

LESSON 4

Growing in Virtues



Learning Objectives

In this lesson you will:

- Realize that the Christian life involves practicing moral virtue.
- Understand the role of the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance in your life.
- Learn how to grow in virtue.

Opening Prayer

“The just one will flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a Lebanon cedar.” —Ps. 92:13



Opening Activity

Scan the QR code to access the online resources.

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Introduction

Baptism marks the first stage of our Christian life and our beginning as followers of Jesus. After our Baptism, we are called to grow spiritually. Yes, God wants us to grow in virtue and become who he has created us to be: beloved sons and daughters. Ultimately, God wants us to become holy like the saints.

In this lesson we will learn about virtue. As children of God, we are made for freedom, not for fear. In the words of Saint Paul, “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rom 8:15) Being a child of God means we must banish fear and worry from our hearts because God is our Father. We must trust him because he always knows what is best for us. And he cares for us at every moment. On the other hand, the devil wants to make us slaves, especially to sin. When we do not trust that God, our Father, knows what is best for us, we easily become enslaved.

Reflection Questions

1. *How does knowing that God is our loving Father help you?*
2. *How can you better live as a beloved child of God and not as a slave of the devil?*



Point **1** **Real Christians**

A real Christian believes in Jesus, follows the Bible and lives out their faith with good deeds. They live by standards of right behavior. They choose good actions instead of bad ones. Any good thought, word, or action that shows love for God and others is right and **moral**. Any bad thought, word, or action that disrespects God and others is wrong and **immoral**.

Real Christians are rich, but not in money. They are rich in good habits known as virtues.

Point 2

What Is Virtue?

A **virtue** is a good habit to do what is right. The word “virtue” means “manly or womanly strength.” Virtue is a grace that is only possible with the help of the Holy Spirit and our cooperation. Examples of virtues include honesty, gentleness, peacefulness, patience, and compassion for others. People who practice these virtues are more than “real men” or “real women.” They are real Christians. The people who possessed the greatest virtue were the saints, especially Our Lady, who was favored by and with the Lord (see Lk 1:28). Mary said “yes” to God at every moment of her life.

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Point 3

Moral Virtues

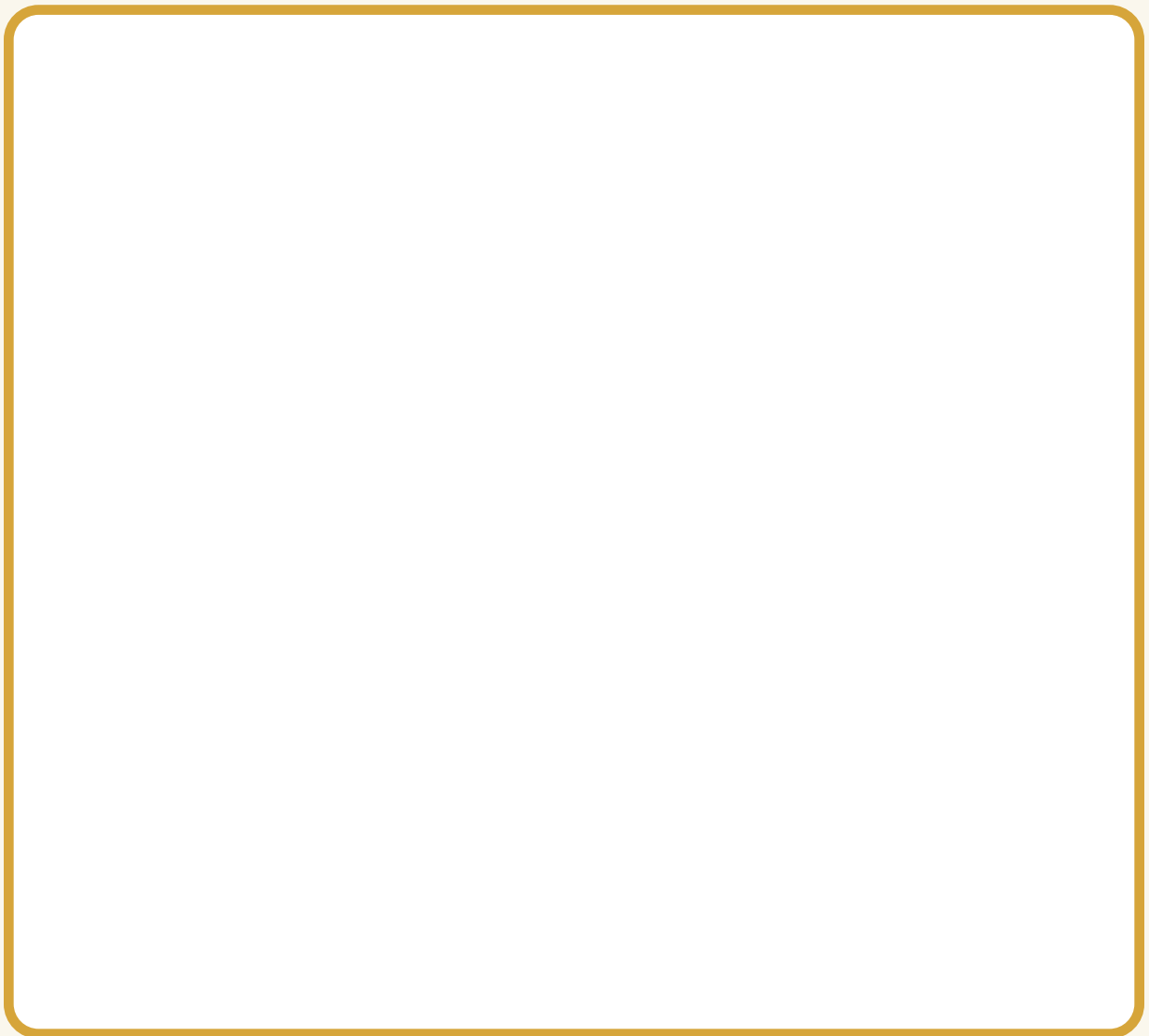
The **moral virtues** are acquired by God’s grace working through us. Among the moral virtues, four cardinal virtues are especially important: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

