

1

Creation and covenant



In this chapter, you will explore:

- Catholic beliefs about human sin
- the importance of the Sinai **Covenant** between God and the Israelites, and the role of the Ten Commandments
- how Catholics believe that, because we are made in the image of God, we can enter into a relationship with God that involves us following rules
- the importance of these rules and laws, as well as where these laws come from
- how humans know right from wrong, including the role of our conscience
- the importance of Baptism as a way of freeing people from sin, and of receiving God's grace that gives us the power to resist sin.

Key word

covenant – a promise or agreement made between two parties. The Bible tells of several covenants that God made with individuals and groups of people



Think

What do you think is the most important rule to follow?



Understand

- 1 With a partner:
 - a Write a list of things you already know about the rules and laws that Catholics follow.
 - b How do we know these rules and laws?
 - c Where do they come from?
 - d Why is it easy or difficult to obey laws and rules?
- 2 Do you think there are some rules that everyone should follow? Why or why not?

Covenant is an important theme in this chapter. The timeline on the next page will remind you of the covenants in the Bible.

Adam and Eve

God enters into relationship with our first ancestors, entrusting Creation to them and, in return, expecting them to observe the moral law.

Noah

After God sends the flood to destroy all living things on earth apart from Noah and his family, God promises that he will never destroy the earth again. Noah was saved because he was a good and faithful man. The rainbow is a sign of this covenant.



▲ Noah's ark

Abraham

God promises Abraham that he will have a land of his own and many descendants if he trusts in God and does what he says, which includes moving his family across the land and being prepared to sacrifice his son. All those in Abraham's tribe were circumcised; this was a sign of the covenant.

Moses

This covenant is made with the whole of Israel. If they follow the Ten Commandments (given to Moses by God) then God will bless them and they will be God's people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.



▲ You will discuss the story of Moses later in this chapter

David

King David is told that the one who God will send (the messiah) will be from David's line or a 'son of David'.

The new covenant

Catholics believe that through faith in Jesus, human beings can receive God's grace, forgiveness from their sins, the Holy Spirit to guide them in their lives and the possibility of eternal life with God. Jesus fulfilled all of the other covenants. Hence Catholics speak of this covenant as 'new and everlasting'.

1.1

What went wrong?



Think

When have you heard the word 'sin'? What things do you think count as sins?

At the end of the second creation account in Genesis 2, all of creation was in harmony. God, humans and nature were all living alongside each other and creation was as God intended it to be. Then sin entered the world and everything changed.

What is sin?

Sin is something human beings do that goes against what God wants. However, sin is more than just breaking rules – it involves turning away from God's love, ignoring him and instead focusing on ourselves. It can be a thought, an act, intention or omission that deliberately goes against the way that God wishes things to be.

YouCat tells us that 'Sin is a rejection of God and refusal to accept God's love'. (YouCat 67)

A personal sin is a sin that somebody freely commits and therefore they are responsible for it.

Sin is responsible for much of the suffering in the world. In Year 7, you explored the world as God created it: God 'saw that it was good'. We know that the world now is not like the one described in Genesis 1 and 2. So what went wrong?



Understand

- 1 Read Genesis 3 to find out the next part of the story. As you read the story, think about why this story is known as 'the Fall'.
- 2 Summarise the important parts of the story in your notes.

When we look at the world, there are many questions about evil. Where does it come from? Why is there so much trouble and suffering around us? People have always asked themselves these questions. The ancient people of Israel thought about these questions too. God answered some of their questions through the great stories in the Book of Genesis.

So the people of Israel knew:

- there had been a catastrophe at the beginning of the human story that affected everything from then on
- that evil in the world is because of bad choices made by humans
- that sin leads to more sin
- that sin brings destruction into the world.

They also knew that God hadn't forgotten them.

Where does evil come from?

The first humans disobeyed God. Tempted by the Devil, Adam and Eve wanted their way instead of God's way. They blamed each other.

What happened then?

They were sent away from God's presence. They had fallen away from God's friendship.

Does that make a difference to me?

When Adam and Eve fell from God, they passed on a fallen nature.

What happened after the exile from Paradise?

Well, one son (Cain) murdered his brother (Abel). Then wrongdoing spread like a disease.

And then ...?

In their pride, people tried to create a world without God, the Tower of Babel.

Did it work?

Trying to live without God brings disaster. In this case, disaster came through the story of Noah's Ark.



Understand

- 3 Which part of the story above tells us something about:
 - a the way we try to blame others for what we have done?
 - b how we sometimes find it hard to control ourselves?
 - c how we sometimes want to push God out of our lives?
- 4 Explain why you think this story in Genesis is called 'the Fall'. Include examples from Genesis 3 in your answer.
- 5 Match up the punishments and consequences to the characters below. You may match each point to more than one character.

Character	Consequence
Adam	It will crawl on its belly
	Woman will crush its head
	The serpent will bite their heel
Eve	They will have pain in childbirth
	They will die
	They are expelled from the garden
Serpent	They will have to work hard on the land to produce food
	They are ashamed of their nakedness

1.2

What were the consequences of the Fall?

?

Think

How is the world different now from when it was first created? How are human beings different?



▲ After the Fall there were consequences for the whole human race

The account of the Fall in Genesis 3 tells us that there were consequences for Adam and Eve (and the serpent!) at the time. Catholics believe that there continue to be consequences for the whole human race.

What do we learn from Genesis 3?

