Invisibilia on NPR (available for free online) – “Bubble-Hopping” (June 8, 2017) and “Bonus: Catch-up with Max Hawkins” (December 22, 2017)]

Pair Exercise (15 min):

- Split students into pairs to have them discuss what filters they suspect might be part of their own ladders of inference. Have each student fill out their own ladder using the “Ladder of Inference” handout but complete the work in dialogue with another.
- At the close, have pairs briefly report back to the whole group two key similarities and two differences that they discovered in each other’s ladders of inference.

“Even though the sense always apprehends a thing as it is unless there is an impediment in the organ or in the medium, the imagination usually apprehends a thing as it is not.” – Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae et veritate*

1.11



Adapting for Zoom? The “Fact or Judgment” handout could be reconstructed as a poll and conducted with the whole group. Additional note: For a transcript of the original podcast mentioned in the group reflection, see: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/531921221>

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session 5 – seek truth

Advance Preparations: Before this session begins, make sure students have read the “[Renewing the Mind](#)” Handout passed out at the end of Session 4. You will also need the “Ladder of Inference and Good Judgments” slide (or a way to easily draw this for yourself), and a Bible and candle.

Scripture Reading & Reflection (15 min)

- Light candle and read Romans 12:1-2
- Discuss student impressions of the pre-read that they did for today's session (and/or the podcast that they listened to)
 - What did they admire about Max's effort? What were some of the challenges that it posed for him and his friends?
 - Are there “bubbles” that the students think should not be “hopped”? How do they discern that?
 - What do they make of GK Chesterton's quip that “An open mind is something like the open mouth, designed to bit down on something solid”? What are the gifts and challenges of “open-mindedness”?
 - How did they understand the definition on conscience from their reading? Why is conscience important in “living truth”?

Forming the Best Judgments Possible (10 min)

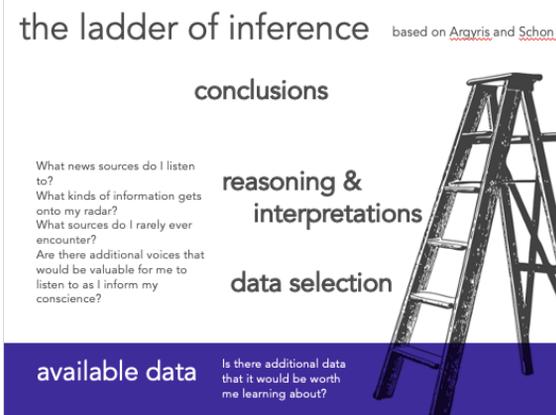
- Transition: Christian teaching does not hold that all opinions are equal and need to be given equal value / equal airtime. It would not say that each person is “entitled to their own opinion” but rather that each person is “obligated to follow their own conscience.” Describe how these are different referring to points in LTAT, pp. 61-67.
- Using Ladder of Inference diagram from last session (or available slide “**Ladder of Inference & Good Judgments**”) highlight that we need to always be asking ourselves whether we are working with good facts as a basis. We need to also be asking whether there are other voices we need to include in the lower rungs of our ladder to help us filter the information and make sense of it.
 - What role do we let the wisdom of the church play? The voices of the poor / those negative impacted?
 - Decisions that are well grounded in fact and have taken in the voice of church teaching, the voices of the marginalized, etc. will be better/more worthy judgments than those that don't.

Small Group Exercise (10 min)

- Transition: So if you are careful to arrive at the best judgments possible for yourself, what do you do when others don't agree with you?
- In groups of 3-4, have students come up with "Five Guidelines for Talking with People Who Have Judgments Different than Your Own." What would the students propose as tips they think are effective when talking about differences of opinion?
- Have them record their five points on a large sheet of easel paper and display around the classroom.

Talking with Others Who Hold Different "Truths" (10 min)

- Have representatives from small groups read aloud what they've recorded.
- Highlight patterns across the sheets and also differences. Where helpful discuss pros and cautions about the ideas they have come up with.
- It is very possible that all of these points will surface as part of the student conversations, but if not, the following are suggestions that you will want to make sure get brought up somewhere in the wider conversation:
 - Assume charitable and reasonable intent (see pp.76-77 in LTAT for further description)
 - Listen and share from the lower rungs of each other's ladders (see pp. 77-80 in LTAT)
 - Pray (see pp. 80-81 in LTAT)



"Let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save his neighbor's proposition than to condemn it. If he cannot save it, let him inquire how he means it; and if he means it badly, let him correct him with charity."
– St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*

Adapting to Zoom? Have students in breakout rooms use annotate feature to jot down their "Five Guidelines for Talking" and then take a screen shot to share. Or, invite them to type their guidelines in chat and "cut and paste" before returning to main room so that they can insert their responses in the main chat box.

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session 6 – speak truthfully

Advance Preparation: Depending on the size of your class, you will need one or more sets of the board game Clue. You will also need copies of the handout titled “**The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Lying**”

Transition to New Theme (5 min)

- We've been talking about the commitment to seek truth as part of our Christian call to “do truth.” This involves trying to get our minds aligned with reality and the best way to live within it. Another aspect of “doing truth,” however, is speaking truthfully.
- On the board, create a word cloud around the word “truthful.” What words do students associate with the word “truthful”? How are these related yet a bit different from the word “truth”?
- Note how speaking truthfully has less to do with having “a mind aligned with reality” and more to do with having “a mouth aligned with your mind.” It is possible to be entirely honest and still be wrong. That is called an error. It is also possible to be entirely aligned with reality and still say something untrue. That is called a lie.