1. **Prudence** helps us know the right thing to say or do in each situation.
2. **Justice** is a virtue that helps us treat people as they deserve to be treated.
3. **Fortitude** is a practical form of courage to follow Jesus and seek the truth, choose the good, and love the beautiful.
4. **Temperance** helps us find a good balance when we are having fun.

Activity 1

Draw a Virtuous Superhero

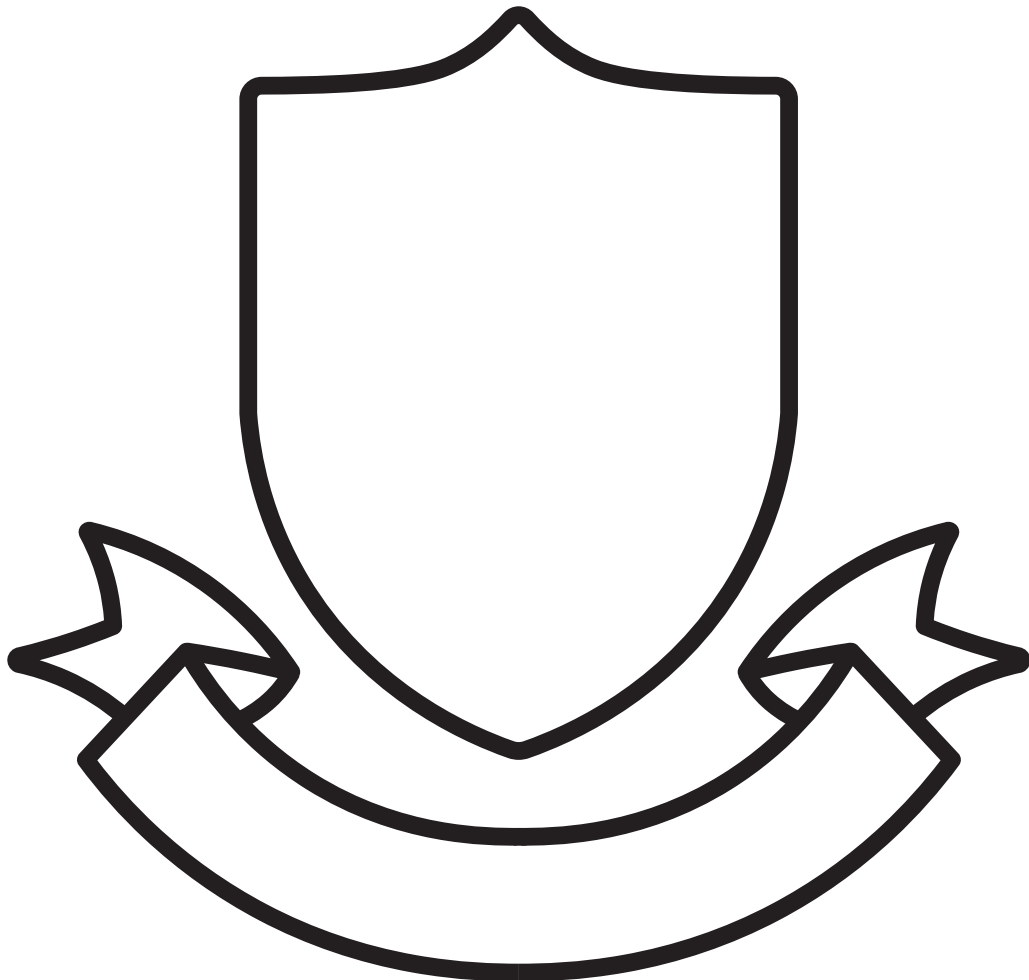
Directions: *Draw a superhero: Prudence Woman, Justice Man, Fortitude Guy, or Temperance Girl. Show them using their superpower to help someone and describe their traits.*