As with the other symbolic stories in Genesis, it is not to be read literally. However, we know that Catholics believe it contains some important truths about us, God and the world. The Catechism calls it a **figurative** story.

Before the Fall ...	Once sin entered the world ...
Adam and Eve were in perfect harmony	Adam and Eve had tensions in their relationship (Genesis 3:7-16)
human beings had all they needed and were in harmony with nature	Adam and Eve needed to work with nature and this can be difficult and challenging. For example, they had to work the land to produce food (Genesis 3)
there was no death	Adam and Eve would eventually die (Genesis 3:19)

Understand

- 1 Describe the consequences of the Fall for Adam and Eve.
- 2 The Fall is a figurative story, but what consequences for Adam and Eve do we still see in our world today?

What is Original Sin?

Remembering that Catholics do not take this story literally but instead read it figuratively, one important **doctrine** that comes from Genesis 3 is that of Original Sin.

Catholics believe that there were original human beings and those humans had an original holiness and rightness with God (as seen in Genesis 1 and 2) that was lost. If it had not been lost then that holiness would have been passed to all of their descendants – the whole human race. When it was lost, the effects of that were also passed to the whole human race. Our first parents committed the first sin and our human nature was altered. This is still true of us today.

Human nature was changed after this event compared to when God first created human beings. As a result of the pride of our first parents, each of us shares a fallen nature. We call this 'Original Sin'. We say that this Original Sin affects us all as a state that is 'contracted', not as an act 'committed'. This means even though we didn't do (commit) it, we contract the effect of it (the effect is passed on to us).

What are the effects of Original Sin?

As a result of Original Sin, we find it harder to love good and are more easily drawn to bad. This is called **concupiscence**. We experience conflict in ourselves between what we know we should do and what we want to do. Our minds became clouded and the existence of God is no longer obvious to us. In short, we find it easier to commit sin ourselves.

Key words

figurative – a non-literal story meant to give meaning

doctrine – a teaching, in this case the teaching of the Catholic Church

concupiscence – strong desire or lust

prophecy – a message delivered by God through a chosen messenger

God made no mistake in Creation. All was in harmony – between God and humankind, between humans and within each human. There was also harmony between humankind and the created order. Whenever we sin, we separate ourselves from God and from others. Sin introduced a fracturing of all those harmonies.



Understand

- 3 Write down as many differences between personal sin and Original Sin as you can find.
- 4 Why is it incorrect to say we have committed 'Original Sin'? Try to include the following words in your answer:
personal sin Original Sin committed contracted

The Protoevangelium

One of the parts of this story is more hopeful, though it doesn't look that way at first glance! The Catholic Church calls it the *Protoevangelium*, which means the 'first gospel'. The word 'gospel' itself means 'good news'. This is good news because although sin has entered the world, God announces that this is not the end of the world. In this story there is a **prophecy** that humankind will be rescued!

*I will put enmity between
you and the woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.*

THE PROTOEVANGELIUM

GENESIS 3:15

Catholics believe the woman here is Mary and that Jesus is the descendent who will redeem human beings from this sin.

There will be a battle between the woman and the serpent, and the victory will be won by a descendent of hers.

▲ The *Protoevangelium* is the first Gospel



Understand

- 5 It is difficult to read Genesis 3:15 as good news! Explain why Genesis 3:15, known as the *Protoevangelium*, is actually good news.



▲ Original Sin fractured the original harmony of creation



Think

Empirical evidence is evidence that we can see and experience.

- What empirical evidence could you present to argue the doctrine of Original Sin is true?
- Do we have similar evidence for other doctrines, for example that Jesus is God incarnate or that the Trinity is one God in three persons?



Discern

- 6 Consider the following view: *Original Sin is the only Christian doctrine for which there is empirical evidence.* Present arguments for and against this statement, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

1.3

What is Baptism?

Key word

sacrament – an outward sign of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification



▲ John the Baptist baptised Jesus

Baptism was instituted by Christ and has been practised by the Church from the beginning. It is the sacrament that all Christians share in common. Christian denominations celebrate it slightly differently and at different ages, but they all believe that Baptism is the way Christians join the Church – that it is how human beings are saved after the Fall. It is the first **Sacrament** (gateway sacrament) and you cannot receive any other sacraments unless you are baptised.

Baptism in the New Testament

John the Baptist was baptising people who wanted to repent and begin a new life at the time of Jesus, but this was not sacramental baptism. Jesus allowed himself to receive John's baptism of repentance, thereby letting himself be taken for a sinner (2 Corinthians 5:21, CCC 536).

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave the disciples the Great Commission to continue his work and mission. Part of their responsibility was to baptise believers.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

We also hear about Baptism in the Acts of the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, St Peter said to the crowd:

Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Therefore the Apostles offered Baptism to anyone who believed in Jesus.

From the very beginning of the Church, those who believed in Jesus were baptised to put right what was wrong in the human condition and to share the life of God.

Understand

- 1 Look at the following words that have had their vowels removed. What are they and what is their significance to this topic?
JHN TH BPTST TH GRT CMMSSN PNTCST

What is a Sacrament of Initiation?

There are three Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. These are the Sacraments by which someone joins the Church.

Baptism

- Usually infants are baptised.
- People enter into the Church through Baptism.

Eucharist

- Usually happens at around 7 years old.
- People express their unity with the Church through Holy Communion.

