

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Seventh Commandment: You Shall Not Steal

## Catechist Preparation

### Clarifying the Essentials

Respect for human dignity demands that we do not take what belongs to another and that we behave temperately and justly.

- Temperance moderates our attachment to the things of this world; justice helps us render to others what is rightfully owed them (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2407).
- The social doctrine of the Church addresses the demands of temperance, justice, and peace (see CCC 2419).

Use of the things of this world must be regulated by good stewardship.

- As we practice stewardship, we must judge the impact on everyone's quality of life, including future generations (see CCC 2415).
- Animals must be treated kindly, even when they are domesticated for human use or employed in medical and scientific testing (see CCC 2417).

### Why Is This Important?

The Seventh Commandment is understood in light of the Church's social doctrine, a set of teachings that concern the temporal, economic, and social aspects of the common good. The truth of the Gospel helps the best functioning of society and economy.

Social interaction among individuals, groups, and nations must be guided by Gospel principles of good stewardship, justice, solidarity, and love of the poor. This guidance promotes communion among all peoples in accord with divine wisdom.

*When the kingdom of heaven  
is set before you . . .  
and God tells you to [enter],  
are you hesitating, and reluctant,  
and gazing after money . . . ?*

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

## Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. Arrange a prayer space with a candle and an open Bible. Provide name tags and refreshments.

### Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Invite everyone to quiet prayer, thanking God for the many blessings he has bestowed on them.

### Engage

1. Elicit the participants' current understanding of the Seventh Commandment.
2. Continue with the *Insight* section of the participant handout. Invite responses to the *For Reflection* questions.

### Teach

Summarize the *Church Teaching* section. Then discuss the following:

- Legitimate theft does not exist. We do not have a right to what belongs to another.
- We are not entitled to steal from the workplace for any reason—no matter the value of the item.
- Obeying the Seventh Commandment includes good stewardship of our money and possessions. It challenges believers to avoid hoarding and to live temperately.
- We are challenged to live in harmony with creation and to work for all peoples to have adequate food, clothing, and shelter.

### Apply

Ask the participants to share one way they might better live in alignment with the Seventh Commandment.

### Pray

Lead a litany of contrition. (Response: Forgive us, Jesus.):

*For the times I have taken something that was not mine . . .*

*For the times I have been dishonest in business . . .*

*For the times I damaged the property of others . . .*

Add other spontaneous prayers.