Activity 2

Make a Coat of Arms

Directions: *Write the name of your favorite virtue on the scroll. Next, draw an image representing it.*





Maronite Hymn



Jesus Christ, O Source of Light

Syriac: hasyo oo-qadeesho

Alleluia!

Jesus Christ, O Source of Light, in you we see light.

Truly Light from Light, you shine on all creation.

Shine your light upon us all; grant us joy with your bright dawn.



Listen to the hymn.

FaithOfTheMountain.org/grade4/lesson4/hymn

My Role Model

Saint James, the Hermit of Cyrrhus, Disciple of Saint Maron

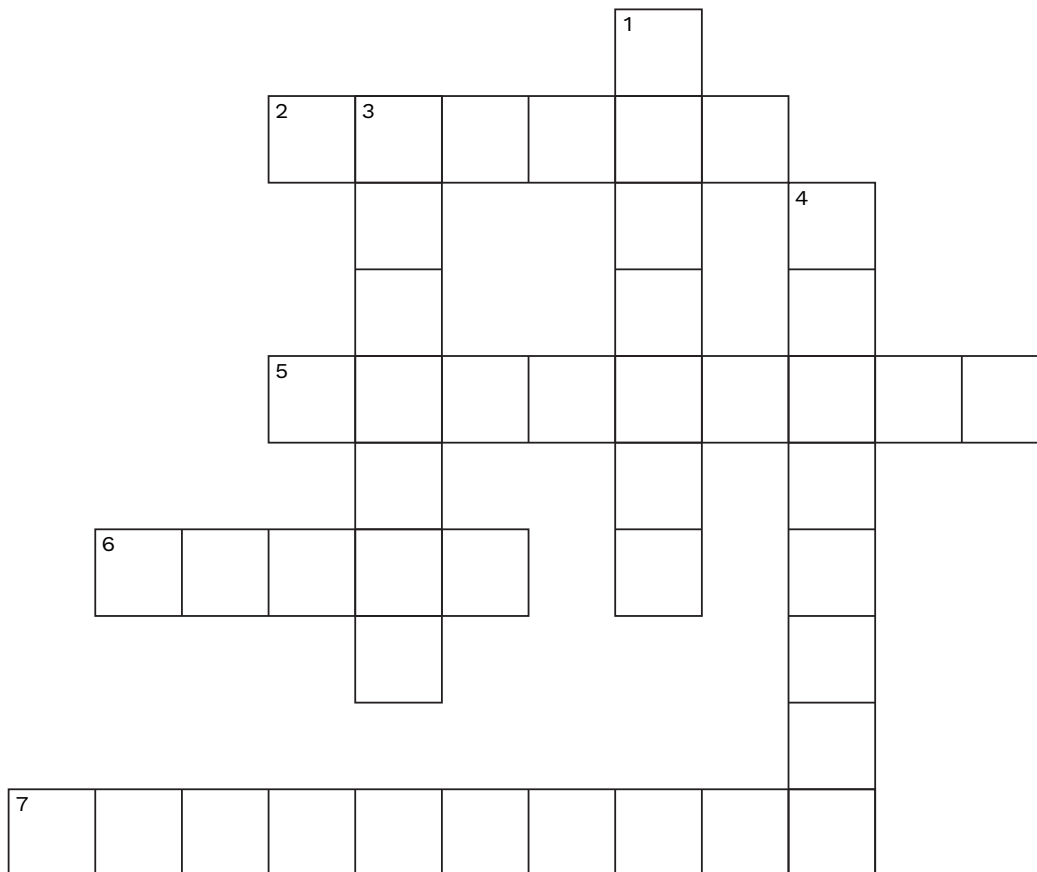
Saint James the Hermit lived for a time with Saint Maron. He did his best to follow the Maronite Way. He tried to live a prayerful and virtuous life. Even though James lived in the mountains far away from the city, people heard about his holiness. They began to come to him, asking how they, too, might grow in virtue. James explained ways the people could practice the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. He told them that they did not have to live in the desert to practice these virtues. They could live them in the midst of their everyday lives, at home, at work, in the marketplace, and wherever they were. We honor Saint James on February 20.

