

Unit 1: 7 Deadly Sins

Lesson 1.9 THOUGHTS . WORDS . ACTIONS

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Scripture Reference:

Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 4:8; James 3:5-6; Matthew 12:34; Romans 12:21

Activities:

Implement based on available time. Detailed instructions and materials lists are provided in the lesson.

Activity 1: Build Your Personal “Code”

Activity 2: This Week’s Challenge: The 3-Part Daily Check-In Journal

Words of the week:

մտածում - muh-da-dzoom - thought

խօսք - khos-k - word

գործ - kordz - action

Objective:

Students will understand that their thoughts directly influence their words and actions, and they will learn practical strategies to guard their minds, speak with intention, and act with integrity by recognizing the chain reaction: Thoughts → Words → Actions.

Moral Character Focus:

Knowledge: Students will learn that every action begins with a thought (Thoughts → Words → Actions). They will understand biblical teachings about guarding the heart (Proverbs 4:23) and controlling the tongue (James 3:5-6).

Understanding: Students will recognize they can control what they do with their thoughts. They will see how negative thoughts lead to sin, while positive thoughts lead to virtue.

Application: Students will practice the 3-Part Daily Check-In (morning thought, daytime word, evening action). They will create a personal code to guide their choices throughout the week.

Values: Integrity, self-control, mindfulness, responsibility, and authenticity.

Memory Verse:

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

- Philippians 4:8

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

**Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos yev paneets yen kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

Lesson Body: THOUGHTS . WORDS . ACTIONS

Over the past few weeks, we’ve explored the Seven Deadly Sins: sloth, anger, pride, envy, gluttony, greed, and lust. Heavy topics, right? But here’s what they all have in common: they all start in your head.

Every action you take, every word you speak, every choice you make begins with a thought. And here’s the really cool part: you have way more control over your thoughts than you realize. Today we’re connecting all the dots. We’re going to talk about the chain reaction that happens in your life every single day: Thoughts → Words → Actions. Understanding this chain is like discovering the cheat code to life. Once you see how it works, you can actually start changing who you’re becoming.

Think of your mind like a Minecraft world or a video game map. You’re constantly building it, sometimes without even realizing it. Your thoughts are the blocks you place. Your words are what you show to other players. Your actions are the structures everyone can see. If you place angry blocks, jealous blocks, and lazy blocks, that’s what your world becomes. But if you place honest blocks, kind blocks, and brave blocks, you build something completely different. The question is: what are you building?

Proverbs 4:23 puts it this way: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Protect your thoughts, because everything else comes from there. This is the key to understanding why you do what you do and become who you become.

Let’s be real: you can’t control every thought that pops into your head. Random stuff just shows up sometimes. That’s normal. But here’s what you can control: what you do with those thoughts. This is where you have more power than you think.

Consider how every sin begins. Envy starts with: “Why do they have everything? That’s so unfair.” If you keep thinking it, feeding it, it grows. Anger begins with: “They did that on purpose. I’m going to make them pay.” If you keep thinking it, it becomes a plan. Pride whispers: “I’m better than them.” Lust says: “Just one more look won’t hurt.” Sloth thinks: “This is too hard. I’ll do it later.” See the pattern? The thought itself isn’t the sin. Feeding the thought is where things go wrong. It’s like the difference between a bird flying over your head and letting it build a nest in your hair.

But here’s the flip side: every virtue also begins with a thought. Courage starts with: “This is scary, but God is with me. I can do this.” Kindness begins with: “They’re having a hard day. I wonder how I could help.” Purity chooses: “That’s not something I want in my head.” The same power that can lead you toward sin can also lead you toward goodness. It just depends on which thoughts you choose to water and which ones you let die.

Here’s a challenging question: If someone could see a list of your most common thoughts this week, what would they learn about you? Your thought life reveals who you really are, not who you pretend to be.

Now let’s talk about words, because this is where your thoughts leak out into the world. James 3:5-6 says the tongue is

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- Philippians 4:8

like a tiny spark that can set a whole forest on fire. Words have massive power, way more than we usually give them credit for.

Consider words that destroy: “You’re so weird.” “Why are you even here?” “You’re terrible at this.” You’ve probably heard words like that. Maybe you’ve even said them. Here’s the thing: they stick. People remember mean words for years. A single sentence you say without thinking can become someone else’s inner voice for a long time.

