

Newark Catholic High School

Theology I

Personal Morality – 1st Semester

“Jesus 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 greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets.’” (Matt. 22:37-40)

Objective:

This class is intended to present to high school freshmen a broad overview of the major doctrines and teachings of the Catholic faith in the context of the student’s own personal character formation and development. This class, therefore, seeks to help students build good character and develop Christian life skills, particularly by introducing their minds as well as their hearts to both the intellectual and the practical aspects of the values and practices of the Catholic tradition.

Textbook and Readings:

- *Building Catholic Character: Developing Christian Life Skills*, by Janie Gustafson. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, Inc., 1998.
- Excerpts from other assigned readings will be distributed in class throughout the semester.

Course Structure:

The course begins by introducing what it means to be human, what it means to be Catholic, and what it means to grow in the image of, and in relationship with, God. The course then proceeds to a deeper examination of these questions by looking into relevant implications of six attributes of God: Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Love, Mercy, and Justice. It is important to note that we look at these aspects of God not solely as abstract theological concepts, but more so as they relate to adolescent students in today’s reality.

Tentative Topics of Study:

Being Human and Being Christian

- The Spiritual Dimension of Humans
- Christian Character

Goodness

- Healthy Self-Esteem
- Integrity and Honesty

Power

- Right Relationships with Others
- Right Relationships with Things and Nature

Wisdom

- Making Good Decisions
- Work

Love

- Sexuality and Friendship
- Generosity

Mercy

- Peace and Patience
- Forgiveness

Justice

- Fairness and Equity

- Good Citizenship
Wholeness and Holiness

Grading Breakdown:

2 Research papers/projects @ 50-75 points each

3-4 Tests @ 50-100 points each

6-8 Quizzes @ 10-25 points each

Homework and In-Class Assignments @ 5-15 points each

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = around 800-1000 points (400-500 points per quarter)

Grading Scale:

A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	87-89
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60
F	Below 60

How to Succeed in Theology I, Personal Morality:

Success in this class may be summed up with three bits of advice:

1. Pay Attention

Paying attention does not simply mean listening (although listening is an important part of paying attention). Rather, paying attention means that you actively engage yourself with the topics being presented and discussed. Yes, this means that you listen; but this also means that you open up your mind and intellectually wrestle with the topics at hand. Share your opinions about the topics with others (i.e., the class), compare your opinions with other perspectives, and reevaluate your opinions in order to strengthen them, modify them, or, if necessary, even change them. Practically speaking, therefore, paying attention requires a lot of listening and participating. Through this, you will gain a deeper understanding of the class topics, and you will be able to succeed come test-time. But also, more importantly, through paying attention you will move further and further down the road to young adulthood, growing intellectually and spiritually along the way.

2. Take Good Notes

This class covers a lot of material, and as a result we will talk about a wide range of information. It is good to organize this material by selecting the important points—that is, the stuff that gets repeated or emphasized throughout our lectures and discussions—and jot down these important points in some sort of organized fashion (for example, in an outline format). I will often help by providing on the chalkboard a basic outline of topical information that will be covered. But, I stress that this outline is only basic and is mostly for organizational purposes; it in no way should be the only substance of your notes. Rather, use this outline as a starting point, adding to it as the lectures and class discussions go into further detail. Come test-time, good in-depth notes will come in very handy. It is much easier to recall the important information covered in previous class lectures and discussions if you have a written record to study, rather than just trying to remember everything.

Furthermore, this class will talk about many philosophical ideas and foreign concepts which may be difficult to grasp. A good way to understand these ideas and concepts is by taking the information presented in the lectures or readings and restating this information in your own words in your notes. This allows you to internalize the information and grasp it on your own terms. Therefore, developing your own system of note-taking to explain esoteric ideas and concepts will greatly help you come to a deeper understanding of the class topics, and you will be in a better position to succeed come test-time.

3. Ask Questions

Questioning is necessary in any learning enterprise. Questioning helps to clear up misunderstandings, it gives you alternative ways to understand, and it allows you to more fully connect with the topic. In short, by continually asking questions about the material, your understanding will grow along with your critical thinking skills. This, no doubt, will put you in a better position to succeed come test-time.

Class Rules, Policies, & Procedures:

“Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the teacher but also to one another as brothers and sisters, since we know that it is by this way of obedience that we go to God”
(St. Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 71*).

1. Be respectful to everyone.
 - Disruptive behavior will result in either a school or a teacher detention.
2. Be on time and seated when class begins.
 - You are counted tardy if you enter the classroom after the bell without an appropriate pass, and if you are not seated in your assigned seat and ready to go when the bell rings.
 - More than 3 tardies will result in either a school or a teacher detention.
3. Follow the dress code at all times. No Gum.
 - Excessive gum-chewing or violations of the dress code will result in a school detention.
4. Be prepared each day; bring your textbook and all your supplies to class everyday.
 - Please participate in the class discussions and activities. Class participation is vitally important to learning and it demonstrates that you are prepared.
5. Cheating will not be tolerated.
 - Any student caught cheating on any test, project, or homework assignment will receive a zero on that task and may face further consequences in line with the student handbook.
 - Cheating includes plagiarism as well as copying off the work of other classmates.
6. Homework is due at the beginning of class; in-class assignments are due at the end of class.
7. Late homework assignments will be accepted up to one week after the original due date. Turning in late homework is far better than turning in no homework.
 - Late homework turned in up to three days late will automatically lose one letter grade per day late.
 - Late homework turned in four to seven days late will automatically lose half of the total points possible.
 - After a week has passed since the original due date, homework not turned in will be automatically counted as a zero.
 - Late homework turned in prior to the one week deadline and with a valid excuse will be accepted at no penalty; however, I reserve the right to determine the validity of the excuse.
8. Quizzes and tests will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or long essay questions. Quizzes and tests account for approximately 60% of your total grade.
9. For students who miss a day of class:
 - It is your responsibility to see me when you return to class to see what you missed. I will give you the appropriate reading assignments, worksheets or handouts (if any), and homework assignments (if any). Please get the notes from the class you missed from a fellow classmate.
 - All homework assignments must be made-up and turned in. The amount of days missed is the amount of time you will have to make-up the homework and turn it in with no penalty.All quizzes and tests must be made up within one week of the original quiz or test date. Please coordinate your make-up date with me. Quizzes or tests not made up will result in a zero