

What Do We Mean by “Freedom”?



Photograph of Isabel . She entered the Convent of the Discalced Carmelites at 18 years old.

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“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Jn 8:32

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**"You will know the truth,
and the truth will set you
free."**

Jn 8:32



All men search for their freedom. Every day on the news we hear about a large portion of humanity that doesn't possess even a minimal amount of freedom. Their life can't be considered dignified. But this is not the case for us.

We are used to living in a culture where everything, or almost everything, is possible and where practically everything is allowed and tolerated. Moreover, any attempt to set limits is considered as a lack of freedom.

We might even dare to say that the "right" to freedom has become the motto that governs modern, developed societies.



1 What does freedom mean to you? Write down some concrete examples from your life where you feel free or not free, and why.

FREE	WITHOUT FREEDOM

3 I BRING MY FREEDOM INTO PLAY

2

What Do We Mean by "Freedom"?

Do you think a baby is free? Can he/she exercise their freedom?



When do you think that we start to exercise our freedom?

Think about one time when you felt pressured by external factors, and another when you felt pressured by internal factors.

Even though you acted freely, since you could still decide and act, do you believe that you were truly free? Would you have made a different decision without this pressure?

2 Look at the image below and reflect on the following questions:



BUILDING UP LOVE

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What Do We Mean by "Freedom"?

What does this image make you think of?



Do you think that things can enslave you?

How does this kid resemble you? What are your slaveries?

3 Gather into small groups with your classmates. Look at the image. Read the questions below. Think about them individually. Then, share the ideas that came to you during your reflection. Finally, choose a spokesperson to share the group's thoughts with the rest of the class.



What other slaveries can young people have?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Draw them onto the end of these four empty chains.



2

What Do We Mean by "Freedom"?

4 Reflect on the following statements. You can share your thoughts with your classmates.



1. Freedom is a right, not a gift. T F

2. Authentic freedom is always reached at the price of a certain submission. T F

3. Freedom is the ability to do what is forbidden. T F

4. Christianity preaches and fights for freedom. T F

5. Man, more than a free being, is a being capable of freeing himself. T F

6. Freedom is doing what we like and what pleases us. T F

7. Authority and freedom never intersect. T F

8. There is no such thing as absolute freedom; there is only relative freedom. T F

9. Freedom is the faculty of doing what we feel like. T F

10. My freedom is limited by the rights of others. T F

11. Freedom is self-determination toward reason and the good. T F

What Do We Mean by "Freedom"?



Freedom is the capacity that I have to be able to make decisions according to my reason and will without being hindered by anything or anyone.

It is also being able to make decisions without being conditioned by anyone, avoiding:

- External pressure like what people will say about me, trends, the opinions of others, and coercion.
- Internal pressure like laziness, anger, fear, selfishness, etc.

True freedom is overcoming all interior and exterior pressure. When I am able to overcome my passions, selfishness, vices, social pressures, dependencies, and artificial needs, etc., then I will be free.

True freedom is a faculty **AT THE SERVICE OF THE GOOD**. A faculty that makes me grow as a person, that makes me mature in a human way.

3 I BRING MY FREEDOM INTO PLAY

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5 Lastly, we invite you to look within yourself for the origin of this freedom. Who created you? Who loved you so much that they endowed you with the gift of freedom?

Prayer

I have known it for a while:
To be free is not to do
whatever I feel like at any given
moment,
but to choose in every situation
what can make me better.

I want to ask you for this, Lord,
that you help me understand
that to be free is to
overcome my indifference and make
an effort,
loving every person,
without ever binding anyone.

To discover that freedom
is not something possessed from the
beginning;
it must be conquered for oneself,

and it is never too late.

That the greatest slavery lies not
in being unable to do this or that,
but in living my life depending
on what others may say or think.

Teach me, Lord, to call things by
their name,
and to fight so that everything I do
will help me to mature
and will help better others.

Give me strength and intelligence
to use my freedom well, and for the
good.
To always choose what is the best,
for me and for others.

Amen

