



“TEEN SCENES”

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“PLAGIARISM”

1. Eric has several options regarding his term paper.
Discuss the possible consequences and risks of copying a paper off the Internet.
2. Sometimes when we find ourselves in a situation like Eric’s, we are overwhelmed by it and feel depressed. This depression prevents us from seeing other possibilities. Are there any other alternatives Eric might have besides copying his paper or failing the class? Discuss other alternatives.
3. Often our society tells us we must do what it takes to succeed. Not telling all the truth about our actions or being more violent than necessary in a sports game are two examples of this. If Eric prints an Internet paper, he might justify his actions by saying he is doing what it takes to succeed. Discuss the effect this could have on his personal integrity.
4. Honesty and integrity were very important values in the early Christian Church. Read the story of Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts [5:1-11]. Discuss its meaning for Christians today.
5. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also discusses the importance of honesty and integrity. In the 8th Commandment – You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor – we are forbidden to misrepresent the truth in our relations with others. [CCC2464] How would this commandment relate to Eric’s decision concerning plagiarism?

For Further Discussion:

6. Eric must decide whether the good of maintaining the possibility of a college scholarship justifies his act of plagiarism. Discuss what you think Eric should do and why.
7. Depending on his decision, Eric could look in the mirror and see himself as one of these young men:
 - a) Someone who cheated, achieved his goal, but sacrificed his integrity.
 - b) Someone whose own efforts were not good enough, who lost a scholarship opportunity, but kept his personal dignity.
 - c) Someone who rose to the challenge, passed with his own work, and reached a new level of personal excellence.Discuss each of these faces in the mirror. Which risks are worth taking? What should Eric do?

“SHOPLIFTING”

1. Sara’s options are pretty clear. She does not have enough money to buy the necklace. She either steals it or does without it. What are some consequences of each decision? How could her decision affect the way she feels about herself at the dance?
2. More teen shoplifting occurs when teens are together in small groups. Why do you think this is so? What effect could peer pressure have on Sara’s decision?

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3. Society often helps us justify our own actions by minimizing the effects they have on others. In this case, Stacy tells Sara that her action won't hurt the store because it carries insurance to cover its losses and since it has such a large quantity of necklaces, it won't matter if there is one less to sell. Does what Stacy said justify Sara's shoplifting?
4. In Luke's gospel [19:1-10] Jesus meets Zaccheus and invites him to be in relationship with him. Zaccheus' response is that he will not steal money from those whom he collects taxes. How does this story relate to the sin of shoplifting?
5. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the seventh commandment—You shall not steal—forbids theft, that is taking another's property against the reasonable will of the owner. [CCC 2408]. Discuss this as it applies to Sara's situation.

For Further Discussion:

6. Stacy believes that shoplifting does not hurt anyone. Stores must recover the costs of shoplifting—insurance costs, prosecution fees, and costs of stolen merchandise. How do businesses get back this money? Who are the real victims of shoplifting?
7. Stacy says that the necklace is a small item and Sara needs it for an important occasion. Do you think if Sara steals the necklace, she will ever shoplift again? How easy is it to steal a second time? What does this say about our actions changing our attitudes and moral values?
8. Sara might impress Steve by stealing and wearing such a pretty necklace. However, what might her action do to her self-esteem and personal integrity? Is pleasing others worth the price of our own self-respect? Discuss this.

“PEER PRESSURE”

1. Alex has a difficult decision to make. Discuss the possible consequences of joining Mike and Berto. What could be the consequences for Alex if he doesn't show up?
2. Loyalty is a big issue for Mike. He is going to confront Peter because he wants to show his loyalty to Leslie, his girlfriend. How can loyalty to others sometimes conflict with loyalty to yourself and what your moral values are?
3. When a group of people attack one person, we call that behavior “bullying”. Do you think Mike and his friends are going to bully Peter? Discuss your answer.
4. Alex suggests that “there's gotta be a better way”. What other ways could there be in this situation?
5. In Matthew's gospel [26:47-52] we see Peter's loyalty to Jesus at the time of His arrest. Jesus tells Peter to put away his sword. Discuss the relevance of this passage for today's Christian.

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6. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that anger is a desire for revenge, and if anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or wound someone, it is sinful. [CCC 2302] Discuss how this applies to our everyday life. What are some examples of anger becoming sinful?

For Further Discussion:

7. Society tells us that we have a right to take care of ourselves and those we love even if the expression of that right causes harm to others. The president of a company might justify laying off many of his employees in order to maintain profits that ensure a certain lifestyle for his own family. What are other examples of this kind? Morally, how do we balance one person's rights with another person's rights?
8. Hurting someone as an act of loyalty to one's friends does not have to involve physical injury to that person. What are some other ways we frequently hurt someone or exact revenge?

“GOSSIP / CLIQUES”

1. Gina's decision is one with mostly personal consequences. If she doesn't stand up for Sophie, no one else may ever know. However, Gina's own integrity will be affected. Discuss what Gina might say to her friends Rachel and Jessica.
2. There is always something that holds a group together. Sometimes it is an activity in which everyone in the group participates such as being on a sport team. Often, though, a clique is held together by its members' refusal to find good in those outside the group. What kinds of problems can occur in cliques of this sort?
3. Sophie tells Tonya that Gina is really nice, but that people just drift apart. What does Sophie mean? Is that what has really happened in this situation? Discuss.
4. Society often teaches us that one way we can feel better about ourselves is by putting down another person. We are encouraged to strive to be the best, which means others are less than we are. How can competition be harmful to a person's self-esteem and development? How can it be helpful?
5. Jesus had trouble with His apostles wanting to be an exclusive group of followers. Read Luke 9:49-50. How does Jesus' advice to Peter apply to us today?
6. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks about three aspects of gossip. It says that “respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.” [CCC 2477] It also addresses judging others when it states that we should be careful to interpret what people say in a favorable way in order to avoid rash judgment. [CCC 2478] Finally it reminds us that irony (or making fun of what others say or do) is an offense against the truth. [CCC 2481]. Discuss examples of how this relates to the groups in your school.

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For Further Discussion:

7. Examine the cliques and groups that you belong to and those from which you are excluded. What is the bond that holds them together? Is there a positive, more morally responsible way for that group to identify itself? Discuss how people could change a clique or group's way of treating those who are its members and those who are outside of it.

8. Sometimes our actions do not appear to have negative consequences. Is there still a moral code to which we are called? What might determine how we choose to act in such situations? What role does personal integrity play in how we choose to behave?

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