Saint James the Hermit, pray for us.

Recall



Use the clues to complete the crossword puzzle.



Across

2. A habit or disposition that helps us do good.
5. This virtue is a practical form of courage.
6. Describes any good action that shows love for God and others.
7. This virtue helps us find a happy balance in life.

Down

1. This virtue helps us treat others as they deserve to be treated.
3. Describes any bad action that disrespects God and others.
4. This virtue is a practical form of wisdom.

Weekly Journal



Which of the four moral virtues do you want to get better at with God's help?

Write: Describe one way that you practiced a moral virtue during this past week, and one moral virtue you need to work on.

Concluding Prayer



O Virgin, you received the announcement of the angel and brought forth the Lord of the saints. By your prayers, make us holy. Then we shall praise you with the One who made you virtuous. We shall glorify him, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Climbing the Mountain

Bonus Materials for Students & Teachers



Lk 1:26-35

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."

Reflection:

From all appearances, Mary seemed like any other girl in Nazareth. She was young and was going to marry Joseph the carpenter. However, from the inside, Mary was not ordinary, she received grace because God chose her. God's initiative always comes first. He chose her and gave her his grace. As a result, she practiced the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance each day. And Mary shows us how we also can follow and love Jesus with our whole heart.

Saintly Quote

“When I remember the disobedience of Eve, I weep. But when I view the fruit of Mary, I am again renewed. Deathless by descent, invisible through beauty, before the ages light of light; of God the Father you were begotten; being Word and Son of God, you took on flesh from Mary Virgin, in order that you might renew Adam fashioned by your holy hand.” — *Saint Gregory the Wonder Worker*

Questions

1. What is God saying to you through this Scripture verse?
 2. How does Mary help you to live a life of virtue?
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Reaching the Summit

For Teachers & Parents



“A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.”
— CCC 1803

The Moral Virtues

Prudence: This is a practical form of wisdom, a gift of the Holy Spirit. Prudence helps us know the right thing to say or do in each situation. Prudent people think about the effects their decisions will have on others. They ask, “How will my words or actions help others? Who may be hurt if I do this?”

Justice: This helps us treat others as they deserve to be treated. Because people are made in God’s image, everyone deserves respect. All people have a right to life, housing, clothing, food, and healthy living conditions. All people have a right to earn a fair salary for their work. They also have a right to follow their conscience in the way they worship God.

Fortitude: This is a practical form of courage, another gift of the Holy Spirit. People who have fortitude act in moral ways even when they are afraid. People of fortitude stand up for their beliefs, even if it means losing friends or being persecuted.

Temperance: This helps us find a balance when we engage in certain pleasures. They include eating, drinking, exercising, or any other activity that involves taste, touch, smell, seeing, and hearing. Temperate people do not eat too much or too little. They do not spend too much time playing video games or watching television.

Mary and the Virtues

Although Mary did not understand the angel's words, she had faith. She was ready to do whatever God asked. So she said, "Yes." This example of Mary shows us what it means to be holy. We do not have to do extraordinary deeds. We can just say "yes," as she did. We can do whatever God calls us to do the best way we can.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you cultivate virtue in your own home?
 2. How can you help your child grow to appreciate his masculinity, if he is a boy, and her femininity if she is a girl?
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Words to Know

Q. What does **immoral** mean?

A. It describes any bad thought, word, or action that hurts God and others. An immoral action is wrong and sinful.

Q. What is a **moral virtue**?

A. Any virtue that helps us behave in a good way. Four basic moral virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Q. What is **virtue**?

A. A good habit and a good disposition to do what is good. Examples of virtues include: honesty, gentleness, peacefulness, patience, and compassion to others.



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more information.**

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