

# Called to Happiness

## *Four Levels of Happiness*

### Grades 9-12: Lesson 1

*Goal: Students will identify the four levels of happiness. They will discuss why holiness is the means to the deepest happiness and fulfillment of self.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 105:3 “Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice”

**Catechism:** YOUCAT #3

*Why do we seek God? God has placed in our hearts a longing to seek and find him. St. Augustine says, “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” We call this longing for God- Religion. (CCC 27-30) It is natural for man to seek God. All of our striving for truth and happiness is ultimately a search for the one who supports us *absolutely*, satisfies us *absolutely*, and employs us *absolutely* in his service. A person is not completely himself until he has found God. “Anyone who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he realizes it. (St. Edith Stein)*

#### **Lesson:**

1. Write on the board: *What is happiness? What makes you happy?* Have students reflect on the questions. Then share student responses to the first question. For the second question, create a list on the board of the answers that the students give.
2. Watch *Four Levels of Happiness* (5 mins.) Have students recall the four levels of happiness listed in the video
  - a. Physical Pleasure and Possessions
  - b. Ego-gratification
  - c. Good Beyond Self
  - d. The Ultimate Good (God Himself)
3. Categorize the students’ previous responses into these four levels.
4. Distribute copies of the chart on the four levels of happiness. Explain each of these levels. Have students take notes.
  - a) Level 1: Physical Pleasure and Possessions: finding “happiness” in acquiring material possessions and physical things.
    - At this level, we use our possessions and experiences of pleasure to seek happiness
    - Ask: What are the consequences and dangers of living on this level? (*We are not satisfied; we have an increasing need to feel/possess in order to be happy.*)
    - Reflection: If you could only carry three things out of your house in a fire or flood, what would you take? How does this reflect what you value?
    - Emphasize: It is good to have material possessions but it is “not good enough” to make us truly happy.

b) Level 2: Ego-gratification: finding “one’s happiness” by seeking to be powerful, popular, or being better than other people

- At this level, we use accomplishments, successes, power, popularity, etc. to seek happiness. “It’s all about ME!”
- Ask: How do I deal with people? Do I surround myself with people who give me the “boost” that I am important? Where do I place my “identity?” Is it in what people say about me....?
- Reflection: Have you ever expected/hoped to be publically recognized for an accomplishment and been passed over? How did that make you feel? How did that effect how you thought about yourself? About other people? Why?
- Emphasize: We all want to be recognized and accepted by others. We need people and people need us. But if I know I am loved by God, family and friends for who I am as a person, not just my talents and gifts then I will experience a deeper sense of happiness.
- Wanting peoples’ recognition is good but “not good enough” to make us truly happy.

c) Level 3 Good Beyond Self: fulfillment that comes from doing good for others and being empathetic (feeling what someone else is experiencing)

- At this level, we help other people or contribute to a good cause. This brings a sense of well-being and happiness.
- Reflection: The person in this level of happiness is seeking the deeper values of love, truth, goodness and justice. Many people who are in this level are those who give their lives for the good causes of helping the poor, homeless... What are your dreams to make a better world? How would you pursue them? How attentive am I in helping other people? Would I still do good for others even if I was not appreciated for it?
- Emphasize: It is admirable to do good for others. However, if service is only for the purpose of making a difference in the world it is not “good enough.” Service must motivated by the love of God or it will eventually lead to frustration and disappointment.
- The truest joy and peace will not be achieved in this level of happiness.

d) Level 4 Ultimate Good (God Himself): Fulfillment a person experiences in the complete and trust in God. This level of happiness requires total surrender to God who is all truth, goodness, love and mercy.

1. Emphasize: There are main characteristics of Level 4 are:
  - It requires total surrender to perfect Truth, Love, Justice, Beauty, and Unity.
  - It is God Himself.
  - It is eternal.
  - It is sought and found by people of all nations and cultures.
2. Reflection: “**You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you.**” We are made for something greater than this world—

our hearts are made with “God-emptiness” which is that restlessness.

3. Choose one or two of the following questions as a topic for students to discuss or journal about:

- Have you ever experienced the restlessness or which St. Augustine speaks? What was the cause of it? Have you ever experienced deep joy and peace? What was the cause of it?
- Where is God in my life? How would I rank my relationship with God in the Person of Jesus Christ (1 as the lowest and 5 the highest) Explain your ranking.
- What was your most powerful experience of God? Try to recapture the experience. What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God?
- List three things I can do today to improve my relationship with God. How can I be accountable?

5. Summarize key ideas regarding the four levels of happiness:

- We are called to holiness (union with God) and this will lead us to our greatest happiness.
- Every human being desires the happiness that will only be found in relationship with God. Only God can fulfill the yearning for ultimate Love and Goodness which we carry within our deepest self.
- Why are the saints on Level 4? Do you know anyone on Level 3 or 4?

6. Watch: *Are you Happy?* To review and lead into reflection questions for homework.

7. Homework: Reflection questions- Journal writing

- a) Which level of happiness are you at?
- b) What level would you like to be?
- c) What three steps can help you move from where you are now?
- d) How can you show hold yourself accountable for making this change?

8. Close with prayer.

(Let us pray that we may grow in union with the One who fulfills our heart's desire:  
*pause*)

Almighty God,  
you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless  
till they find their rest in you;  
so lead us by your Spirit  
that in this life we may live for your glory

and in the life to come enjoy you forever;

through Jesus Christ our Lord  
who is alive with with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God now and forever.

**Amen.**

<http://liturgy.co.nz/reflection/632b.html>

*Additional Activities:*

1. Plan a skit illustrating the different levels of happiness.
  - a. Break the students in small groups.
  - b. Each group will choose a level of happiness. Write a short skit and to include the qualities in that level of happiness. Perform the skit.
  - c. Ask the class what level it is and what makes it in that particular level.
  
2. Choose a story and identify the characters in the story (movies, plays) and their level of happiness. Did any of the characters move from one level to another level. Explain.
  - Suggested stories: Scrooge (Christmas Carol); Zacchaeus ( Luke 19:1-10)
  - Suggested movie: “Ultimate Gift” (written by Jim Stovall)