Confirmation

- Usually happens in adolescence (7–18 years old).
- People are sealed with the Holy Spirit and share fully the mission of Christ.

?

Think

What does the word 'initiation' mean? When have you heard it used?

Link

You learnt about the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 7 (Book 1, Chapter 5.9).

What happens in a Catholic Baptism?

In the Catholic Church, Baptism can occur either during or outside of Mass. The parents, godparents and other family and friends of the child gather in the church. Godparents are chosen by the parents to be role models in the faith to the child.

The parents are asked what name they have chosen for their child. They are asked what they want for their child – the answer is Baptism. They are asked if they understand what Baptism means. The godparents are asked if they will support the parents in their duty as Christian parents. They reply 'We do'.

The priest and then the parents and godparents trace the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead to welcome them into the Church and dedicate them to Christ.

Then there are readings and bidding prayers including prayers for the family.

The priest says a prayer of exorcism that the child will be set free from Original Sin and then anoints the child on the chest with the oil of catechumens. This is a symbol of strength and power that comes from Christ. The priest prays:

We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Saviour; may he strengthen you with his power, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The prayer reflects the strength the child will need to be a Christian, to avoid sin and temptation, and to stand up for their faith.

The child is brought to the **Baptismal font** and the water is blessed. The parents and godparents then make promises. They renew their own baptismal promises so that they are ready to support the child in their life of faith, but also on behalf of the child as they can't yet make promises for themselves.

Key word

Baptismal font – feature in the church that holds the waters used for Baptism



▲ The Sign of the Cross is traced on the child's forehead

?

Think

Why is it necessary to be strong to keep a Christian faith? What challenges might a Christian face?

1.3 What is Baptism?

Do you reject Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty promises?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?

I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

▲ The baptismal promises

The child is then held over the font and is baptised by having water poured over their head and the priest says:

I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The font represents the natural water sources like rivers and lakes where the first Baptisms would have taken place. The water symbolises new life in Christ and the **resurrection**. It is the end of their old life and the beginning of their new life as a Christian.



▲ The child is baptised over the font

The priest then anoints the child on the head with the second oil in Baptism, the oil of chrism. The oil of chrism signifies that the person is anointed with the Holy Spirit just as the Baptism of Christ revealed that Jesus is eternally anointed with the Holy Spirit. It is used to consecrate someone or something to God's service. In Baptism, which is also called 'christening', the child is made like Christ. The priest says:

As Christ was anointed priest, prophet and king, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

Anointing means that someone has been set aside or chosen to do a task. In this case, the child's anointing signifies that they share in Christ's threefold **office** (role) of priest, prophet and king. It is hoped that they will live a life that mirrors Christ in its holiness, sharing the Gospel and leading others in a Christian example.

The child is then dressed in a white garment. The family usually bring the item such as a shawl or a blanket. The white garment again symbolises that the child has become a new creation and is pure.

The parents are then presented with a baptismal candle, lit from the **Paschal candle**, along with the words:

Receive the light of Christ.

This shows that, through baptism, they share in the death and resurrection of Christ. They are offered eternal life. The parents and godparents are told it is their responsibility to keep the light of Christ burning in the child's life. This means they are responsible for helping the child to understand their faith and to be good examples for them.



▲ The baptismal candle is lit from the Paschal candle

The Our Father prayer is said and blessings are given to the parents.

Understand

- 2 Put the events of the Rite of Baptism in the correct order:
 - anointing with chrism oil
 - anointing with oil of catechumens
 - baptising with water
 - baptismal promises
 - lighting the baptismal candle
 - blessing for parents
 - dressing with the white garment
 - prayer of exorcism
- 3 All of these parts of the Rite have a symbolic meaning, expressing what Catholics believe is happening during a Baptism. What is the significance of each part of the Baptismal Rite named above?

Key words

resurrection – to rise from the dead to a new life

office – authoritative burden, duty, responsibility or function related to service

Paschal candle – the candle is a symbol of the resurrection and is lit at Baptisms, funerals and at Easter

Respond

- 4 If you ever go to a Baptism, what will you look out for? Why does this stand out as important to you?

What are the effects of Baptism?

Catholics believe that people receive grace through Baptism. Grace is God's free gift that helps a person to respond to their call and be a good Christian. We cannot do everything by ourselves and need to allow for God's grace to do its work in our lives.

Through Baptism, a person receives the following graces:

- 1 purification from the effects of Original Sin
- 2 the beginning of a new life
- 3 becoming part of the body of Christ
- 4 being left with an indelible mark.

Purification from sin

Through Baptism all sins are forgiven – Original Sin and personal sin and even the consequences of sin, which for us (like for Adam and Eve) means separation from God and death. Remember that Original Sin is contracted and not committed and that Catholics believe all people are born with it. It is removed by Baptism. Personal sin is removed by Baptism if a person has committed a sin, so this element doesn't apply in infant Baptism.

The beginning of a new life

Even though we are freed from sin, some of the effects of sin remain. We are still tempted by sin and are inclined to do wrong. Catholics believe that Baptism saves people from the effects of the Fall that left us separated from God. Through God's grace, given at Baptism, the person is given:

- the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love, so they are able to believe in God, have hope in him and love him
- the grace to grow in goodness through practising the moral (human) virtues like courage, justice and patience
- the presence of the Holy Spirit, whose gifts are given more fully at Confirmation.

Link



You learnt about the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 7 (Book 1, Chapter 5.9).



