Lesson Plan: The Gifts of Fortitude & Counsel

Preparation

What You Will Need

- Fortitude & Counsel Discussion Guide
- Fortitude & Counsel lesson review
- Healthy Guilt learning activity cards
- Tape (optional for activity)

Prepare Yourself

- Read through the lesson and make sure that it is all clear to you. If you have any questions, feel free to use the online resource center at www.fromtheabbey.com/Classroom/live/ to ask them.
- The Gifts of Fortitude & Counsel help us to choose the greatest good that God has planned for us by following the moral law.
- Make sure the activity scenarios are cut apart into individual strips.

Starting the Lesson

Opening Prayer

You are, of course, free to use any opening prayer you would like. One is provided for you below if you’d like to use it.

Heavenly Father, through your Son you call us to embrace what is true and good. The Holy Spirit helps us to know what is good, and gives us the strength to embrace it even when doing so is difficult. Grant us the grace to prepare well to receive the gifts of fortitude and counsel from the Holy Spirit by doing our part to form a healthy conscience. Make us
Central Point
The following phrase encapsulates the main point of the lesson. It is recommended that you display this phrase prominently on a chalk board, a white board, or a poster.

Fortitude is the Gift of the Holy Spirit that strengthens us to do what is right and good, and Counsel is the Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to know what is right and good.

Opening Discussion
Ask the candidates what makes it difficult to know what is right and wrong. Discuss the effects of

- Changing social standards that contradict the teachings of Christ and His Church
- Confusion in the media (movies, music, news, video games, etc.)
- Confusion and dissention among Catholics

Ask the candidates what makes it difficult sometimes to do what is right and good even when we have knowledge. Discuss the effects of

- Peer pressure
- Our own weaknesses and disordered desires for physical goods

The fact that many times doing the right thing comes with bad consequences (it's difficult)

The Main Lesson
The discussion guide for the main lesson should be mostly self-explanatory. The outline below offers a big picture of the lesson.

Instruction
The instruction is fairly long for this lesson, especially since it covers two Gifts. Pace yourself so you have time for the learning activity. Discussion questions and scripture passages to look up are set apart by the red horizontal bars (like the prayer and main point above in this lesson plan). Take the time for the discussion, but be sure to pace yourself so you have time for the learning activity.
Malformed Conscience

The section on malformed conscience offers a great opportunity to lead students to concrete ways that they can form their conscience. This is a great place to stress the need for continued education after Confirmation, for self-sacrifice, and for loving service to others. Offer the students a practical plan for forming their conscience by increasing their knowledge and their willpower.

Virtue Spotlight

There are two virtue spotlights in this lesson – one on prudence and one on natural fortitude. While these are "sidebars" in the discussion guide, they are central to the lesson as they are practical ways to live out the Gifts of Counsel and Fortitude. One recommendation for this discussion is to offer examples of how you live out prudence and fortitude in your own life and how each has benefitted you.

Making a Plan

This is the point where participants are asked to prepare to receive the Gifts of Fortitude & Counsel. The answers they write down on this worksheet should be as thoughtful and specific as possible. Be sure to encourage participants to take this plan seriously and to prepare to receive these Gifts.

Lesson Summary

Next, have students fill out the study guide, called a "lesson summary" because filling the act of filling out the guide helps students to summarize the most important points of the lesson. Most of the terms on the study guide are emphasized by bold text in the discussion guide.

Activity: Healthy Guilt

This concept reinforcement game will help students understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy guilt. The hope is that teaching students to evaluate their feelings of guilt will also open them to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
There are two ways to run this activity (and you may think of a different way altogether):

**Preparation**
The scenarios should be cut into individual strips or cards. You should also have a 'sign' for 'Healthy Guilt' and one for 'Unhealthy Guilt.'

**Activity Option: Acting Out the Scenarios**
Have students work in pairs to develop a 2-person skit for a scenario card. As each pair acts out a scenario, the rest of the students judge whether they are displaying healthy or unhealthy guilt. Stress the use of the criteria for healthy guilt so that students don't judge guilt as “unhealthy” because they disagree with the moral principle in the scenario.

**Activity Option: Scenario Sorting**
Spread out the scenario cards face down in front of the students. Put the Healthy and Unhealthy Guilt signs up on a wall. Have each student choose a scenario, read it aloud and place it under one of the signs. The student should then explain why the scenario illustrates healthy or unhealthy guilt. Have the group discuss whether or not they agree.

**Closing**

**Celebrate the Gift!**
Share with the candidates that God's love for us extends to every aspect of our lives. God's moral law is His guidance for our happiness in this world and forever with Him in Heaven. The gifts of counsel and fortitude are His aid to us in following His divine, loving plan for us to live to the fullest.

**Closing Prayer**
Lord Jesus Christ, you love us so much that you want everything that is good for us. You give us the Holy Spirit to guide us to what is good and true and to give us the strength we need to make right choices amidst the evils of a Fallen world. Grant us your grace as we prepare to be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit on our Confirmation to begin now to form our conscience according to Your loving plan for us. Amen.