Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework 2007 by USCCB

Core Curriculum

**6th Semester**: Life in Jesus Christ

**Main Points:**

1. **What is Life in Christ?**
   1. God’s plan for us (share his eternal love, desire and longing for God, fall, promise of redemption, Jesus fulfills promise; created in his image and likeness, human dignity – endowed with intellect, reason, freewill)
   2. Our response to God’s plan (response of love, called to beatitude or joy, effects of Beatitudes, meaning of being a follower of Christ
2. **God Has Taught Us How to Live a New Life in Christ**
   1. God rules the universe with wisdom and directs its divine fulfillment
      1. Eternal law and God’s Providence
      2. Natural moral law (reason, basis for human rights and duties); NML found in all cultures, basis for moral rules and civil laws)
   2. Revelation
      1. Teaching revealed by God under the Old Covenant
         1. Context of Ten Commandments
         2. Ten Commandments
            1. teach and discuss each commandment – how it includes more than just the literal meaning (pp. 27-28)
            2. includes: Catholic Social Teaching, Beatitudes, vocation to chastity (pp. 27-28)
      2. Teaching revealed by God in the New Covenant
         1. Two Greatest Commandments
         2. Grace of the Holy Spirit
         3. Sermon on the Mount
         4. Other teachings (love of enemies, absolute trust in God, non-violence, charity to others in judgment and action, avoidance of hypocrisy)
      3. The Church (teaching authority and responsibilities)
         1. Teacher of moral principles,
         2. Canon law, precepts of the Church
         3. Church teaching forms one’s conscience for moral decision making
3. **Living New Life in Christ Jesus and the Gospel Message Are the Basis for Catholic Moral Teaching**
   1. God’s love and mercy through Jesus Christ
   2. Our vocation – universal call to holiness as disciples of Christ
      1. Discipleship – lived witness in daily life and in married or unmarried lifestyle, service to the Church, missionary activity, religious movements (charismatic, Focolare)
      2. Consecrated life and societies of apostolic life; third orders and associates; life in the Spirit
   3. Grace (definition & types)
   4. Virtue (definition, types, theological & cardinal virtues)
   5. Sustaining the moral life: (seven gifts of the Sprit and twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit)
   6. conscience (definition, types, proper formation, moral responsibility of following an informed conscience, freedom of conscience)
4. **The Reality of Sin**
   1. Original innocence,
   2. Effects of original sin
   3. Reality of sin: definition, omission and commission, types of sin(mortal & venial); effects of sin; capital sins; Scriptural images of sin

**6th Semester**: Life in Jesus Christ

**Challenges**

1. **If God created me free, doesn’t that mean that I alone can decide what is right and wrong?**
   1. No. The freedom God gave us is the capacity to choose what is right, true and good and to resist temptation to sin
   2. The use of freedom to do whatever we want is a misuse of that freedom and actually lessens our freedom
   3. Freedom is following the natural law God planted in our hearts
   4. In reality, sinful acts diminish freedom; moral acts increate it

1. **Isn’t it wrong to judge other people by telling them something they are doing is wrong?**
   1. No. We have a responsibility to each other to encourage one another to live a life free of sin. Sin is real and we must be willing to call what is sinful “sin”
   2. We would warn friends against doing something that could harm them; sin harms them more than physical evil
   3. The Church reminds us to love the sinner and hate the sin (John 8:1-11)
   4. The pressure in society to practice tolerance toward all , no matter what they do, is a distorted understanding of what tolerance means; moral actions must always be measured by truth
   5. Fraternal correction is an act of charity
   6. Objective moral judgment prevents chaos; moral relativism is a common problem today
2. **Isn’t it wrong for the Church to impose her views of morality on others?**
   1. The Church has the responsibility to teach everyone what God has revealed about how people should live, act, and treat each other; fulfilling this is the Church’s responsibility is not the same as the Church’s imposing her own views on others.
   2. In the development of public policy, the Church promotes the universal moral law and the common good, not her own ecclesiastical disciplines
   3. All people have the ability to understand the Church’s basic moral teaching because God has written the natural law on the heart of every person.
   4. If every person was to live by a relatively moral code dependent on choice, this would lead to chaos and a loss of happiness.

1. **Why can’t we make up our own minds and be in control over everything?**
   1. The Church does teach that everyone can and should make up their own mind about heir actions. The key is that the decision is made on the basis of an informed or educated conscience.
   2. Because we are finite beings cannot know everything or control everything.
   3. We have to remember that God knows, sees and understand more than any of us can.
   4. The tragic conflicts that still exist in the work points to the imperfection of human beings.
   5. Our sinfulness can only be overcome by Christ’s salvation.
2. **There’s an old saying about charity beginning at home. Doesn’t this mean that I don’t have to work about helping anyone else until I have enough to take care of me and my family?**
   1. No; concern for others is always a responsibility and characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ.
   2. Parable of the Widow’s Mite (Mk12:38-44); Jesus teaches – charity is measured not by how much one gives but by the degree of generosity with which something is given or done for another.