▲ Water is a symbol of new life

Becoming part of the body of Christ

All people are known and loved by God, but through Baptism a person becomes a member of the Church. All members of the Church are called to share in Christ’s threefold office of priest, prophet, and king. like Christ, as shown through the anointing with chrism oil.



▲ In Baptism people are called to be priest, prophet and king

Being left with an indelible mark

Baptism cannot be undone and there is no need to be rebaptised. The effects on a person’s soul are permanent.

Understand

5 Copy and complete the table to show the effects of Baptism.

	Purification from sin	Beginning of a new life
What does this mean for the person being baptised?		
Which symbols used in Baptism show this?		

- 6 Which membership does a person join at Baptism?
- 7 Why can’t a person become un-baptised?

Discern

8 Consider the following view:
The Baptism of babies does not make sense as they are not guilty of any personal sins.
Present arguments for and against this statement, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

1.4

What is freedom?



Think

What does freedom mean to you?

Link



You learnt about Genesis 1 and 2 in Year 7 (Book 1, Chapter 1).

Key word

free will – the ability to make choices for ourselves

Freedom and responsibility

In Genesis 1 and 2, we studied the world as God intended it to be. In those creation accounts, the human beings were given the gift of **free will**. They had the choice to use it for good, leading them to God, or for bad, leading them away from God. We know what happened and what the consequences were.



Understand

- 1 What choices do humans have as a result of God's gift of free will?
- 2 What responsibilities did God give to Adam in the second creation account (Genesis 2:4-25)?
- 3 In what ways were human beings different from the other creatures?
- 4 What was the one rule that Adam and Eve had to follow?
- 5 Use your Bible or notes from this chapter to find evidence from Genesis 3 that:
 - a Adam and Eve were free
 - b Adam and Eve had to take responsibility.

Freedom *from* and freedom *to*

Catholics believe that, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, a person can have freedom *from* sin and its consequences, including death. Baptism frees a person from these effects. They can then choose to use their freedom *to* live a good and fulfilling life and, when they die, enter the fullness of eternal life.

We have the freedom to act or not act in a certain way. Therefore our actions, when we choose them freely, are our own responsibility. Catholics believe choosing to do wrong abuses that God-given freedom and cannot lead to happiness. The more we sin, the more we only think of ourselves. We are then likely to sin more and become less free!

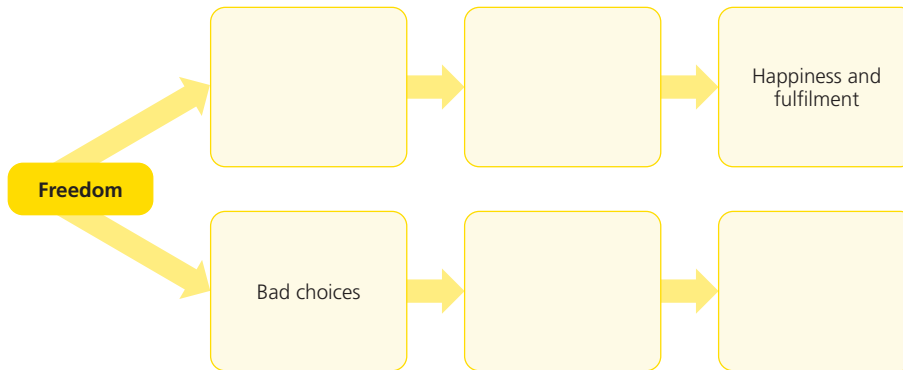
Choosing to do good is a positive use of the gift of freedom. Catholics believe the more we let God's grace into our life and are guided by the Holy Spirit, the more free we become because it opens our hearts to love and leads us to what is true and good, ultimately leading to happiness and fulfilment with God.



▲ Using our freedom to do wrong abuses the freedom we have been given

Understand

- 6 Create a flow diagram that shows the consequences of human choices. The diagram below will get you started, but you can use as many more arrows as you need.



- 7 What are the different ways a Catholic understands freedom?

Respond

- 8 Can you think of a time when you were given some freedom, perhaps at school or at home, that you did not use well? What were the consequences? How could things have been different?

Why are there rules?

Catholics don't believe that God gives us commandments because he will love us if we follow his commandments. They believe he gives us commandments to follow because he loves us. God's commandments are part of how humans can show our love for God in return.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

The commandments that need to be followed are part of a covenant. These rules are not just to prove we are obedient; they lead human beings to a full and happy life.

Discern

- 9 Consider the following view:
Rules are a necessary part of freedom.
 Present arguments for and against this statement, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

Respond

- 10 Reflect on ways in which rules set you free personally.

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Think

What are some of the rules the adults in your life ask you to follow? Do they ask you to follow rules because they love you, or do they love you because you follow the rules?

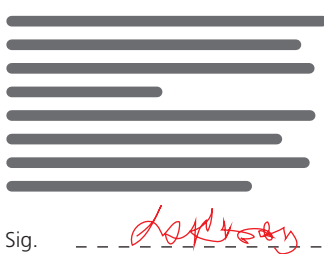
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Think

What would life be like without rules?

**Think**

Look at the pictures below. Discuss what is being promised in each image. What are the consequences of breaking the promises? What different categories of promise can you see?

Car loan contract**What is a covenant?**

‘Covenant’ is a rich concept, not easy to pin down in simple sentences. Let us start with a simple working definition:

A covenant is a two-way agreement involving freedom and responsibility.

