

Sample Lesson Plan for Teaching Elements of the Syllabus Section F THE MORAL CHALLENGE

**Part 5 LAW AND MORALITY**

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| <b>Syllabus Aim</b>           | To introduce students to some aspects of the relationship between religion, morality, and state law.   |
| <b>Syllabus Objectives</b>    | As a result of studying this section, the students should:<br>1. Have a basic understanding of the relationship between state law and personal morality  |
| <b>Key Concepts</b>           | Civil law, constitution  |
| <b>Description of Content</b> | 1. Introducing some aspects of the relationship between personal morality and state law and situations where conflict might arise  |
| <b>Methodology</b>            | A variety of methodologies are used including problem solving and decision-making exercises, role-play, presentation and interpretation of data, group work and discussion. These methodologies were used so as to give students an opportunity to identify, explore and clarify the concepts and to structure and elaborate on their existing knowledge and understanding of the content. |

**Procedure**

**Introduction – Relationship between personal morality and laws**

*Group work:* Divide students into groups of four or five.  
Read the following situation to the class or give problem card to each group.

**Problem: Desert Island.**  
The four of you are marooned on a desert island. You have two aims: to stay alive, and to attract the attention of any ships, which pass once every four months. You have one gun (with bullets), one source of fresh water and a limited amount of food (fruit, vegetables and a few pigs). What would be your top five rules for living on the island?  
Aim to keep the rules clear and concise.

Take feedback from each group of students and discuss:

1. What rules are common to each group?
2. Why are these rules considered important?
3. What would happen if two of you did not follow the rules?
4. Why do people need rules to live by?
5. Can you think of any other situations where people accept certain rules for the good of the group or society?

Or View a video clip of *Lord of the Flies* – based on the novel by William Golding’s or read the extract from it and discuss:

1. Why did the boys need rules on the island?
2. Why do people need rules to live by?
3. Can you think of any other situations where people accept certain rules for the good of the group or society?

*Written Assignment:* Under the following headings describe three groups or organisations, which make rules for the common good of their members.

|      | <i>Organisation....</i> | <i>Rule....</i> | <i>helpful for...</i> |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| e.g. | GAA                     |                 |                       |
|      | School                  |                 |                       |
|      | State                   |                 |                       |

Take feedback from students and note answers on the board.

## State law / civil law

Write the words State Law on the board and brainstorm students about what it means and note feedback on the board.

Read dictionary definitions of the words state law e.g.

- Oxford dictionary

State: “a country considered as an organised political community controlled by one government”

Law: “all the rules established by authority or custom for regulating the behaviour of members of a community or country”

*Written Assignment:* Pick any one of the dictionary definitions of state law and describe how it is similar or different to the ideas noted earlier on the board.

Take feedback and conclude by defining state law / civil law as a set of rules, which are prescribed or set out by the proper authority and imposed on a society to protect the rights and freedom of individuals and /or the common good of the members of that society, e.g. the speed limit.

Discuss:

1. How does the state law affect you?
2. What is the proper authority that sets out laws in this country?
3. Where would you find out about the laws of this country?
4. What laws are you aware of that are for the common good?
5. What would life in Ireland be like if there were no laws?

Take feedback and conclude by explaining how the laws of the state seek to protect its citizens by working for the common good. The Constitution contains the basic laws of our country. It is very important because it protects the rights of citizens and acts as a safeguard against the abuse of power.

*Read Student Work:* CIVIL LAW AND YOU

Discuss: Why are these teenagers unhappy with the above laws?

Are there any laws, which you think are unfair? Explain why you hold this opinion?

Or *Role play* a conversation between one of the teenagers in *Student Work: Civil LAW AND YOU* and someone who believes the law is there for the common good of society.

*Written Assignment:*

Choose one of the teenagers in *Student Work: Civil LAW AND YOU* and write a response to them suggesting reasons for the law.

Or Write a paragraph on “What is state law?” In it explain what you think state law is and why it is necessary.

## Situations where conflict has arisen –State law and Personal Morality

Read the story of Rosa Parks in *So Everyday Fights?* – Irish Commission for Justice and Peace and discuss:

Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat?

What was unusual about this decision?

Why was she arrested for this?

What was wrong with the law in her opinion?

What does this incident tell us about the relationship between state law and personal morality in Alabama in 1955?

Can you think of any other situations when a person’s personal morality was in conflict with state law? Describe what happened.

Read the story of Anton Wallich Clifford in *My Choices*, The Living Faith Series, Module 2 and discuss:

What job had Anton Wallich Clifford?

What did his work involve?

What caused him to leave his job?

