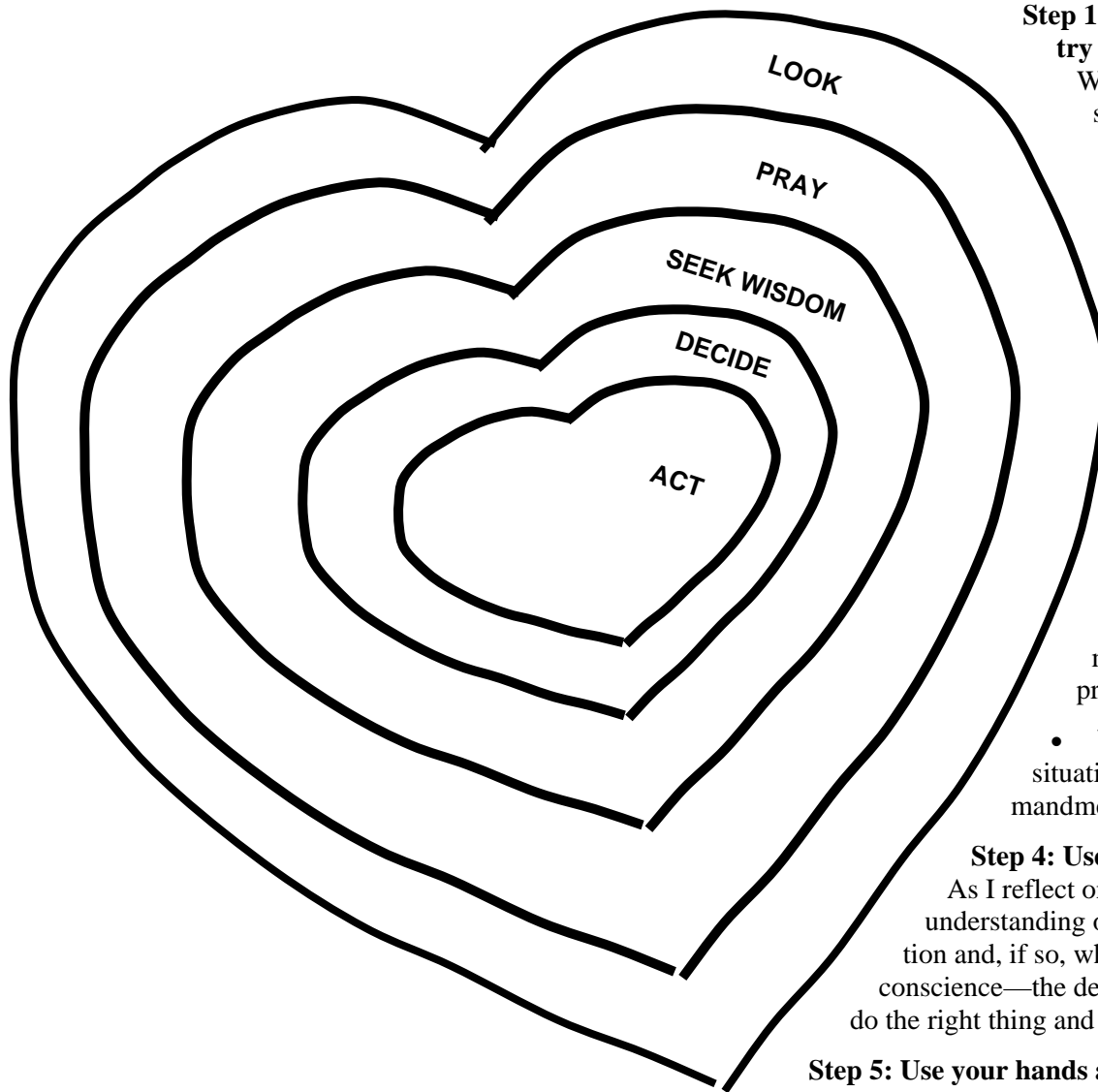


STEPS IN FORMING CONSCIENCE AS WE MAKE MORAL DECISIONS:



Step 1: Use your own wisdom to LOOK at and assess the situation; try to view the situation and issues as clearly as possible.

What is happening and what and who exactly is involved? What are some of the motives? What are possible consequences? What good can happen? What bad can occur?

Step 2: PRAY that your heart is open to doing what is right.

Am I willing to do what is right and do it for the right reasons? Am I open to the guidance of others?

Step 3: Use your head to widen and test your understanding of what is good and right by SEEKING THE WISDOM of others.