But there is more to a covenant than that. A ‘contract’ would also fit in this definition but, when we speak of the ‘covenants God made with Israel’, we do not mean ‘contracts God made with Israel’.

Thought experiment

Suppose you enter a contract to download and use an illustrator app whose subscription is £5 per month. You decide you like it and think £5 each month fits your budget. Is this based on trust and personal relationship? Well, not really. It’s an impersonal deal. If you don’t pay up, you lose the service. If you do pay up, who gains? You, because you get use of the app, and the app designer, who increases their profits. Covenants are not like this; the biblical covenants are personal.

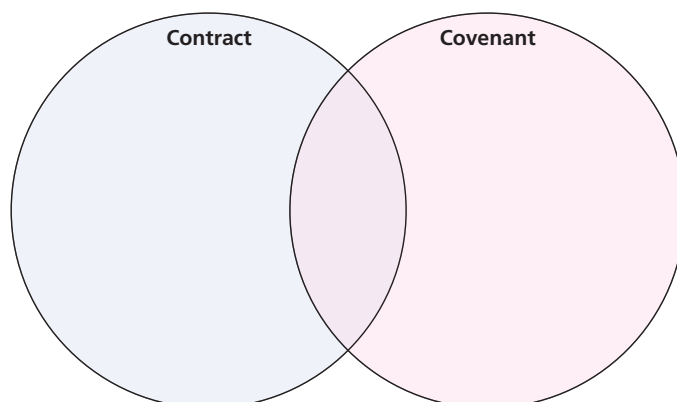
In summary, although a ‘contract’ can fit in our loose working definition of covenant, the biblical idea of covenant has some key differences. Look again at the examples of biblical covenant on the opening spread of this chapter. You will see some common features.

Contract	Biblical covenant
Initiated by you	Initiated by God
Two-sided advantage: both buyer and supplier benefit	One-sided advantage: for humans 'life to the full', adding nothing to God's glory
Based on a business relationship	Based on a personal relationship
Not geared to fuller freedom (could do the opposite – addiction, financial problems)	The people grow into fuller freedom (more on this later)
No 'forgiveness' – if you cease to pay, the service ceases	Possibility of forgiveness for a humble, repentant covenant-breaker

In Genesis 1:27, God says that, unlike other creatures, human beings are made in the image of God. Part of being made in God's image means we have free will and responsibility. Both of these are needed to enter into a covenant. A person needs to freely choose to be a part of the covenant and is given responsibilities when they enter into it. They must also take responsibility if they break it.

Understand

- 1 Copy and complete the Venn diagram, using key terms from the list of words provided below.



- one-sided advantage
 - impersonal relationship
 - involving responsibility
 - initiated by you
 - involving freedom
 - might be against freedom
 - initiated by God
 - personal relationship
 - no forgiveness
 - two-sided advantage
 - forgiveness for the repentant
- 2 Add two or more words of your own to the Venn diagram.
 - 3 Of all creatures, why are only human beings capable of entering into a covenant?

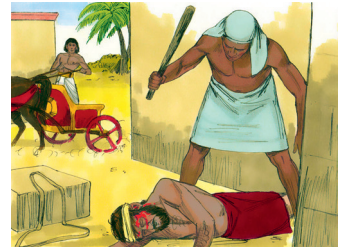
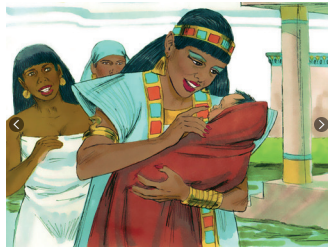
What is the Sinai Covenant?

1.6

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Think

Look at the comic strip below. What do you already know about the story of Moses? Discuss it with your class/partner to see if you can tell his life story.



▲ The life of Moses

Understand

- 1 What did God call the people of Israel to do?
- 2 Which features of a covenant (see Chapter 1.5) can you see in the Sinai Covenant?

What is the Sinai Covenant?

After fleeing slavery in Egypt, the Israelites lived in the desert for 40 years in search of the promised land. During that time, some of them became impatient and began to turn away from God, worshipping pagan gods instead. Moses went up Mount Sinai and, while he was there, he received laws from God that are known as the Ten Commandments. These rules were given to Moses so that the Israelites would know how to live a good life that was pleasing to God. God led the Israelites out of Egypt to freedom. In return he wanted them to live as his people – this meant they must follow his commandments. If they did not, there would be consequences for them (although they would have a chance to repent if they were truly sorry). This is the Sinai Covenant.

What are the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments are part of the Sinai Covenant. These are sometimes called the Decalogue (ten-words). The Ten Commandments can be found in two places in the Bible: Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21. They are not numbered in the Bible but the Catholic Church presents them as follows.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 I am the LORD your God: you shall have no other gods before me. | 6 You shall not commit adultery. |
| 2 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. | 7 You shall not steal. |
| 3 Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day. | 8 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. |
| 4 Honour your father and your mother. | 9 You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. |
| 5 You shall not kill. | 10 You shall not covet your neighbour's goods. |

The Ten Commandments are found in the Old Testament. They were received by Moses about 1500 years before Jesus was born. Yet these laws remain important to Catholics because they came from the mouth of God.