What conflict was there between the laws of the state and Anton’s personal morality?

Or Show clips from videos “Cry Freedom” or “Gandhi” and discuss:

What conflict was there between the laws of the state and personal morality?

Or Read *Student Work*: THE DRIVING TEST and discuss:

1. Which of the voices represents the laws of the State?
2. What would happen if people listened to the other voices when driving on our roads?
3. Give examples of times when people are tempted to ignore the driving laws.

*Written Assignment:*

Civil law seeks to protect the common good of the citizens of the state. Choose any one of the statements made by the tempting voice and write a short response explaining why the law should be followed.

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*Resources which teachers have suggested include:*

Cyberclass Manual Scholastech Disk 3

Logos

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*Student Work: Civil LAW AND YOU*

*Laws are a set of rules, which are prescribed or set out by the proper authority and imposed on a society to protect the rights and freedom of individuals and /or the common good of the members of that society*

It is illegal for a person under 18 years of age to buy alcohol and for a pub or retailer to supply alcohol to anyone less than 18 years of age

à David 17, I'm aware that alcohol needs to be handled carefully, but honestly at 17 I'm confident that I'm mature enough to make my own decisions about it. I'm doing my leaving cert this year and am presently making decisions about my career; I think that explains my point....

It is illegal for person's under 16 to smoke or purchase cigarettes in a shop, if caught the shop involved can be fined a certain fee

à Tom 15. I get messages in the local shop for my Gran who is house bound. She often asks me to include 20 cigarettes and I get them, as she likes a smoke and there is no way she could to the shops herself.

No matter how much money you have you cannot open a current account until you are 18 years of age without parental consent.

à Anne 16: I think this is crazy, I mean I've been working in the local supermarket for the past three years and I want to be able to withdraw money from an ATM as I'm always busy during the day and can't get to the bank. Surely if I'm old enough to earn the money, I can manage my money without my parents help!

Under the present law a young person is required to attend school until they are 16 years of age. "The State shall, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social" Article 42.3.2

**Civil Law  
&  
You**  
à

Paul, 14. I'm sick of school, I know I'm not going to go to college, so why do I have to go in there everyday when I've decided to get out as soon as I can? I could get a job easily, it's not fair.....

You must be 18 years to purchase a lottery ticket

à Mary 17. This is silly. My family have a shop and I help out every weekend, selling the lotto tickets. Why can't I have a chance at winning?

Questions:

- Why are these teenagers unhappy with the above laws?
- Are there any laws, which you think are unfair? Explain why you hold this opinion?

*Student Work: THE DRIVING TEST*

Five Volunteers take the following parts in the reading that follows:

1. The words spoken by the *Strict Voice* are actual quotations from a highway code.
2. The *strict Voice* should sound like an old fashioned headmaster.
3. *The tempting Voice* should sound mischievous and provocative.
4. *The Thoughtful Voice1* should sound... sympathetic
5. *The Thoughtful Voice 2* should sound... understanding

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Strict Voice</i>       | Before moving off, always look round, as well as using your mirror. Signal before moving out.   |
| <i>Tempting Voice</i>     | On the other hand, it's great fun to suddenly switch on the engine and screech away without bothering with all those boring time-consuming signals!   |
| <i>Strict Voice</i>       | Always keep to the left when driving.   |
| <i>Tempting Voice</i>     | Unless you feel it would be good fun to wander across into the right hand lane to look at some shops to practise for driving on the continent or just to give other drivers something to think about! |
| <i>Strict Voice</i>       | Never break the speed limit. Make sure you go much more slowly if the road is wet or icy, or if there is fog.   |
| <i>Tempting Voice</i>     | However, you can ignore all of this if it's Christmas Eve, if you've had one Guinness too many, or if you're trying to impress your girlfriend!   |
| <i>Strict Voice</i>       | When approaching traffic lights, if a red light is showing, you must stop...  |
| <i>Tempting Voice</i>     | or go! Whichever you think is best!   |
| <i>Thoughtful Voice1</i>  | Rules are for people with small cars, the bigger the car the more you can do what you want.   |
| <i>Thoughtful Voice 2</i> | The bigger you think you are, the more rules you'll want to break.  |
| <i>Thoughtful Voice 1</i> | But don't expect to pass the test.  |

*Discuss:*

1. Which of the voices represents the laws of the State?
2. What would happen if people listened to the other voices when driving on our roads?
3. Give examples of times when people are tempted to ignore the driving laws.

*Written Assignment:*

Civil law seeks to protect the common good of the citizens of the state.

Choose any one of the statements made by the tempting voice and write a short response explaining why the law should be followed.