

# The Avanti PRE Curriculum

## Teacher Resource Sheet 7.1.5a (1)

### Teacher Tips: “Ways of Making Moral Decisions”

This lesson introduces students to the various ethical theories, such as ‘virtue ethics’, ‘deontology’, ‘utilitarianism’, ‘divine-command theory’ and the more recent ‘caring ethics’ (with its emphases on *empathy* and *relationships*). These are just some ideas and keep in mind that other teachers and moralists will present somewhat different lists (I have not mentioned the prevalent ‘human rights’ approach.)

This is a rather advanced topic. However, it should not be ignored as it is an important precursor to later studies. It can be made accessible, as by having children and young people consider the reasons they make moral decisions. Naturally, ‘seeking approval’ and (the related) ‘peer-pressure’ are pertinent at Key Stage 3.

Here are a few ways we make moral decisions:

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| 1. <u>Authority</u> (i.e. hearing from others) | Includes <b>Divine Command Theory</b>   |
| 2. <u>Rationality</u> (thought)                | Related to <b>Kant</b> and <b>Critical Thinking</b>                                       |
| 3. <u>On principal</u>                         | Linked to <b>Kant</b> , but in common use.  |
| 4. By considering the <u>results</u>           | <b>Consequentialism (+ Utilitarianism)</b>  |
| 5. By having <u>virtue/character</u>           | <b>Virtue Ethics</b> (e.g. <b>Aristotle</b> )   |
| 6. <u>Caring</u> for others (empathy)          | <b>Caring Ethics</b> (and feminist ethics)  |
| 7. Doing our <u>duty</u>                       | <b>Deontology</b>   |
| 8. <u>Desire for approval</u> (peer-pressure)  | <u>Not</u> usually a good reason!   |
| 9. <u>Emotion and desire</u>                   | Often not a good motivator; liked by <b>Moral sentimentalists</b> (such as <b>Hume</b> ). |

#### Notes:

- There are many ‘ways’ here, and the teacher may wish to stress about 5 (somewhat dependant on those identified by students).
- Some of these overlap (e.g. 2+3. 2+4, and – with Kantian deontology – 2+7; also 1+7).
- The teacher may wish to select age-appropriate terminology for each ‘way’.
- Examples of associated responses are listed in the table below:

No.	Possible Statement
1	“The Bible says so!”
2	“This decision makes the most sense; it seems logical.”
3	“Lying is wrong, full stop! I will not break my principles.”
4	“Yes, but the robbers will kill the people they pursue unless we lie to them!”
5	“We must act with virtue and integrity!” “What will become of us if we act like that?”
6	“This will demonstrate care and compassion”. “How would you like to be treated....?”
7	“I did nothing wrong. I was simply doing my duty! I’m was just doing my job.”
8	“What on earth <u>will</u> the neighbours think?”
9	“I like this solution! It feels really good.”