And God spoke all these words (Exodus 20:1)

Catholics do not view these as a list of individual laws or rules but instead as one whole law. You cannot, for example, break just one but let yourself off because you're getting the rest of them right! The Catechism puts it like this:

The decalogue forms a coherent whole ... to transgress one commandment is to infringe all the others. (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2069)

The Catholic Church teaches that there is something quite unusual about the Ten Commandments. They are revealed to us by general revelation (we can all discern in our hearts that these things are true) but they have also been made known to us through special revelation (they are written in the Bible) as a reminder of their importance.



Understand

- Devise a way to help you remember the Ten Commandments. It might be an acronym, symbols, a diagram or some other memorable way.
- Test yourself and then your neighbour on how many of the Ten Commandments you can recall.



Understand

- Explain the important beliefs about the Ten Commandments that are summarised by these symbols/images.



Discern

- Consider the following view:
People would know killing was wrong even before God told them not to do it in the Decalogue.
Present arguments for and against this statement, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

**Think**

Is it possible to decide which is the most important of the Ten Commandments?



▲ What is the greatest commandment in the law?

What is the greatest commandment?

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, he was being asked about all 613 commandments in the Jewish law. He did not answer with a single commandment:

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.' (Matthew 22:34-40)

Jesus' answer includes both how we must behave towards God and to each other. Three of the Ten Commandments are about our relationship with God and seven of them are to do with our relationship with each other (our neighbours). Jesus therefore summarised all of the Ten Commandments in the two commandments above: love God and love your neighbour.

**Understand**

- 1 What is Jesus' answer to the question of what is the greatest commandment?
- 2 Copy and complete the following table, writing out each of the Ten Commandments under the correct heading.

Love God	Love your neighbour

- 3 Explain how Jo's answer can be correct.

If the Ten Commandments are so important, why didn't Jesus give one of those when he was asked which was the greatest commandment? (Alex)

He did! He said they were all the greatest. (Jo)

How do the Ten Commandments apply today?

The Ten Commandments are very specific and seem to cover a limited amount of human behaviour. If there are just ten rules to follow, what about ... swearing, hitting, or giving to the poor?

The Catechism explains that many other things we should avoid or should do can come under the headings of the Ten Commandments if we understand them a little more.



?

Think

Do you think all of the Ten Commandments are still relevant today?

Commandment	Catholic beliefs about this commandment	What might this look like?
I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.	This is the first commandment because it is the key to the others. Nothing should have priority over God. People should have total faith and hope in God but this must be freely chosen and not forced on anyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not 'worshipping' something other than God such as money, power, influence or youth. These things distract from what is most important. Not putting trust in things other than God such as fortune telling, superstition or the occult.
You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.	To share your name with someone shows trust. God shared his name with us and to use it inappropriately breaks that trust and is disrespectful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not cursing with God's name, or making false promises in his name. Instead, God's name must be a blessing – like the Sign of the Cross.
Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day.	Originally, the sabbath remembers the seventh day of creation on which God rested. Christians replaced this with Sunday to remember the resurrection. It is both a time to break from work to worship God and a symbol of eternal rest in the future with God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending Mass to celebrate and give thanks to God. Refraining from work that prevents the worship of God or that stops the day being joyful, restful and restorative (except those with a serious service to society).
Honour your father and your mother.	People should show love, duty and respect to their parents, but also to people in society that we owe our life, wellbeing, security and faith to. It reminds people of the importance of family to support and nurture children. It is where children learn how to behave in society and is also called the 'domestic Church' as their faith is learnt there too. It also reminds people that they have a duty as citizens of the state they live in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children being loving, respectful, obedient and grateful to their parents, and taking care of them in sickness and old age. This can be our parents, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents and elders, but also our teachers, employers and superiors. Parents setting good examples. Caring for children and helping them to develop physically, to become good people and to get to know God. People should love and protect their country, participating in society, voting and paying taxes. This doesn't prevent criticism of the state. One can disobey it or resist if their conscience says so (see Chapter 1.8).

1.7 Are the Ten Commandments still relevant?

Commandment	Catholic beliefs about this commandment	What might this look like?
You shall not kill.	All life is sacred and belongs to God. It has only been entrusted to the person as a gift. It is precious from its very beginning in the womb until its natural end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate killing is forbidden. A person must never take their own or other lives – the exception is in self-defence. This includes killing even with good intention, e.g. to end suffering. Civilians must not be killed in war. Capital punishment must not be used. Because Catholics believe that life begins at conception, anything that harms unborn babies is not permitted; this includes abortion and embryo research. Any sort of abuse of a person is forbidden by this commandment. Humans must protect and preserve their own body and not cause it harm deliberately. People's bodies must be respected. If someone is dying they should be prayed for and receive the Sacraments if they are Catholic. When someone dies, they must be treated with respect. A person must not direct their anger towards another person. They must instead choose non-violence and work for peace. War should be avoided unless it satisfies very strict conditions known as 'the just war' criteria.
You shall not commit adultery.	<p>This is sometimes understood as cheating or 'having an affair'. It is a relationship that involves someone who is already married.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The commandment covers any sexual behaviour that goes against God's plan for creation, including sex outside of marriage. Within marriage, treating sex as a gift from God to create new life and welcome children. It reminds us that we should all be chaste, which means to respect and treat others and ourselves as precious individuals and not as physical or sexual objects. It condemns sexual violence.
You shall not steal.	<p>This relates to taking from another person unlawfully, but it also refers to sharing profits and the world's resources fairly.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct theft and keeping what is found (if no attempt is made to find the rightful owner), plagiarism and fraud all count as stealing. In business, a person must act morally by not, for example, refusing to pay people, driving up prices unfairly, doing poor work, or tax evasion. Businesses must look after workers and always put people before profits. People living in poverty must be cared for. People's property should be respected and no vandalism is allowed. A person must never be bought or sold as property. Enslaving people, trading soldiers and paying to adopt babies are all included. But this does not include buying sportspeople to play on a team. People should be involved in society, politics and business to make things better for others. Tax must be paid to contribute to the state so that services can be run. Caring for creation and natural resources is also included.

