

Additional Resources

Principles & Choices Teacher's Resource Book One: Identity and Values,
Chapter One: Four Levels of Happiness, pages TR11-TR55.

Principles & Choices Student Book One: Identity and Values,
Chapter One: Four Levels of Happiness, pages 1-35.

Ten Universal Principles: A Brief Philosophy of the Life Issues,
by Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D. (Ignatius Press, 2010).

Finding True Happiness: Satisfying Our Restless Hearts,
by Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D. (Ignatius Press, 2015).

*The Soul's Upward Yearning:
Clues to Our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason*,
by Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D. (Ignatius Press, 2015).

You can purchase these and other resources at
www.principlesandchoices.com/store or call (855) 664-6598.



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The Four Levels of Happiness DVD

Facilitator Guide



The Four Levels of Happiness DVD can be viewed in one session or it can be broken up into smaller sessions. A sample 60-minute session follows:

Introduction (5 minutes)

The presenter may propose a few questions for reflection before playing the video.
For example:

- **Are you happy?** [According to recent polls, roughly one third of Americans (34%) are “very happy.” This means that two thirds of Americans are not very happy.]
- **Do you want to be happy?** [“All men desire happiness” – St. Augustine (De Trin. xiii, 3,4). In fact, it is impossible for people to want to be unhappy. To prove it, ask the class to try to want to be unhappy.]
- **What does happiness mean? What does it mean that we want to be happy?**
- **What makes you happy?** [Many things can make us happy because human beings have a variety of faculties – sense, intellect, will, and capacity for relationship with people and with God.]
- **Do these things make you perfectly happy?** [“Man is not perfectly happy, so long as something remains for him to desire and seek.” – St. Thomas Aquinas (ST I-II, Q. 3, Art. 8)]

Play video (27 minutes)

Give ‘The Preference Test’ (5 minutes)

‘The Preference Test’ (on the next page) was written by Fr. Richard Veras and is used here with permission. Individuals who have purchased a *Principles & Choices* ‘Four Levels of Happiness’ DVD have permission to photocopy ‘The Preference Test’ for use as a classroom assignment. Or the instructor may read aloud the following questions or show them on a projector and ask the students to record their answers on a blank sheet of paper.

The Preference Test

Answer the following questions from your own experience. Please answer sincerely. **Note:** You are not being asked which possibility you think is true, or which you believe, but which you would prefer, whether or not you think it is true or believe it.

- 1) A. When someone you love dies, they are dead and that's it. You will never see them again.
- B. When someone you love dies, they somehow live on and you have the possibility of seeing them again, because when you die, you will also somehow live on.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 2) A. Your desire for happiness will find an answer. You will desire more and be given more and you are promised that this will go on for ever.
- B. Your desire for happiness will last for your biological life; it might be answered sometimes, but it will die when your life ends.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 3) A. You are loved.
- B. You are not loved.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 4) A. There is a God who created all of reality and who loves you like a Father and who wants you to exist.
- B. Life is accidental, outside of what you see and touch, there is Nothing that cares if you exist.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 5) A. Your value depends on your abilities. The greater your abilities are, the more important you are. You are more important than people who can't do as much or as well as you. People who have greater abilities than you are more valuable and more important than you. When you lose your abilities, your value will diminish.
- B. Your value comes from the fact that there is a God who wants you to exist. So even when your abilities are not the best and when other people don't think you are important, he still loves and values you. Thus, you are always of infinite value.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 6) A. God exists, true love exists, but in this life he, and his love, can never be known.
- B. God exists, true love exists, God and his love can be known and experienced in this life.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 7) A. Your existence is summed up in your biology. Everything about you is dictated by your physical and chemical makeup. There is nothing about you that science, at some point, will not be able to figure out, and perhaps even reproduce.
- B. Beyond your biology, there is something about you that is mysterious and could never be subject to any analysis. Your existence is irreducible to any measure because something at the core of your being is somehow connected to the infinite, i.e., you are ultimately immeasurable.

Which would you prefer? Choose A or B and give a reason for your choice.

- 8) Was this test easy or hard? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion (20 minutes)

On 'The Preference Test'

Most teachers encounter students who are not religious, and/or do not believe in God, and/or who are offended that anyone would make an assumption that God exists, even in a Christian classroom.

The purpose of this test is to help students personally experience indications of God's existence through their own desires. If students are being authentic, nearly every one of them will admit that they desire to see loved ones again after they die... that they desire that there is a God who loves them like a father... that they desire that they are more than the sum total of their biological parts, etc. Aristotle showed that our desires point to reality. If you desire something, there must be a reality which can fulfill that desire; otherwise there would be nothing to elicit the desire from you in the first place. If you can get your students to admit that they agree with most of the answers in the key below, it will be, for some students, a first step toward seriously entertaining the reality of God.

You may encounter students who deny desiring any of the things on the test that point to God's existence. Take the discussion opportunity to press them on what they really desire. For example, if they argue that when someone they love dies, they prefer for that person to never exist anymore and never see them again, challenge them on what this means about their definition of love. If they argue that they don't want to want God to exist, your battle is over. They have just admitted that they desire for God to exist, but don't want to admit it.

KEY: 1) B; 2) A; 3) A ;4) A; 5) B; 6) B; 7) B.

On Happiness in General

1. Consider the culture in the society where you live—think about the music that surrounds you, the programs on television, movies, plays, art, fashion, advertising, political discussions, stories in the news, etc. Is the culture mostly stuck on Happiness Level 1, 2, 3, or 4? Tell why you think this is true. Does everyone agree?
2. How are you influenced by the culture around you in the decisions you make about happiness? How have you seen others influenced? Talk about good influences as well as bad influences.
3. What difference can you make in helping to encourage people to value Levels 3 and 4 above Levels 1 and 2. Be daring in your ideas. Think BIG! Be creative. If you could do anything to help people move to higher levels, what would you do?
4. Do the following meditation either as a group or at home. Open a Bible to the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 10, verses 17 to 31. Before you begin reading, ask God to be with you and to give you the graces that He feels will be best for you during this time of prayer. Specifically ask for the grace to know what is good for you, and how you can be tempted to choose the kinds of things in life that don't bring you true peace and happiness. Then, read the passage very slowly so that you can visualize the scenes as they really happened, only place yourself in the crowd. Notice all the details of the people, the smells, the sounds, etc. Be aware of all the thoughts and feelings that you had coming into the meditation, only now, let yourself be immersed in the events of the story as they unfold before you. Take each scene one at a time and reflect before moving on. Let God work with you. If you do this with a group, end with an open discussion about your experiences and discoveries during the meditation.