Exercise (25 min)

- Note: You will need possibly several sets of the board game Clue to complete this exercise (though the exercise could work with any number of other games as well)
- Divide students into teams of no more than 8 and give each group a set of Clue. Then ask each group to send two members over to you to receive special instructions for playing the game.
- Special instructions given only to two members of each team: “As people begin to ask you whether you have the cards, lie and say that you do not, even if you do.” (Consider giving these instructions in an envelope to each of the two people from each team and have them read the instructions silently and nod to indicate they understand.)
- Invite students to play game and to let you know as soon as someone wins because the first table to have a winner will receive a prize, with special bonus points given to the winner her/himself.

- Allow students to play until time runs out, since no one will win.
- Invite discussion on the experience. Why was no one able to win? What was their experience of asking and not being able to come up with a workable “solution” to the mystery? What was the impact of lying on their experience of the game?

Introduction to the Catechism on Lying (15 min)

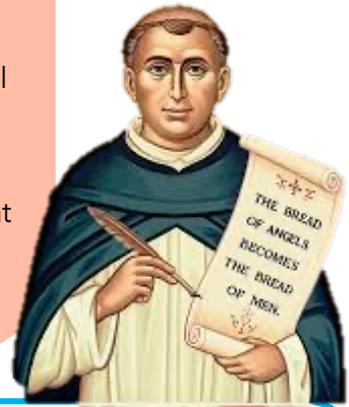
- Pass out and read through together the handout **“The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Lying.”** Pause along the way to check for understanding. Questions such as the following might be useful:
 - What does it mean to say, “Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another.” Why not? What would be the problems with that? Note that were not even able to finish a game of clue if there were people on your team lying! What would be the consequences if someone lied when trying to create architectural plans? When building a bridge? When mapping out a hiking path? When running for an election?
 - “By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.” Why is the Lord involved when a lie is told?
 - “It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others” What is this trying to tell us about why speech exists in the first place? That is a huge statement to make!
 - “Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.” Again, such a strong statement! Why do you think that the Catechism is so harsh on the topic of lying?

Adapting for Zoom? Use annotate feature to create the word cloud around “truthful.” Is there another online game that you could use in place of the board game version of Clue? If so, consider also how you might give secret instructions to the two members in each group through a special quick breakout session before launching into regular small groups. You may wish to turn the handout on the Catechism and Lying into a couple of power point slides instead.

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session 7 – speak truthfully

Advance Preparation: In advance of this session, make copies of the handout titled, “**The Catechism of the Catholic Church and ‘How Much to Tell’**”. Then, choose some stories from the newspaper / social media platforms to print out that will be thought-provoking examples of potential violations of justice with regard to honesty – i.e. examples of stories or posts that share information about other people / harm another’s reputation when it probably was not “just or charitable” to share it... no one had a real need to know this information. Some stories can be clear violations of charity. (Probably will make sense to black out the names of those involved here with a Sharpie.) Some can be clear examples of information that should be known, even though the persons involved would probably prefer it not be. Some can be examples that are up for debate. Clip enough so that everyone in the class will receive at least one story.



Transition:

- Last session talked about the importance of honesty in our speech. But is there such a thing as “too much honesty”? Do we need to say everything that it is on our minds? Should we even say everything on our minds? “Living truth” through the virtue of truthfulness requires a good deal more than spewing out of your mouth everything that comes to your mind.

Continued Reflection on the Catechism of the Catholic Church (15 min)

- Pass out the handout “**Catechism of the Catholic Church on ‘How Much to Tell’**”
- Review the handout together lifting out key phrases to check for understanding:
 - “The right to the communication of the truth is not unconditional. Everyone must conform his life to the Gospel precept of fraternal love.” We talk so much about a right to “free speech.” How does this passage put boundaries on that right?

- “No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it.” What do you think this might mean? How does one discern who has the “right to know” something?
- What do you understand the Catechism to mean when it describes “respect for the reputation of persons”? What are common ways that this respect is violated?
- Why do you think the Catechism draws particular attention to “social communications media” as a place where truthfulness / respect can go awry?

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

- Break students into small groups of 4-5 students. Pass out an equal number of stories to match the number of students in the group.
- Invite each student to read the story they’ve received silently and summarize it for their small group in one or two sentences. Group can help to label it as “Clear Violation (of justice and charity),” “Should-have Information (out in the public),” or “Iffy (we are unsure).” Ask group to be prepared to share rationale for why they put a story in a particular category.
- At the end of the small group discussion time, have a representative from each small group present to the larger group any story that the small group put in the “iffy, we are unsure” category to see what the whole class determines

Coming up with Guidelines (15 min)

- Create three columns on the board labeled “Clear Violation,” “Should-have Information” and “Iffy.” What guidelines would students propose about how to decide which category a story or post should go into. Prompts: “I can tell that a story is a clear violation of justice and charity when....” “I think the public should have information when....” Pay special attention to what they would put in the “Iffy” category. “I think it’s iffy when....” How will they judge when things fall in this category?
- See LTAT, pp.99-102 for potential points to bring up as part of this conversation.

Adapting for Zoom? Consider sending out snapshots of the newspaper stories you’ve chosen to students before class begins. During the small group breakouts, one person in each group could take notes in a notebook to refer back to when reporting to whole group. Use annotate feature to write the final three columns that synthesizes the small group work. Consider sharing quotes from handout as ppt slides instead.

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session 8 – be true

Advanced Preparation: Be ready to open the slide for the old Sarum rite wedding vows (or copy and print the phrase on strips to hand out to students: “I N. take the N. to my weddyd wyf, to have and to hold fro thys day forward, for better for wors, for richer for porer, in siknesse and in healthe, tyl deth us departe, yf holy Chyrche wyl it ordeyne; and therto I plight the my trouthe.”) Also be sure to have You-tube video(s) you plan to show ready at hand and a way of sending students the Eboo Patel link of choice at the end of the class

Transition to New Theme: (5 min)

- Note that in the last several sessions, we've talked about what our faith calls us to by way of “living truth”: We are to seek truth and speak truthfully. There is yet one more way we talk about “living truth” in the Christian tradition and that regards the importance of “being true.” Check for familiarity with that term. Have they ever heard of “being true” to someone? In what contexts are they familiar with that phrase?