Commandment	Catholic beliefs about this commandment	What might this look like?
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.	This means deliberately acting against the truth, most obviously by lying. Lying is unfair and unloving. It affects how people trust each other and divides people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committing to their faith in God, which they believe to be the truth. Lying includes any untruth, from gossip to breaking promises, to perjury. When speaking the truth, people must also remember the importance of being helpful and kind and not saying unkind things just because they are 'true'. Media should truthfully inform people so it can be trustworthy. People who work in the media should be careful about what they report and share so it is not exaggerated or misrepresented for entertainment. All of the above is applicable on social media, as well as in person.
You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.	This means that people should not desire people who are already married.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People must protect their own and other people's marriages. They must be careful not to have relationships that could lead to people cheating on their partners. People should act modestly (animals don't worry about this!). Some things are meant to be private – this is about dignity, not about being prudish.
You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.	Coveting is feeling jealous and wanting what others have. A person might even wish another harm because of what they have or can do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not unreasonable to want what others have, but people must be respectful of others' property and not let it lead to greed or even theft or fraud. Instead of being sad or annoyed by what others have, we should try not to be envious, instead celebrating the gifts of others and focusing on what really matters, which is closeness with God.



Understand

4 Relate each example below to one of the Ten Commandments:

- vandalism
- focusing on getting close to God
- the obligation to vote
- cursing with God's name
- being too concerned with your power and influence
- behaving chastely
- being violent
- going to Mass on Sunday
- behaving modestly.

Key words

plagiarism – passing off somebody's work as your own

perjury – lying in court



Discern

5 Look at the table containing explanations of the Ten Commandments and what each of the commandments covers. To what extent are the Ten Commandments relevant today?



Respond

6 Did any of the explanations in the table surprise you? Which commandments do you feel you could follow more faithfully and in what way?

Why is a conscience so important?



Think

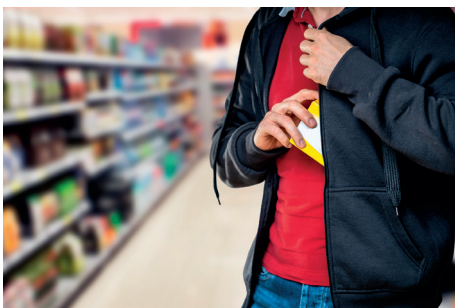
Have you ever felt like you really should do something? Or felt bad when you did do something? Have your actions ever made you feel good about yourself? This could be your conscience.

Key word

faculty – a natural ability or power



▲ Everyone has a God-given conscience



▲ Sometimes people do wrong things deliberately

What is a conscience?

The Catholic Church teaches that everyone has a conscience. They describe it as a **faculty**. Through their conscience, a person can judge and weigh up right and wrong. Their conscience will also let them know whether what they did was right or wrong and how they can take responsibility for it.

As all human beings have been made by God and all have the ability to reason, all people have a conscience that is God-given. Although some people believe that a conscience is the voice of God. Catholics believe that conscience is at the core of our being where we are alone with God, whose voice echoes in our depths.

How can a person trust their conscience?

If a person is weighing up what to do, how do they know if their conscience is telling them the right thing? Catholics believe that their conscience must be informed or educated. A person must never stop educating their conscience. This is a lifelong task. They must do this though studying the Bible and Church teachings. They should pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and seek advice from people who are educated in the faith. Then they will be better equipped to make decisions.

Must a person follow their conscience?

Catholics believe that if a person has informed their conscience, they must follow it. This is because, when confronted with a moral situation, one's conscience is the light that one must be guided by. This might mean following one way, even if in doing so other precious things have to be set aside. For example, you will later learn about Sophie Scholl, a young woman who followed her conscience and resisted Hitler, even though it meant loss of her own life. This is because a conscience is a God-given faculty and must be listened to. In fact, for Catholics, it is a sin to go against the certain judgment of conscience – that is how important it is to make sure it is trustworthy and to follow it.

Some people deliberately 'blind' their conscience. They convince themselves that something is right or ignore what they know to be right in order to do what they want for selfish reasons. This is not following an informed conscience. If a person deliberately does wrong, they are responsible for that action. If a person does something that turns out to be wrong even though they followed an informed conscience, they were still right to have followed their conscience and committed the act.

Understand

- 1 a Write out the true statements from the following list.
 - Catholics believe conscience is the voice of God.
 - All people have a God-given conscience because they were created by God.
 - Educating your conscience is a lifelong task.
 - A person can educate their conscience by listening to music, reading social media and thinking hard about it.
 - A person following an informed conscience who ends up doing wrong was still right to follow their conscience.
 - A person who deliberately blinds their conscience is not responsible for the wrong they do.
- b Rewrite any false statements so that they are true.

Making moral decisions

We know that Catholics believe that human beings were made free, can make choices and are responsible for those choices. Conscience plays an important part in this process and must be applied to making moral decisions. So how might this work?

