

Seventh Grade Session 14: The Heart of a Hero February 6, 2023

Key Points: Virtue is the distinctive characteristic of superheroes that causes us to be fascinated by them. A person is virtuous when they consistently choose what is good, and the more they decide to do what is right, the easier it becomes. Human beings are drawn toward and created for what is good, and living a virtuous life helps us experience the fullness of life that God desires for us.

Goal: To help you to see how we are drawn to superheroes because of their goodness. Superheroes are the ones who stand for what is right and defend those in need. They, in many ways, reveal the qualities of virtue and inspire us as we are drawn into their stories. Heroes protect what is good and provide for us examples of what it looks like to do the same. We are compelled to cultivate virtue in our own lives because we will find happiness when we seek what is good.

We are all drawn to superheroes. What draws us to the heroes rather than the villains?

Write down your thoughts about the following:

- Who is your favorite superhero and why?
- What is it about superheroes that we find so fascinating?
- How is it that their characters continue to inspire generation after generation?
- How is it that their stories never get old?

The good qualities that we see in superheroes are also qualities that the Church has always promoted as the way to grow in holiness.

- Real heroes don't parade around in capes with fancy powers fighting off supervillains.
- They change the world one choice at a time, one person at a time, and one moment at a time for the better.
- The only superpower we need is the grace from God. With His help, the help of the people around us, and our own willingness, we can really be like the heroes we adore and live as the heroes God created us to be.
- These qualities are called virtues.
- A person who lives out these virtues consistently chooses what is good, and the more they decide to do what is right, the easier it becomes.
- The opposite of a virtue is a vice. A vice is a strong tendency to do something that is sinful and to build up a habit of sinful action or behavior.

The Cardinal Virtues help us live a life full of making good decisions.

Prudence: Is the ability to see rightly, to distinguish between right and wrong, and to choose the best option in a given situation. It helps us to know what is good, and works with our conscience.

Temperance: Is the virtue of freedom. It helps us to overcome our excessive desires and attachments so we can be free and available to do what is most important, and free to receive the good that God wants to give us.

Justice: Is all about giving God and others their due. We owe literally everything to God, so we try to follow Him with everything we have. All people are created in God's image and likeness have God-given rights, so we have to treat them accordingly.

Fortitude: Is the strength of the virtues. It helps us to persevere in difficulties and to stick with things even when it is hard or we don't really want to. It also helps us to be courageous and to overcome our fears.

It is easy to talk about the virtues, but it is a lot harder to actually live them out. Ultimately the virtues will lead us to live a holy life and achieve our true end goal of heaven and a perfect relationship with God. But along the way, it won't be easy. Just like every story of every superhero is filled with struggle, action, hope, joy, sadness, and fear, we too will be faced with a lot of obstacles and adventure.

A Virtuous Life is a Heroic One

God doesn't expect us to be perfect He only asks that we put in the effort needed to become a more virtuous person. This is a lifelong process, but we can begin today. It requires:

- great strength, the ability to discern between good and bad, the freedom and discipline to say "yes" and "no" to your own desires, the choice to love and serve God and to treat others according to their dignity, the willingness to fight for the common good, and the perseverance to commit yourself unceasingly to what is good, no matter the cost.

Virtuous, or Not? Answer if the scenario is virtuous or not and why.

- You choose not to sit next to one of your friends in class because you know they will be a distraction and you both won't pay attention.
- Someone at school is having a bad hair day, so you talk about it to all of your friends and laugh at them without them knowing.
- Your friends are making fun of someone who is not present, so you make an effort to stop the conversation and steer it in another direction.
- Your parents ask you to start doing your chores, but you are tired, so you only do some of them, and hope that your parents forget about the rest of them.
- One of your friends is failing a class, and they ask you to help them cheat on the next test, but you say no.

The more we do what is good, the happier we will be because that is what we were created for. God knows us, He loves us, and He wants what is best for us. And ultimately what is best for us is to follow Him in doing what is good and avoiding what is sinful.

He gives us the virtues for this very reason. They help to guard what is best in us and help us to live in accordance with it. They are guideposts pointing out the way to a happy and fulfilling life.

We are created by God to know Him and to love Him, and the virtues help us to do this. They help us to live in a Christ-like way, to become like God, and they keep us rooted in our relationship with Him.

Choosing to be virtuous — to do good and stand up for what is good — will truly help us to find happiness, fulfillment, and purpose for our lives. Lasting happiness, that is not fleeting or shallow, comes only from our relationship with God and growing in holiness.

Closing Prayer:

*Lord teach me how to be more **prudent**. Teach me to see the good and to choose it more often. Teach me to better know what I should not do and to avoid it.*

*Lord, teach me to practice **temperance** more. Teach me to better control my wants and desires. Teach me to avoid filling my life with distractions and pleasures. Teach me to make more room for you in my life.*

*Lord teach me to be more **just**. Teach me to see the dignity of others and to uphold it. Teach me to see others as you do and to treat them accordingly. Teach me to love every person as my brother and sister.*

*Lord, teach me to have more **fortitude**. Teach me to see through my fears and to do what is right. Teach me how to persevere through trial. Teach me to approach obstacles and temptations with courage.*