Consideration of Old Wedding Vows: (10 min)

- Note that you are going to put on screen / handout one of the first times we see this phrase appearing in English language from the 11th century. Will see if we can figure out what it meant to those using it at time.
- Either put the following phrase on screen or print it on slips to hand out to students: “I N. take thee N. to my weddyd wyf, to have and to hold fro thys day forward, for better for wors, for richer for porer, in siknesse and in healthe, tyl deth us departe, yf holy Chyrche wyl it ordeyne; and therto I plight thee my trouthe.”
- Have students translate into contemporary English. Discuss: Why do you think was meant by “I plight thee my trouthe.” What does it mean to do that in the context of a marriage? Is there some degree of “plight” involved in making a promise like that?
- *Option:* Note that throughout history, it is not only married couples who have made commitments of fidelity to one another. Members of religious communities do so, and sometimes even friends have done so. For more information on friendship commitments, see: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/01/24/beyond-religious-life-and-marriage-look-friendship-vocation>
- Transition: In order to remain faithful in a relationship / be true to a vow that one has taken requires a whole different set of capacities/skills than we talked about in relationship to “seeking truth” or “speaking truthfully.”

Introduce Videos: (15 min)

- Introduce video(s) of committed relationships. Invite students to view with an eye toward what capacities they see in the couples that enable them to “be true” to the relationship that they are in.
- There are many videos on You-tube you might choose to reflect on. One high quality video that includes couples from around the world, in both heterosexual and homosexual committed relationships (put out by “Great Big Story”) can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tpEPc-bdoE>. (14 min) It includes many positive tips about what makes love last. If this seems like it may not be appropriate for your classroom, other possibilities include: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMj_E8UhByg (5:05 min), or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vTvnLipE9Q#:~:text=if%20you're%20not%20sure,celebrated%20their%2080th%20wedding%20anniversary.> (2:30 min) But, a short search on YouTube will uncover other possibilities.

Discussion of Videos: (10 min)

- What kinds of behaviors did the students observe in the videos that gave clues to what it takes to “be true” to someone? List on board.
- Are there others that they would want to add?
- Draw particular attention to the point made in the videos about fidelity not always being easy. Conflict is inevitable when you are with someone for a long time. There are going to be differences of judgment (referring back to what we spoke about earlier in “seeking truth”) and times when “speaking truthfully” becomes hurtful. What did you see these couples doing to “be true” in the midst of differences?
- Note that “being true” is not something that we are only called to do in vowed relationships. While we can’t “be true” to everyone in the same way that we are “true” to a marriage partner (or other serious commitment)—only God can be totally present to all people at all times—there are ways that we practice a healthy fidelity also to friends, extended family, our nation, etc... And in these relationships, too, we need to think about what it looks like to “be true” even if we can’t agree on holding the same “truths.”

Introduce Pre-Work for Next Session

- In preparation for next session, ask students to listen to or read 20 minute interview with Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core. Note that they should listen particularly for how Patel helps people who hold different truths to still “be true” to one another as fellow citizens.
- This link can either be accessed as sound only, video, or full transcript: <https://sahilbadruddin.com/eboo-patel-on-interfaith-cooperation-and-pluralism/>

Adapting for Zoom? Be sure that the video you choose to show will be easily viewed through the platform.

let's talk about truth

session 9 – be true

Advanced Preparation: Make sure that students have seen or listened to the Eboo Patel interview listed at the end of Session 8. Also have a roll of blue painter's tape handy.

Recap & Transition: (5 min)

- Recall that in the last sessions we talked about the capacities needed to “be true” in relationships, and that for any relationship to endure, one of the capacities that will be needed is figuring out ways to “be true” even when you disagree / do not hold the same “truths”
- This capacity is needed not only in marriage but in friendship and in civic life.
- Note that earlier (in Session 5) we talked about ways to remain in dialogue while seeking truth together, even if right now we see things differently.
- At a certain point in time, we may realize that continuing to talk about our differences isn't necessarily moving us toward seeing things in a more unified fashion. Sometimes we may reach a point where we feel like we are beating our head against a brick wall and to continue the conversation may actually do more harm than good.
- While we want to always keep “continued conversation” as a preferred “tool in our toolbox” for breaking through impasse and arriving at greater truth, sometimes we will need other ways of remaining in relationship or “being true.”

Discussion of Patel interview: (10 min)

- One arena in which people have often found themselves stuck is in conversation around religious truths. People of good will and deep study even over many generations of conversation continue to hold different religious beliefs. Certainly getting a “mind aligned around the reality” of God is incredibly important... something worth devoting our entire lives toward. At the same time, however, Patel asks the question, “What is the best way of remaining in relationship with one another while we do not all hold the same truths?”
- What ideas did students come away with on this question from listening to Patel?

- Highlight Patel’s emphasis on joint service as one way that we can still work with one another and be with one another, even when we don’t agree on the same truths.
- Highlight his notion that listening to others share the religious truths that they hold can be valuable for the sake of understanding our own beliefs better. Not every conversation needs to be aimed at persuasion; it is also possible to have conversation simply for the purpose of learning.
- Highlight Patel’s conviction that even when we don’t agree on everything, we can often find something that we *do* agree on and focus our energies on building a community around that commonality rather than keeping the focus on what we don’t agree on.

