

LESSON 7: THE FALL AND SIN

Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 7	:	Cover points 1 to 9
For Intermediate Level / Age 10	:	Cover points 1 to 13
For Advanced Level / Age 13	:	Cover points 1 to 16

Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned that God created the visible and the invisible worlds because of His great love that He wanted to share with His creation. But we also discovered that there were angels who rebelled against Him, and these fallen angels are now exercising their influence on the visible world by tempting mankind to rebel against God. In this lesson, we will learn how they caused the fall of mankind and what the consequences of this fall were on creation.

Current lesson:

1. When God first created mankind, our first parents participated in the Divine Life of God. There was no suffering, death, sin, or selfishness. Adam and Eve were in harmony with God, each other, and all of creation. The body and soul of Adam and Eve were also in perfect harmony. They were perfectly human.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-24 and explain the passage to the students.
3. This passage shows us how sin entered into the world. It also shows how sin enters into our lives. Adam and Eve chose to go against God's command even though they knew it was wrong. They placed themselves over God, and in doing so, they brought harm upon themselves. Tempted by Satan (or the devil), mankind had rebelled against God and broken our relationship with Him. The motive of this rebellion was to assert our independence from God. Mankind failed to trust in God, his Creator, and abused the freedom given by God.
4. The perpetrator of the fall was the devil himself (read from CCC 391 & 392):

CCC 391: "Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy. Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called 'Satan' or the 'devil'. The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: 'The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing.'"

CCC 392: "Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels. This 'fall' consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably rejected God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: 'You will be like God.' The devil 'has sinned from the beginning'; he is 'a liar and the father of lies'.

5. Observe how the devil tempts Adam and Eve. He makes God's commandment sound vague: "Did God really say...?" Then he gets them to doubt God's intentions (verse 5). Through a toxic conversation, he convinces Eve to entertain sin, to rationalise it, to find a way in her own mind to make it all right (verse 6). The devil also indirectly demonstrates Adam's failure to lead his wife, since Adam is standing there the whole time (verse 6).
6. God was upset when mankind rebelled against Him, but He did not respond in anger. The fall did not make God love mankind any less than He already did. In fact, He had already known from the beginning (when he created Adam and Eve) that the fall would happen, and He already had the perfect plan to save mankind.
7. God promised that help was coming. There was a woman coming in the future who would be an instrument for the defeat of the devil. "I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel" (verse 15).
8. God covered their nakedness. Upon the fall, Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness in a new way that brought a sense of shame. Shame and alienation had now replaced the intimacy that they originally experienced with God. "God made tunics of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them" (verse 21).
9. God changed their habitat. In order to constantly keep humanity aware of their need to be saved from their fallenness, God cursed creation in order to create discomfort in their living environment. This was so that humanity would long for the restoration of the perfection that had been lost. "To the man he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, accursed be the soil because of you! Painfully will you get your food from it as long as you live'" (verse 17).
10. When He created the first parents, God had given to Adam and Eve three levels of gifts:
 - A) He gave them **basic humanity**, consisting of a body and soul, with mind and will. Each has within it certain natural drives and needs. No one of these is evil in itself, but without the help of some added gift to coordinate them, they tend to get out of order, to rebel.
 - B) God gave to our first parents an added gift, which is just such a coordinating gift. This coordinating gift made it possible to keep each natural drive in its place (sometimes called the **gift of integrity**). When Adam and Eve sinned, the lower flesh began to get out of line, to rebel. Hence Adam felt the need of cover; before the fall, he did not feel that, for the flesh was easily docile. God gave them also exemption from physical death, which otherwise would be natural to a being composed of parts, body and soul, which can come apart, and so die.
 - C) He gave them the **life of grace**, a share in His own life, which made the soul basically capable of the vision of God in the life to come.

11. God clearly intended that Adam and Eve should pass on all the above gifts to their descendants. Through the narrative of Genesis 3, however, Scripture tells us that they violated His orders to obey His supreme authority (represented by the command to abstain from eating the forbidden fruit). In their rebellion, they lost the sanctifying grace and the coordinating gift. Hence, they transmitted to their descendants only the basic humanity, without the other gifts. This condition is called Original Sin.
12. Although God created us to live in everlasting friendship with Him, the descendants of Adam and Eve are born in a default state of not being in friendship with God. In fact, since the fall of the first parents, mankind became enslaved under the authority of Satan. This also means that every human person who is brought into this world is vulnerable to the influence of Satan and is not automatically a friend of God.
13. Original Sin has resulted in the darkening of the mind and weakening of the human will. However, this does not mean that humanity has totally lost the ability to know God and His will. Original Sin has caused a deep but not a total corruption. This means that mankind, even without special divine grace, still has the capacity to know God and to search for Him. Original Sin did not cause the loss of human freewill; therefore, a person can still exercise his freewill to respond to God's love although in an imperfect way.
14. There are people who are concerned with the Catholic Church's teaching on Original Sin. They misunderstand this teaching to mean that any newly born baby is already guilty of sin when the baby has not even learned to say/do anything yet! This misunderstanding is incorrect. Original Sin does not mean that a child is automatically personally responsible for his condition. It simply means that he is born, by default, without the saving grace of God. Original Sin is not a committed sin but a contracted sin; it is different from personal sin.
15. It is becoming increasingly apparent, from one generation of humanity to another, that mankind asserts his independence from God more and more. We often refuse to submit to the lordship of God in our lives. We prefer to exercise our own authority in deciding what is right and wrong, good and bad.
16. The rebellion of mankind has brought about many grave consequences to the world, and its effects are experienced at a global level. Some examples are as follows:
 - A) *Militant atheism* (or even devil worship): people who refuse to believe in the existence of God, and even those who wilfully choose to worship the devil instead of God.
 - B) *Gender confusion*: There is an increasing phenomenon today of people being confused about their gender and who identify themselves as being something other than the gender that God has created them to be.
 - C) *Economic injustice*: Sin has caused human beings to become greedy and no longer mindful of one another's needs. Many rich people have little or no concern for those who are poorer.

- D) *Political oppression*: Human beings, in their sinful nature, have come to exploit and discriminate against one another. This is especially true of those who have political power.
- E) *“Natural” disasters*: Disasters that seem to be “natural” are very often the result of mankind exploiting creation and nature.



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