- **Wisdom of key others:** What do/would others say about this situation and why? Parents, family, respected friends, professionals who are experienced in dealing with this situation?
- **Wisdom of the Church:** Is there a teaching of the Church that applies to this situation? Who could I ask? If I were to ask my faith community to pray with me, what would I ask them to pray for in this situation?
- **Wisdom of God:** How might the values of Jesus apply to this situation? Do the Scriptures have something to say to me? The commandments? The beatitudes? Stories from Jesus' life?

Step 4: Use your head and heart to make a personal DECISION.

As I reflect on the wisdom of others and apply it to my situation, does my own understanding of what is at stake become clearer? Have I prayed about the situation and, if so, which direction gives me the greatest sense of peace? What is my conscience—the deepest core of who I am—telling me to do? Do I really desire to do the right thing and desire the best for myself and others?

Step 5: Use your hands and feet and heart to ACT on the decision.

What are the first steps I specifically need to take to put this decision into practice? Am I praying for continued wisdom and guidance from God? Am I praying for the courage to do what is right and for the right reasons? After taking these steps, has anything changed that would make me re-evaluate the decision? If so, start at Step 1 and move through the steps again.

Moral dilemma #1: scenario for child

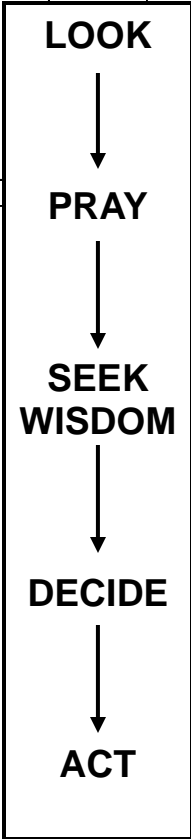
Kelly’s parents have told her to never play around the new empty buildings, homes and schools, that are going up in their neighborhood. Kelly and her friend Alicia are riding their bikes near one of the schools that is being built. They stop to play on the mounds of dirt that surround the outside of the building. Alicia who is always eager for a new adventure wants to go inside the new building to see what it’s like as it will be their school they will be attending in the fall. Kelly sees a bunch of boys playing ball in a nearby in a field. She also sees a car slowly drive by with a man who seems to be watching them as they play on the mounds. She thinks about what her parents have told her about the dangers of going into empty buildings.

Moral dilemma #1: scenario for junior high

Samantha, Carol, Laura and Mindy planned to go to the mall to shop and have lunch. Now Laura and Mindy are electing Samantha to un-invite Carol. “Just call and tell her we can’t go.” Mindy says. “Then we can go without her.” Laura and Mindy don’t like Carol. They say that Carol used to be okay, until she started getting into religion. Even though Carol is Samantha’s friend, Samantha also feels uncomfortable with the religious stuff. She is beginning to feel that her friendship with Laura and Mindy is more important to her than her friendship with Carol. She would feel bad about canceling the lunch with Carol, but if she does not, Laura and Mindy might not have anything more to do with her. She gets up and begins to walk over to the phone.

Home Activity: Practicing Steps Involved in Forming Our Conscience: 4 Moral Dilemmas

Pick one or more of the scenarios listed here and go through the five steps in forming one’s conscience in making a moral decision. As a family or with another person, discuss what you would be doing at each step.



Moral dilemma #1: scenario for adult

Ray is married with four small children. A car accident two years ago has left his wife physically challenged and unable to work. Their 3 year old child needs medical treatment on a weekly basis for a chronic illness. Ray was laid off from his job a year ago. Currently his medical insurance and unemployment benefits have just run out. They have been getting help from their families and their church. They have tried to stretch their savings, but even that has begun to become depleted. Ray has hired himself out as a ‘handyman’ for small jobs. He has not had many jobs, but has been promised a job in the next month.

The bills are piling up and the monthly medication needed to keep this child’s condition from getting worse has run out. Ray does not know where the money is going to come from. He does not want to infringe on their families as they have helped as much as they can.

Ray has been treasure for the St. Vincent de Paul’s Society for many years and has access to the money in the treasury. There is enough money there to purchase the needed meds for this month.

Moral dilemma #1: scenario for teen / young adult

Frank enters his new school with about as much enthusiasm as someone going to have their wisdom teeth pulled. He doesn’t want to change schools, but his mother took a promotion that required them to move. His social life was just getting good at his old school, and he does not want to have to make new friends and start over with only two years of high school left.

The kids at the new school are like snobs. Lonely and bored, Frank feels pushed to start talking to Harley. Harley then invites Frank to go to a football game. After he agrees to go he finds out the Harley expects him to drive and his two buddies Rick and Dave will be coming too.

They have fun at the game, and afterwards Harley says it’s time to celebrate their win. He tells Frank to take them to the corner grocery. Frank and the others wait in the car while Harley runs into the store. A few minutes later he comes back out with a twelve-pack of beer. Not wanting to be left out or ridiculed, Frank doesn’t know what to do.