Small Group Work: (10 min)

- Have students break into small groups of 4-5.
- Note that in our discussion of Patel, we’ve begun a list of possible practices for “being true” even when we hold different truths – i.e. joint acts of service, taking a pause on discussing what we do not hold in common in order to spend some time talking about what we do.
- Have each group come up with 5 or 6 additional strategies for “being true” even when you vehemently disagree and talking about it isn’t working.

Large Group Reflection: (15 min)

- Invite small groups to report back to the whole class on their ideas. List ideas on the board as they are reported, clustering ideas that seem very similar to one another.
- For additional ideas to share (if they haven’t already come up naturally within discussion), see pp. 144-145 in LTAT
- Give each student in the room a three inch strip of blue painter’s tape. Note that they can take their strip and tear it into two or three pieces if desired, or keep it whole. They should place their tape on the ideas on the board that they think hold the most promise and that they themselves would be willing to commit to during the upcoming month / school year (you can decide the time frame that seems like a fit). If one idea seems like a particularly good one, they can put all of their tape on that one idea. If there are a couple of ideas, they can divide up their tape to put it on the ones they like best.
- After everyone has placed their tape, see where the general energy of the room lies.
- See if you can arrive at a class charter of some sort with 3-5 things that the group as a whole is willing to try and report back on after a given period of time. Is there an action that they want to take as a class—for example, being involved in a joint service activity of some sort?

Adapting for Zoom? Most of what is suggested here can be easily done using the annotate feature, but for the final exercise with the blue tape, you may want to take the ideas that surfaced and create a poll for them that could be conducted instead in session 10 as a way of starting class. Students could identify their three top choices.

let's talk about truth

session 10 – let's talk about truth

Advanced Preparation: For this final session you will either need the power point slides provided of the Hebrew words "emet" "sheker" and "met" or you will need to be able to write them in Hebrew alphabet on the board.

Recap & Transition: (5 min.)

- Over the past nine sessions, we've been talking about the Christian commitment to "do truth" by seeking truth, speaking truthfully, and being true to one another. We've talked about how this is often a messy process with a lot of ambiguities, but still something incredibly important. A commitment that we want to make.
- In this wrap-up session, we want to look at a couple scenarios and consider what it might mean to "do truth" as a Christian in each case. Is this a place where we need to seek truth? How? Is this a situation in which we need to speak truthfully? How? Is this a scenario where what we most need is to be true? If so, how?

Small Group Exercise: (15 min.)

- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 students. Pass out "Truth Scenarios" handout to each small group.
- Invite students to discuss each scenario for about 3 minutes and have a recorder take notes for the group.

Large Group Discussion: (10 min.)

- What aspect of "doing truth" did the students identify as necessary in each of the scenarios?
- What were the main ideas they had for how to "do truth" in the scenario? What would they recommend as a potential next step for those involved?

Final Reflection: (10 min.)

- Put up slide or write on the board the Hebrew word “*emet*.”
- Recall that in our first session, we mentioned the Greek word for truth that we find in the Christian scriptures: *aletheia*. Recall that while the Christian scriptures were written in Greek because that was the predominant language of the time, Jesus himself, as Jew, would have spoken Aramaic Hebrew. The scriptures that he would have read would have been written in Hebrew and contained a very ancient word for truth: *emet*.
- *Emet* was comprised of three Hebrew letter: *aleph* (first letter of alphabet), *mem* (from the middle point of the alphabet), and *tav* (last letter of the alphabet). Note how each letter touches the line on which it is written twice, as if it has “two feet.” For the Jewish people, this in itself says something significant about truth: it is orderly, it encompasses all from beginning to end, it is sturdy and trustworthy, not easily knocked over.
- Put up slide or write on board the Hebrew word “*sheker*”
- Note that their word for “lie” also had three letters, but all three of these letters were from the end of the alphabet and they were mixed up in alphabetic order. Each of these letters only touches the line on which they are written once, as if to say that lies are not stable, they create disorder, confusion.
- Put up slide or write on board the word “*met*”
- Interesting point that the Hebrew word for death is only one letter different than the word for truth. You lose one letter from the word truth and you end up with death.
- Point: When trying to live truth, you can’t just pick one of the practices we’ve talked about. You can’t be committed to speaking truthfully and not care at all about the people that you hurt when saying what you think needs to be said. Or, it does no good to be frank and honest if you mind is not aligned with reality. If we really want to “come to the light” that Jesus talks about in John 3:21, we need to be serious about practicing truth in all three of the ways we’ve talked about, not just one.
- A final point: Sometimes you will hear people speak about what it will be like to live in a “post-truth” world. From a Judeo-Christian perspective. There is no such thing. Either we have truth or we won’t have a world. We figure out a way of living truth, or we die. The issue is that important. The future depends on each of us making an unwavering commitment in our life to living truth fully in every sense of the word.

Adapting for Zoom? Consider ways of getting the truth scenarios to the small groups before they breakout. Possibilities: send handout to students in advance class to have before them or post whole handout into chat room before sending students into breakout groups.

let's talk about truth appendix

handouts to accompany the lesson plans

"Ann Garrido dares to look truth in the face, and to preach about it!"

Rev. Gregory Heille, O.P.

Director of the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching program
Aquinas Institute of Theology

LET'S TALK ABOUT

TRUTH

*A Guide for Preachers, Teachers,
and Other Catholic Leaders in a
World of Doubt and Discord*

ANN M. GARRIDO

AUTHOR OF *REDEEMING ADMINISTRATION*

Handouts referenced in the lesson plans (and, where relevant, the Answer Key) can be found here in the Appendix. PPT slides referenced in the lesson plans can be found as a separate document.

exercises in reason

session 3

Challenge #1

Eight people are sitting around a round table facing inwards.

