

# Feelings vs. Reasoning

**PRO TIP**  
Download other grades for alternate activities!

## CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 1767

## MATERIALS

- ▶ [The Role of Feelings](#)
- ▶ [Facts or Feelings?](#)

## CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY STANDARDS

7.6.1 TOB Evaluate actions for self-mastery and describe how actions of self-mastery free one to make a full gift-of-self. (TOB 15:1-4, 32:6; CCC 2339, 2340, 2342, 2346)

## SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

## Teacher Background

We are often told “go with your heart” or “if it feels good, do it.” Such attitudes are not real or true and have been quite destructive in many ways. Both classical wisdom and the Fathers of the Church gave a definite picture of how “the passions” properly fit into a well-lived life. Our passions are a gift from God, and of themselves they are good. The moral quality of our passions occurs by what we decide to do with our feelings. For example, the feeling of anger can be good if it helps you work for justice. But it can be bad if you refuse to forgive and hold a grudge.



### HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

Gender ideology holds that our identity is self-created, and that our so-called gender identity is based on how we feel. The body itself is considered a canvas for self-expression. The truth is that feelings can and do change, and we should never base important decisions on feelings alone. Sometimes feelings can make it hard to think clearly, or they can lead us toward harmful things. The good news is that Jesus has redeemed our entire nature, including our emotional life. In Him our passions can be healed and restored to their proper place. Feelings can help us get to heaven by helping us know what is good and what is bad.

## Activity

- A.** Begin by choosing a few volunteers to do something for the class. Explain that the request you make will be invisible, so the students will have to report truthfully whether they were able to do it.
- B.** Then, call the volunteers to the front of the room or ask them to stand, and make a big show of commanding one student to feel happy, another to feel afraid, and another to feel sad. Make it clear that even though there might be movements or gestures that go along with it, (e.g. smiling for being happy, miming crying for feeling sad), you’re asking for them to feel the feeling, and not simply to act.
- C.** After a moment or two, ask if the students were able to do it.
- D.** Have the volunteers sit down again and then ask more generally: can you be commanded to feel a feeling? *Allow discussion, and guide students to understand that you really cannot truly feel a feeling on command. Feelings come to us, and we do not choose to initially experience them. You don’t decide to feel sad when you get bad news, for example, you just feel sad. And you don’t think carefully and then decide to feel happy when something good happens to you. You just naturally feel happiness.*

E. Explain that this world encourages us to act on feelings first without thinking. In other words, we are encouraged to act based on how we feel at any given moment without the use of intellect. But doing whatever you desire to do is not freedom; it is slavery to those desires!

F. Continue to explain that feelings should come third in our moral lives. Using the classical way of speaking, you begin with the intellect, or your mind, to know what is true and good. You should then use your will to act on what you know is right. Assuming you have a well-formed conscience, your passions (or feelings) can serve as confirmation of what you've done and how good it is. In other words, the feelings you experience alongside an action will tell you about what you've done: guilt for bad actions, contented feelings for good actions. This process is called informing your conscience.

G. Distribute [The Role of Feelings](#) and read it aloud while students follow along. Complete the chart together. Then discuss the questions as a large group, using the answer key as a guide.

H. Finally, pass out [Facts or Feelings?](#) And go over each statement as a class. As you go through the last 5 items, emphasize that we are never defined by our feelings, or our behaviors.

**The Role of Feelings**

Feelings are things we experience. We don't control them; they happen to us. We feel happy when we eat our favorite meal, spend time with loved ones, play games we enjoy, or achieve something good that we had been seeking. Feelings can sometimes be signs that something is wrong. For example, we may feel scared if we are in a dangerous situation, angry if someone breaks a promise, or sad if someone we thought was our friend makes fun of us. Feelings can also be feelings we might feel that our friend doesn't want to hang out with us, but then feel happy when we make up with our friend. Or we might feel that we don't

of Original Sin, our feelings can become disordered and incline us to sin. We can decide what we do as a result of our feelings, but we do not choose to initially experience them. You don't decide to feel sad when you get bad news, for example, you just feel sad. And you don't think carefully and then decide to feel happy when you get something you want. You just naturally feel happiness.

Our intellect, on the other hand, is something we are in control of. Unlike feelings, using our intellect, or reasoning, doesn't simply happen to us. We have to actively do it. Reason is based on observing reality and on logic. Reasoning things are true or false.

**Facts or Feelings?**

Directions: For each statement below, write whether it describes a fact, or a feeling.

	FACT OR FEELING?
1. Pizza is made up of dough, tomato sauce & cheese.	
2. Pizza tastes delicious.	
3. Broccoli is a vegetable.	
4. Broccoli tastes disgusting.	
5. I get it on my math test.	
6. I am bad at math.	
7. I was promoted at my last job.	
8. I am a successful person.	
9. I smoked cigarettes once.	
10. I am a smoker.	