The Catechism teaches that in order for an action to be right, three things need to be considered:

- The object: the action or thing you are doing.
- The intention: why you are doing it or what you want to achieve.
- The circumstances: these include the situation and the consequences that will happen as a result.

In order for an action to be good, all of these have to be good. For example, good intentions or outcomes don't make a wrong act good. A good act can also be made bad with the wrong intentions. The Catechism also says:

Some rules apply in every case:

- One may never do evil so that good may result from it.
- The Golden Rule: 'Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.'
- Charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbour and his conscience: 'Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience ... you sin against Christ.' Therefore 'it is right not to ... do anything that makes your brother stumble.'

(CCC 1789)

Thought experiment

A neighbour is being threatened by someone they owe money to. The person they owe is coming to their house and your neighbour fears for their life. They want you to hide them and to tell the person that they went away for a few days and that they won't find them at home.

Discern

- 2 Consider this statement:
So according to Catholics I can just do whatever I want if I feel it is right.
Respond to this statement, supporting your answer with Catholic beliefs.

Discern

- 3 Read the thought experiment on this page. Consider the following.
 - a What is the:
 - i object?
 - ii intention?
 - iii circumstance?
 - b What Church teaching do you know that would apply here?
 - c What Bible passages would apply here?
 - d Look at the rules (CCC 1789) above. Are they relevant here?
 - e What would you do?



▲ Read the thought experiment. What would you do?

Link



You learnt about Sophie Scholl in Year 7 (Book 1, Chapter 6.12).



▲ Sophie Scholl

Key word

passive resistance – a way to oppose the government without using violence

Sophie Scholl

You may remember a little about Sophie Scholl from Year 7. Here we will look at her life in more detail.

Sophie Scholl was born in 1920 in Germany. She was raised as a Lutheran and lived with her parents and five siblings.

On 1st September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland and, two days later, France and Britain declared war on Germany. The older Scholl brothers were sent off to fight. Throughout her time in high school and her early working life, Sophie became more and more opposed to the Nazi regime that was governing her country.

Between 1940 and 1941, her brother Hans, who had met some like-minded people at university, began to consider how they could oppose the Nazi government. They could see the misery the war was causing firsthand. They decided to show **passive resistance** by writing and distributing leaflets. It was 1942 and this was the beginning of the White Rose Movement. They aimed the leaflets at people they thought would be most convinced of their arguments. These leaflets were left in telephone books in public phone boxes, mailed to professors and students, and taken to universities for distribution. Sophie joined the resistance when she found out about her brother's involvement.

They distributed thousands of leaflets and reached households all over Germany. It was very difficult to get large numbers of stamps, paper and envelopes during the strict rationing, but they managed it by engaging a network of supporters. Through the leaflets, the White Rose Movement gained support among students and young people, and the authorities were unhappy. Sophie believed they were making a difference and things were going to change.

On 18th February 1943, Sophie and Hans Scholl went to the Ludwig Maximilian University to leave flyers out for the students to read. They brought a suitcase full of leaflets to the university main building, and rushed to drop copies in the empty corridors for students to find when they left the lecture rooms. They left before the lectures had ended but noticed that there were some left-over copies in the suitcase and decided to distribute them. Sophie flung the last remaining leaflets from the top floor down into the atrium. The caretaker of the university saw her do this and notified the authorities. He was member of the Nazi party.

Sophie and Hans were arrested and taken into custody by the **Gestapo**, where they were interrogated. Sophie confessed in order to protect the other members of the White Rose Movement. Just four days later, Sophie, Hans and their friend, Christoph Probst, were convicted and killed.

Key word

Gestapo – the secret police of Nazi Germany



▲ Sophie and Hans Scholl when they were arrested

Sophie gave her boyfriend two volumes of sermons by Catholic Theologian St John Henry Newman when he was deployed to the Eastern Front in 1942. In letters discovered after her death, she discussed with her boyfriend the role of conscience in Newman's writings. It was reported that in her interrogations by the Gestapo, she said her conscience had compelled her to peacefully oppose Nazism.



Discern

- 1 Give examples of where you notice conscience at work in the life of Sophie Scholl.
- 2 **a** Did Sophie follow Catholic teachings on conscience? Provide evidence for your answer.
b What might someone who disagrees with you say?
- 3 What might Sophie have done instead if she had deliberately 'blinded' her conscience?



Respond

- 4 What lesson can you learn from the life of Sophie Scholl? How could her example influence you?

The conscience is a central element of our humanity, for it is our mind making moral judgments, but it is a difficult thing to capture in art because we cannot see it! The two paintings on the next page are called *Man Repels the Appeal of Conscience* and *Man Harkens to the Appeal of Conscience*. They are both by Frederick James Shield.



Think

Use a dictionary to find definitions of 'harkens' and 'repels'. Then consider which painting you think is which.



Discern

- 1 Which Catholic beliefs about conscience can you see represented in these two paintings? Use the specialist language that you have learnt in this chapter in your answer.
- 2 Look at the characters, the body language and the symbols in the paintings. Why do you think each has been included?
- 3 Which important beliefs about conscience are **not** captured in these two paintings?



Respond

- 4 Create a piece of art that expresses the beliefs about conscience that you outlined in question 3.
- 5 Consider how these pieces of art might inspire you to think or act differently in relation to issues of conscience.



▲ *Man Repels the Appeal of Conscience and Man Harkens to the Appeal of Conscience*
by Frederick James Shield