Alex is two seats to Sophie's left.

Adam is three seats to Alex's right.

Michelle is two seats to Alex's left.

Juan is six seats to Lucia's right.

Edward is six seats to Juan's right.

Miguel is not sitting next to Alex.

Who sits one seat to Edward's left?

Challenge #2

In a park where no hunting is allowed, a deer population of 400 deer can sustain a wolf pack of 50 wolves with the ratio of deer to wolves being maintained. If the deer increase to 600, how many wolves could be sustained?

Challenge #3

You take a 1200 mile trip to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada for the big annual powwow .

- a) How much time will you save on the 1200 mile trip if and you average 60 mph compared to averaging 50 mph.

- b) If your car gets 25 mpg at 60 mph but increases to 30 mpg at 50 mph, how many gallons of gas would you save on the 1200 mile trip at the lower speed? If gas costs \$2.10 a gallon, how much money do you save?

- c) Is the saving in time at 60 mph worth the extra cost?

Bonus: Challenge #4

The new VW Jetta diesel has an EPA highway rating of 41 mpg. You plan to make a summer trip from Green Bay, Wisconsin to Los Angeles, a distance of 2172 miles.

- a) Since this will be mostly highway driving, how many gallons of diesel will you need for the whole trip, there and back?

- b) If diesel costs an average of \$2.25 a gallon, what will be the total fuel cost of the whole trip?

- c) Instead of taking the VW, you think it might be cheaper to drive a Honda Civic to LA since gasoline is cheaper and costs only \$2.10 a gallon. However, the Honda gets lower gas mileage at 34 mpg. How much would it cost for fuel for the whole trip if you took the Honda?

- d) Which car is more economical? What is the savings in fuel costs using this car?

exercises in reason answer key

session 3

Challenge #1: Michael

(Thanks to

<https://www.wikijob.co.uk/content/aptitude-tests/test-types/deductive-reasoning-tests#sample-questions>)

Challenge #2: Proportion problem. $400/50 = 600/w$ $w = 75$ wolves

(Thanks to: Dr. Gerald Fast http://www.uwosh.edu/coehs/cmagentproject/many_word/index.htm)

Challenge #3:

You take a 1200 mile trip to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada for the big annual powwow.

a) How much time will you save on the 1200 mile trip if and you average 60 mph compared to averaging 50 mph. At 60 mph the trip will take $(1200 \div 60)$ hours. $1200 \div 60 = 20$ hours. At 50 mph the trip will take $(1200 \div 50)$ hours. $1200 \div 50 = 24$ hours. So the time saved at 60 mph is $(24 - 20)$ hours. $24 - 20 = 4$ hours. So at 60 mph you saved 4 hours compared to traveling at 50 mph.

b) If your car gets 25 mpg at 60 mph but increases to 30 mpg at 50 mph, how many gallons of gas would you save on the 1200 mile trip at the lower speed? If gas costs \$2.10 a gallon, how much money do you save? At 25 mpg you would need $(1200 \div 25)$ gallons of gas. $1200 \div 25 = 48$ gallons. At 30 mpg you would need $(1200 \div 30)$ gallons of gas. $1200 \div 30 = 40$ gallons. So you would save $(48 - 40)$ gallons = 8 gallons. If gas costs \$2.10 a gallons, you would save $(8 \times \$2.10) = \16.80

c) Is the saving in time at 60 mph worth the extra cost? It depends how you look at it. You are saving \$16.80 at the slower speed but it is taking you 4 hours longer to make the trip. Any reasonable answer is acceptable. (*We'll discuss this response more in the follow up*)

(thank you to Dr. Gerald Fast http://www.uwosh.edu/coehs/cmagentproject/many_word/index.htm)

Bonus Challenge #4:

The new VW Jetta diesel has an EPA highway rating of 41 mpg. You plan to make a summer trip from Green Bay, Wisconsin to Los Angeles, a distance of 2172 miles.

a) Since this will be mostly highway driving, how many gallons of diesel will you need for the whole trip, there and back? The total distance there and back will be 2×2172 miles which is 4344 miles.

At 41 mpg, the VW will need $(4344 \div 41)$ gallons of diesel. $4344 \div 41 = 105.95$ gallons approximately.

b) If diesel costs an average of \$2.25 a gallon, what will be the total fuel cost of the whole trip? Rounding the answer in a) to 106 gallons, the cost would be $106 \times \$2.25 = \238.50

c) Instead of taking the VW, you think it might be cheaper to drive a Honda Civic to LA since gasoline is cheaper and costs only \$2.10 a gallon. However the Honda gets lower gas mileage at 34 mpg. How much would it cost for fuel for the whole trip if you took the Honda? $4344 \text{ miles} \div 34 \text{ mpg} = 127.76$ gallons approximately. Round this to 128 gallons. So the cost would be $128 \times \$2.10 = \268.80

d) Which car is more economical? What is the savings in fuel costs using this car? The VW is more economical. You save $(\$268.80 - 238.50) = \30.30 with the VW.

(thank you to Dr. Gerald Fast http://www.uwosh.edu/coehs/cmagentproject/many_word/index.htm)

fact or judgment?

session 4

Determine whether each of the following statements, *if true*, would convey a fact or a judgment. Circle your answer. Be prepared to share how you arrived at your decision. Note: the goal here is not to assess the truthfulness of the statement but whether it fits into the category of fact or judgment.

