



- In a recent year, more than 22 percent of high school students and 8 percent of middle school students smoked cigarettes. White and Hispanic students smoked cigarettes the most.
- Almost half of Americans who continue to smoke will die as a result of the habit. Currently, about 438,000 people die in the United States each year from tobacco use.
- One out of five deaths is related to smoking, killing more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined.
- Cigarette smoking is involved in 30 percent of all deaths from cancer.⁵

Facts like these should be enough for us to conclude that cigarette smoking does not contribute to the true good of humans.

Consider the consequences of shoplifting. It is the number one reason why small stores go out of business. Around 10 percent of people who come to stores shoplift.

Market analysts estimate that shops boost their prices by the same 10 percent to cover shoplifting losses.

Take another issue that is common in today's society that is often encouraged by popular culture. That issue is premarital sex, which is often promiscuous. Sexual indulgence outside of God's plan for humanity brings much human misery such as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies that often lead to abortions, emotional pain, and the erosion of the family. Further, the lack of self-control before marriage contributes to infidelity after marriage. There are many negatives that result from violating God's will for human sexuality, that is, an exclusive male-female union of love and the sharing of life within the context of a committed marriage.

When considering consequences, an excellent question to ask is: "Would I be willing to allow everyone in a similar situation to act this way?" If you answer no, then what you propose to do is most certainly wrong. Consider:

- What if everyone cheated on tests?
- What if everyone cheated on his or her taxes?
- What if everybody disobeyed traffic laws?
- What if everyone lied?



Visit the American Cancer Society web page at: www.cancer.org. Research the site and learn about the bad effects of smoking. Find out ways you can get involved in the fight against cigarette smoking. Write a letter, send an e-mail, make a phone call, or meet your representative face-to-face. Alternatively, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper on some issue before Congress that deals with the health and welfare of young people.



Obnoxious Boss

Rarely are we faced with just one alternative in our decisions. By using our minds and imaginations, by examining our values and the consequences of our proposed actions, we can choose the most loving, Christian, and moral course of action. What if you found yourself in the following situation? What would you do? What should you do?

Your boss at the local fast-food restaurant is always on your case. He consistently gives you the rotten clean-up jobs, criticizes your performance in front of the other employees, and even questions your integrity. It has gotten to the point where you hate to go to work. Even your coworkers have commented on how unfair the boss has been toward you.

You have tried talking to him, but he never looks you directly in the eye and ignores most of what you say.

One of your best friends works with you. He suggests that you get even with the unfair employer. He said he will help you in a ploy to slash his tires.

Briefly describe three moral alternatives to the tire-slashing plan and the consequences for each.

RESOURCES

Internet Resources

American Cancer Society

Good source for facts and figures about cancer.
www.cancer.org

"Approaching Ethics"

Describes various ways to look at ethical issues.
www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/approach.html

A Framework for Ethical Decision Making

A good guide from the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University. Good supplement to the "STOP Sign" method. This is the site of the Ethics Connection, a wonderful resource with lots of good articles.
www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/framework.html

"Ethics and Morality"

Overview of various approaches to ethical theory today.
http://cs.clark.edu/~hum101/Humanities_101/ethics_and_morality.htm

How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living

An online introduction to a book by Rushworth M. Kidder.
www.globalethics.org/pub/toughchoices.html

(continued on page 86)

5. In small groups, have students write the three assigned prayers, doing the For Your Journal project on p. 66 together.



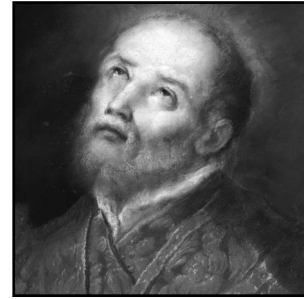
FOR YOUR JOURNAL

Compose three one-sentence prayers that ask help for living a moral life or making the right decisions. Address one prayer to Jesus, a second prayer to the Holy Spirit, and write the third asking the Blessed Mother to add her prayers to yours.

DISCERNMENT

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola taught an effective way to discern God's will. The following ways to choose right are based on his *Exercises*. Prior to using each way, put yourself in the Lord's presence. Describe how you would respond to either of these meditations based on a current moral decision with which you are struggling.

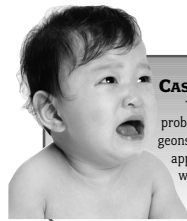
- Imagine a friend your age, with similar talents and interests, coming to ask you for your advice on this very problem. You really want to help this person. What would you say to help him or her search out the facts and reflect on the alternatives, consequences, and other people involved? Apply this same advice to yourself.
- Picture yourself on your deathbed or standing before Jesus right after your death. What do you wish you would have done concerning this decision? Now do the right thing.



CASE 1: THE SENATOR'S CONTRIBUTION

A famous Catholic senator wants to donate a considerable amount of money to the Catholic elementary school he attended as a child. However, though he claims to be personally against abortion, the senator is a vocal and strong pro-abortion advocate (the so-called "pro-choice" position). His gift will significantly help poor children gain access to a good Catholic education.⁹

Debate: Should the pastor accept this money? Why or why not?



CASE 2: THE CRYING BABY

The classic television program *MASH* closed its highly successful run with this riveting moral problem: Hawkeye—one of the doctor-heroes of the show—was on a bus with some fellow surgeons and a few Koreans. He informed the driver of the bus that some enemy soldiers were approaching, and the bus should be hidden by the side of the road. As enemy soldiers began to walk past the bus, an infant on the bus began to cry.

Debate: What should the mother do in this situation?

RESOURCES

Internet Resources (continued from page 79)

Josephson Institute of Ethics "The Seven-Step Path to Better Decisions"

www.josephsoninstitute.org/MED/MED-4sevensteppath.htm

Media Ethics Online

Links to various sites stressing journalistic ethics. Good source for finding ethics cases, especially:

<http://spj.org/ethicscasestudies.asp>

www.stlouisspj.org/ethics.htm

Some Moral Dilemmas

You might be able to use some of these as discussion starters.

www.friesian.com/valley/dilemmas.htm

MacDonald, Chris, Ph.D. *A Guide to Moral Decision Making*.

Some helpful steps that could supplement the "STOP Sign" method. Short and sweet.

www.ethicsweb.ca/guide

"Right Versus Wrong: Knowing the Difference"

Short article from the Institute for Global Ethics.

www.becal.net/toolkit/bds/reading.html

Why Not Love Them Both

The famous Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke book online.

www.abortionfacts.com/online_books/love_them_both/why_cant_we_love_them_both_17.asp