I. Close by going over how our feelings are a gift from God, and it is good that we have them. But because of the effects of Original Sin, our feelings do not function as God intended them to. Sometimes feelings can make it hard to think clearly, or they can lead us toward harmful things.

The good news is that Jesus has redeemed our entire nature, including our emotional life. In Him our passions can be healed and restored to their proper place. Feelings can help us to truly love others and get to heaven by helping us know what is good and what is bad. To love is to will the true good of another. With the help of grace and a well-formed conscience, we can know that an action is good or bad and our feelings will confirm that understanding. Assuming we have a well-formed conscience, bad actions make us feel sad, guilty, ashamed, and so forth, while good actions make us feel happy, content, fulfilled, and so forth. Doing good should and will make us happy. When our conscience is well-formed and we strive to grow closer to Christ, we are more naturally drawn to what is good.

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of Original Sin, our feelings can become disordered and incline us to sin.

We can decide what we do as a result of our feelings, but we do not choose to initially experience them. You don't decide to feel sad when you get bad news, for example, you just feel sad. And you don't think carefully and then decide to feel happy when you get something you want. You just naturally feel happiness.

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FEELINGS VS. REASONING



## STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

red, and a certain bird is a cardinal, you can know for sure that bird is red. It does not matter how we feel about the cardinal being red, it is red.

Like our feelings, our reason has also been damaged by Original Sin, and it can be flawed. We might make a mistake in logic, or we may get facts wrong. But with the help of grace, we can carefully use our intellect to study different points of view, and decide which ones are true. We can change our minds when we get new information.

So we see there is a world of difference between reason and feelings. We should

never tell someone that their feelings are wrong. When a friend comes to us expressing a feeling, we should validate it. For example, "That sounds really scary," or "I would be sad too if that happened to me!" But, we can and should gently and kindly correct reasoning that is wrong, so that we don't support someone's error. There is a modern saying that "Facts don't care about our feelings." This saying might make us laugh, but it is true. True things are true regardless of how we feel about them. We should never validate someone's faulty reasoning, because doing so leads that person away from the truth.

**Directions:** Complete the chart by circling yes or no.

	We can initially control	Can be objectively right or wrong
Feelings	Yes / <b>No</b>	Yes / <b>No</b>
Reason	<b>Yes</b> / No	<b>Yes</b> / No

### Reflection Questions

- 1 Keeping in mind what we have read, why would it be wrong to tell someone that their feelings are wrong or that they should not feel a certain way?

**Because we do not choose our feelings, they come to us. We naturally feel what we feel in a situation, and there is no right or wrong.**

- 2 Keeping in mind what we have read, why might it be important to tell someone in a kind and compassionate way that their reasoning is wrong?

**Because our reasoning can be objectively mistaken; it can even be wrong in ways that may be harmful.**

## STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

- 3 Imagine you had a friend from Toronto who had never left Canada. Your friend tells you she is feeling feverish, exhausted, and achy. She thinks she needs medicine for malaria (a rare disease you only get in tropical climates). What would you say?

**You'd probably say it was more likely she had the flu. You wouldn't want her to take the wrong medicine. Notice that you wouldn't tell her she wasn't feeling feverish, or tired, or that her body aches weren't real. Her feelings are not invalid or wrong, she has just reached an unreasonable conclusion about them. Hopefully, you would correct her reasoning that those feelings were due to malaria. This item is inspired by an example in *Desist, Detrans & Detox: Getting Your Child Out of the Gender Cult* by Maria Kefler.**

- 4 Is kindly correcting someone's reasoning an insult to them? Is invalidating someone's reasoning the same as invalidating them as a person?

**No. Correcting someone's reasoning is not the same as insulting or invalidating them.**

- 5 Why do you think it is important to base important decisions on reason, rather than feelings?

**Because our feelings can and do change. Making decisions solely based on feelings actually makes us a slave to our feelings. Also, feelings are neither right nor wrong, and therefore they cannot tell us the truth of anything. We want to make good decisions! Therefore, as much as possible, we should make decisions based on things that we can know are true. We can use reason to discover whether an idea or point of view is the right one.**

# Facts or Feelings?

**Directions:** For each statement below, write whether it describes a fact, or a feeling.



		FACT OR FEELING?
1.	Pizza is made up of dough, tomato sauce & cheese.	Fact
2.	Pizza tastes delicious.	Feeling
3.	Broccoli is a vegetable.	Fact
4.	Broccoli tastes disgusting.	Feeling
5.	I got a D on my math test.	Fact
6.	I am bad at math.	Feeling
7.	I was promoted at my last job.	Fact
8.	I am a successful person.	Feeling
9.	I smoked cigarettes once.	Fact
10.	I am a smoker.	Feeling

**Note to teacher:** As you discuss items 6, 8, and 10, emphasize that we are never defined by our feelings, or our behaviors. We are each made in God's image and likeness and as baptized Christians, we are sons and daughters of God created for an eternity in heaven. This is our identity.

# Feelings vs. Reasoning



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