1	Bill and Melinda Gates have three children.	FACT	JUDGMENT
2	We should not be building a wall between the US and Mexico if only because of the environmental devastation it will cause.	FACT	JUDGMENT
3	Abortion is the gravest sin.	FACT	JUDGMENT
4	The fact of the matter is that unless we start treating LGBTQ issues seriously, many young people will exit the church.	FACT	JUDGMENT
5	The crowd gathered on the National Mall at Donald Trump's inauguration was the largest in history.	FACT	JUDGMENT
6	Really, there are only eight planets orbiting the sun.	FACT	JUDGMENT
7	All white people are racist.	FACT	JUDGMENT
8	The Nokia 1100 and 1110 models have sold more than any other mobile phone models in the last 20 years, including Apple.	FACT	JUDGMENT
9	Bill and Melinda Gates really have five children.	FACT	JUDGMENT
10	Truthfully, there should be a law against gambling.	FACT	JUDGMENT
11	Instagram is a better platform for young people.	FACT	JUDGMENT
12	More young people are on Instagram than on Facebook.	FACT	JUDGMENT
13	The Loving vs. Virginia decision in 1967 made it legal for people from other countries to marry one another and get US citizenship.	FACT	JUDGMENT
14	2016 is the warmest year on record globally.	FACT	JUDGMENT
15	Facebook has a worse problem with hate speech than Reddit.	FACT	JUDGMENT

fact or judgment? answer key

session 4

Determine whether each of the following statements, *if true*, would convey a fact or a judgment. Circle your answer. Be prepared to share how you arrived at your decision. *Note: the goal here is not to assess the truthfulness of the statement but whether it fits into the category of fact or judgment. Explanatory note: Students are likely to have difficulty understanding this concept. Sometimes they will think that if it is "correct" then it is a fact and if it is "wrong" then it is a judgment. The point of this exercise is to note that fact and judgment are different categories and that to assess the truthfulness of a fact requires a different set of skills than to assess the truthfulness of a judgment. It is possible for something to be factually true or untrue (based on its accuracy or inaccuracy). It is also possible for a judgment to be true or untrue (but based on a different set of qualifiers.) Before we can even begin to decide whether something is true or not, we need to know in what category we are making that assessment.*

So, for example, the Gateses cannot have both three children and five children. One of these statements is clearly factually inaccurate. But in order to determine which is accurate (if either) we would use the skills necessary to determine facticity.... Not those used to assess judgments.

A key point you will want to highlight: Saying something is a "fact" or "reality" does not necessarily put it into the category of fact.

1	Bill and Melinda Gates have three children.	FACT	JUDGMENT
2	We should not be building a wall between the US and Mexico if only because of the environmental devastation it will cause.	FACT	JUDGMENT
3	Abortion is the gravest sin.	FACT	JUDGMENT
4	The fact of the matter is that unless we start treating LGBTQ issues seriously, many young people will exit the church.	FACT	JUDGMENT

5	The crowd gathered on the National Mall at Donald Trump's inauguration was the largest in history.	FACT	JUDGMENT
6	Really, there are only eight planets orbiting the sun. The category here could be argued a bit. It is a statement fact-based statement, but whether something is a planet or not, depends a bit on what scientists judge to be a planet.	FACT	JUDGMENT
7	All white people are racist.	FACT	JUDGMENT
8	The Nokia 1100 and 1110 models have sold more than any other mobile phone models in the last 20 years, including Apple.	FACT	JUDGMENT
9	Bill and Melinda Gates really have five children.	FACT	JUDGMENT
10	Truthfully, there should be a law against gambling.	FACT	JUDGMENT
11	Instagram is a better platform for young people.	FACT	JUDGMENT
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13	The Loving vs. Virginia decision in 1967 made it legal for people from other countries to marry one another and get US citizenship.	FACT	JUDGMENT
14	2016 was the warmest year yet on record globally.	FACT	JUDGMENT
15	Facebook has a worse problem with hate speech than Reddit.	FACT	JUDGMENT

renewing the mind

session 5

Scripture Text: Romans 12:1-2

I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

A renewal of the mind. That is what an engineer named Max was after when he left his job at Google a few years back.

I learned about Max from a podcast. Apparently Max loved his job. Loved life in San Francisco. Loved the people he worked with. But as the months passed, Max began to realize that he was living in a “bubble.” He was only meeting others who shared his experiences and reinforced his views. He decided that in order to broaden his perspective, he would design an app that would send him to random public events posted on Facebook, allowing him to meet and talk with people he would never otherwise encounter. The app took him to a gathering of young Russian professionals, a pancake breakfast, a salsa-dancing event, and even Christmas dinner at a stranger’s home. Max admitted it could be incredibly awkward to go where the app sent him. After all, he didn’t know anyone there. Sometimes it took him places where he didn’t exactly feel safe, such as a biker bar on the side of a rural highway. But he would go in open-minded—not there to judge, just to meet people wherever they were at. It turned out that the experience was so enriching, he eventually quit his job to devote two years of his life to following where the app might take him across the country. He also began to share the app with others so that they could join in the experiment. Max and his colleagues continued to have amazing conversations that opened their eyes to the experiences of others and introduced them to very different activities than they would have otherwise enjoyed. Turns out bocce ball is super fun.

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“Bubble-Hopping (Reality Part Two),” *Invisibilia*, June 8, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/08/531905309/reality-part-two>. See also the follow-up to this episode, “Bonus: Catch-Up with Max Hawkins,” December 22, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/22/572696073/bonus-catch-up-with-max-hawkins>. Max’s app is available at <https://findrandomevents.com>.

Bubbles were bursting all over the place. And as I was listening to the podcast, I found myself really admiring Max. One of the things the 2016 election illumined for so many of us was how small our bubbles are—how we only talk to people who are like us. We have few interracial friendships, few interreligious friendships. We know so little about other parts of the country, much less the world. Max struck me as someone who, in St. Paul’s words, wasn’t conforming himself to the age but open to transformation. I was thinking maybe I should get Max’s app and try it out myself.

The original podcast telling Max’s story, however, was followed by a second episode, recorded several months later. And this one complicated matters. Apparently sometimes the app—with its design for randomness—was sending users to some profoundly uncomfortable places. One user described a time that Max’s app sent her to an event billed as a “midget wrestling strip club,” or as she described it in her own words, a “trifecta of exploitation.” She wanted to be open to stretching experiences and getting outside of her bubble. She didn’t want to be close-minded. At the same time, even being present at such an event evoked a deep discomfort within her. Did attending demonstrate an admirable curiosity about the wider world or did it cross over into the realm of what the Fathers of the Church deride as curiositas—a lurid, seedy curiosity? By paying the cover charge to get into the event, was she supporting the ongoing existence of such venues?

Max and his friends were forced to ask, “Are there limits to how much we should be willing to bubble hop?” Are there worlds that we simply should not entertain? Is being neutral and open-minded always the way to go? What should we do about the deep discomfort we sometimes feel? Yes, sometimes it’s just because the situation we’re in is socially awkward; sometimes it’s telling us to be attentive to our safety; but sometimes, might it also be something more? The English writer G. K. Chesterton was known to quip, “An open mind is something like the open mouth, designed to bite down on something solid.” Maybe open-mindedness is not really meant to be a permanent stance in life but a step in a bigger journey?

The renewal of mind that St. Paul talks about seems to say so. He doesn’t just say to undergo a renewal of mind but to undergo a renewal of mind so that you’ll be able to “discern what is the will of God” or, in other words, to discern “what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (The will of God and the good are the same thing.)

The renewal of mind that Paul seems to be talking about is what now we might call renewal of conscience—a deeper listening to that voice inside of each of us, nudging us in the direction of what is good and away from what is evil. The voice that says, “Do this . . . Avoid that.” Just like reason is a God-given capacity to help figure out what’s real, conscience is a God-given capacity to help figure out what’s good. And, like reason, conscience is not just for Christians. Everyone has a conscience. And it’s important that we listen to it and not turn it off in the effort of being open-minded. Because while we don’t necessarily want to avoid doing things just because they might be awkward, or even just because they make us nervous, we do still want to avoid things that aren’t good for us or the wider world.

When people ignore the voice of reason, we end up with things such as the Flat Earth Society or climate change denial. When people ignore the voice of conscience, we end up with things such as the Holocaust.

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“Bonus: Catch-Up with Max Hawkins.”

G. K. Chesterton, quoted by Bishop Robert Barron, “Looking for the Nones,” YouTube video, 1:04:22, March 7, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuQq3nn15ZE>.

We open our minds not just for the sake of having open minds. We open our minds in order to search for the “good and pleasing and perfect.” And we can only do that if we are guided by conscience. So, rather than turn that voice off while on our bubble-bursting adventures, we actually want to pay more attention to it. To develop it. To feed it. To nurture it—with the wisdom of the ages, with Church teaching, with sage counsel. (The good news is you don’t have to figure everything out all by yourself!) We tend to the conscience so that in whatever random direction the app of life takes us, we only enter an experience, a relationship, an event to the degree that it serves good.

Max’s friend says she stood outside the strip club for a while and decided to go in, but she left after only an hour. Indeed, she saw things she’d never seen before, but they were things she knew no one should see. We can’t live totally judgment-free lives and simultaneously hope for a more just world. “You have to acknowledge,” she said at the end of the podcast, “that sometimes standing up does mean closing off.”

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“Bonus: Catch-Up with Max Hawkins.”

catechism of the catholic church & lying

session 6

selections from part 3, section 2, article 8 on the eighth commandment
for fuller text, see: https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P8H.HTM

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.²

It was said to the men of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn."

2464 The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offenses against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness: they are fundamental infidelities to God and, in this sense, they undermine the foundations of the covenant.

I. Living in the Truth

2468 Truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity, or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

2469 "Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another." The virtue of truth gives another his just due. Truthfulness keeps to the just mean between what ought to be expressed and what ought to be kept secret: it entails honesty and discretion. In justice, "as a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth."

"lying is the
most direct
offense
against the
truth"

– ccc #2483

III. Offenses Against Truth

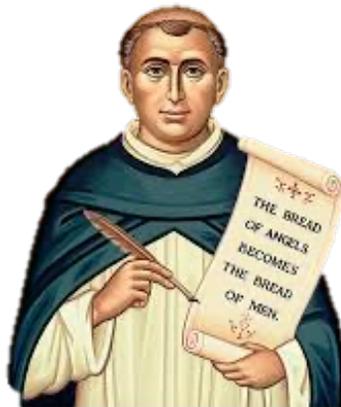
2482 "A lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving."

2483 Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead into error someone who has the right to know the truth. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.

2485 By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray.

2486 Since it violates the virtue of truthfulness, a lie does real violence to another. It affects his ability to know, which is a condition of every judgment and decision. It contains the seed of discord and all consequent evils. Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.

2487 Every offense committed against justice and truth entails the duty of reparation, even if its author has been forgiven. When it is impossible publicly to make reparation for a wrong, it must be made secretly...It obliges in conscience.



"Since it violates the virtue of truthfulness, a lie does real violence to another." – CCC #2486

catechism of the catholic church & how much truth to tell

session 7

selections from part 3, section 2, article 8 on the eighth commandment
for fuller text, see: https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P8H.HTM

III. Offenses Against Truth

2477 Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury. He becomes guilty:

- of rash judgment who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;
- of detraction who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them;
- of calumny who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.

2478 To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way:

Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. and if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.

2479 Detraction and calumny destroy the reputation and honor of one's neighbor. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity.

2480 Every word or attitude is forbidden which by flattery, adulation, or complaisance encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins. Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech.

2481 Boasting or bragging is an offense against truth. So is irony aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his behavior.

IV. Respect for the Truth

2488 The right to the communication of the truth is not unconditional. Everyone must conform his life to the Gospel precept of fraternal love. This requires us in concrete situations to judge whether or not it is appropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it.

2489 Charity and respect for the truth should dictate the response to every request for information or communication. The good and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language. The duty to avoid scandal often commands strict discretion. No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it

2492 Everyone should observe an appropriate reserve concerning persons' private lives. Those in charge of communications should maintain a fair balance between the requirements of the common good and respect for individual rights. Interference by the media in the private lives of persons engaged in political or public activity is to be condemned to the extent that it infringes upon their privacy and freedom.

V. The Use of the Social Communications Media

2493 Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural promotion, and formation. This role is increasing, as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influence exercised on public opinion.

2494 The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good. Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity:

The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and - within the limits set by justice and charity - complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld.

2495 "It is necessary that all members of society meet the demands of justice and charity in this domain. They should help, through the means of social communication, in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion." Solidarity is a consequence of genuine and right communication and the free circulation of ideas that further knowledge and respect for others.

"The right to the communication of the truth is not unconditional. Everyone must conform his life to the Gospel precept of fraternal love" – CCC #2488

2496 The means of social communication (especially the mass media) can give rise to a certain passivity among users, making them less than vigilant consumers of what is said or shown. Users should practice moderation and discipline in their approach to the mass media. They will want to form enlightened and correct consciences the more easily to resist unwholesome influences.

2497 By the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not offend against charity in disseminating information. They should strive to respect, with equal care, the nature of the facts and the limits of critical judgment concerning individuals. They should not stoop to defamation.

2498 "Civil authorities have particular responsibilities in this field because of the common good.... It is for the civil authority ... to defend and safeguard a true and just freedom of information." By promulgating laws and overseeing their application, public authorities should ensure that "public morality and social progress are not gravely endangered" through misuse of the media. Civil authorities should punish any violation of the rights of individuals to their reputation and privacy. They should give timely and reliable reports concerning the general good or respond to the well-founded concerns of the people. Nothing can justify recourse to disinformation for manipulating public opinion through the media. Interventions by public authority should avoid injuring the freedom of individuals or groups.



"By the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not offend against charity in disseminating information" – CCC #2497

truth scenarios

session 10

Directions: Consider each of the following scenarios and decide what it would look like to “live truth” in the situation. Is this a scenario where one needs to “seek truth,” “speak truthfully,” and/or “be true”? (Don’t feel you need to limit yourself to choosing just one! You may be able to argue for all three.) How would you coach the person involved drawing on the conversations we’ve had during the previous nine sessions. Note that as a coach you don’t need to come up with an answer for the person, but rather can just point them in the right direction for figuring out how to arrive at their own answer. What tools / resources could the person use to think through their response?

Scenario 1

Tien’s daughter, Lam, had her first wiggly tooth and was nervous about losing it. She cried when anyone tried to touch it, even as it hung by a thread. To persuade Lam to let him pull the thing out, Tien promised the tooth fairy would come that night and bring her a dollar which she could put toward purchasing the toy she wanted. Lam gave in. That night as Tien snuck in to her room to put the dollar under her pillow, Lam rolled over and turned a flash light into his face. “I knew it,” she said, “There is no tooth fairy. You lied to me.”

seek truth

how?

speak truthfully

how?

be true

how?

truth scenarios

session 10

Scenario 2

Amber has been excited about the coming national election because it will be the first time she is able to vote. She has registered already and, at the encouragement of her civics teacher, has been following more of the news on Twitter to keep informed on the issues she considers most relevant. Her grandparents with whom she lives are news junkies, spending large swaths of time watching cable news while they are more housebound. They express strong political opinions that contradict Amber's perspective, especially around issues related to race and policing. In the past, Amber has told them that they have it wrong, but this hasn't gone well. The more she brings the topic up, the more argumentative they become. She feels that the truth of what is going on is being entirely dismissed.

seek truth

how?

speak truthfully

how?

be true

how?

truth scenarios

session 10

Scenario 3

Elijah belongs to an ecumenical youth group that includes teens from a number of local churches. One of the commitments of the group is to respect each other's beliefs. Indeed, most of what they do together is community service and eat pizza. When together they don't talk much Bible except. On Facebook, however, one of the other teens, Marisa, constantly shares links to stories that promote creationism and debate evolution. She challenges friends (who include many members of the youth group) not to fall prey to the claims of scientists, most of whom are atheists. Elijah can see that fellow youth group members often thank Marisa for posting what she posts and sometimes share the links on their own pages.

seek truth

how?

speak truthfully

how?

be true

how?

truth scenarios

session 10

Scenario 4

Arokia and her cousin Max grew up in the same neighborhood and as children spent lots of time together, both in school and out. When they were little, she knew Max didn't interact like the other kids, but most of the time, it didn't really matter. He rarely looked her in the eye. He didn't speak until he was four. He often did his own thing. When they were eight, Arokia's mom explained that Max had Autism Spectrum Disorder and that he didn't process things in the same way. She asked Arokia to watch out for him at school. Arokia did. She stood up for Max when she saw him being bullied. She sat next to him at lunch. But once they got into middle school, it got tougher. Sometimes Max could be so blunt that it was hurtful. When she was with friends, he would often walk up and interrupt the conversation. Freshman year of high school, he got a crush on one of Arokia's friends—Emma—and would not stop talking about her; would not stop texting her; would not stop bringing her small gifts. Even after Emma made clear that she was not interested, Max would not back off. Emma is now so frustrated she has told Arokia she "wants to get a restraining order against Max."

seek truth

how?

speak truthfully

how?

be true

how?