But words can also give life: “That was actually really cool.” “I’m glad you’re here.” “You’re getting better at that.” These words stick too, in the best way. They become the encouragement someone remembers when everything feels impossible.

Jesus said: *“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks”* (Matthew 12:34). Whatever fills your thoughts will eventually come out of your mouth. If your head is full of complaints and gossip, that’s what you’ll talk about. If your head is full of gratitude and truth, that’s what you’ll speak.

Here’s the real test: notice how you talk about people when they’re not around. Are you building them up or tearing them down? The way you speak when someone isn’t there to hear it shows what you really think about them.

Now we get to actions, and this is where the rubber meets the road. Romans 12:21 says: *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* Here’s the hard truth: you are what you do, not what you say you are. People don’t remember your intentions. They remember what you actually did.

Let’s run some real-life tests. Someone trips in the hallway. Do you laugh or help them up? A group chat is roasting someone. Do you join in, stay silent, or defend them? Your parent asks you to do something annoying. Do you groan or just do it? You have a chance to cheat and no one will know. Do you do it anyway? Your character is what you do when no one’s watching.

St. John Chrysostom said: “The soul is dyed by the color of its thoughts and actions.” Every choice you make is like adding a drop of color to your soul. Drop by drop, you’re becoming someone. The question is, who?

Let me show you how this chain reaction works. Imagine the jealousy spiral. It starts with a thought: “Why does she get everything? It’s not fair.” Then come the words: you start making snarky comments to your friends. Then the actions: you ignore her, exclude her, or spread rumors. The result? You’ve become someone bitter, and you hurt someone else. One thought, left unchecked, created a whole chain of destruction.

But now imagine the kindness chain. It starts with a thought: “He looks really sad today.” Then come the words: “Hey, you okay?” Then the actions: you sit with him at lunch or text him encouragement. The result? You’ve become someone compassionate, and you might’ve just changed his whole day. One thought, fed and acted upon, created a chain of goodness.

See how it works? Change the thought, and you change the words. Change the words, and you change the action. Change the action, and you change who you’re becoming. You have more control over your life than you think, but it starts at the source. It starts with your thoughts.

Right now, in middle school, you’re at the perfect age to start taking control of this process. You’re old enough to recognize your patterns but young enough to change them before they’re set in stone. When you catch yourself thinking something jealous, angry, or mean, that’s your moment of power. You can stop, redirect, and choose a better thought. When you’re about to say something you’ll regret, you can pause and choose silence or kindness instead. When you have the chance to do the right thing, even when it’s hard, that’s when your character is actually being built.

The Holy Spirit is with you in all of this, giving you the strength to guard your mind, control your tongue, and act with integrity. You’re not just surviving middle school. You’re becoming someone. Make it count. The Apostle Paul gave us the perfect filter in Philippians 4:8: *“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”* That’s a blueprint for building a mind that produces good words and actions. That’s how you build a life worth living.

Special Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, true God, with your peace that surpasses all wisdom and understanding, comfort us your servants, by accepting our supplications. Through your beneficence, blot out our transgressions worthy of dreadful punishment. Expiate and hear us, remit and forgive our sins. Make us worthy to thankfully glorify you, together with the Father and the Only-begotten Son, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Խաղաղութեամբ քով Յոգիդ Սուրբ Աստուած ճշմարիտ, որ ի վեր է քան զամենայն միտս եւ զխորհուրդս, մխիթարեա զանձինս ծառայից քոց, ընդունելով զաղաչանս մեր. անցո ի մէջ զգաստմն պատուիասի յանցանաց մերոց բարերարութեամբ քով: Ներեա եւ լուր մեզ, քաւեա եւ թող զմեղս մեր, արժանաւորեա գոհութեամբ փառաւորել զքեզ ընդ Յօր եւ ընդ Որդւոյն Միածնի, այժմ եւ միշտ եւ յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից: Ամէն:

Khaghaghootyamp kov Hokeet Soorp Asdvadz jshmareed, vor ee ver eh kan zamenayn meedus yev uzkhorthoortus, mukheetarya zantseenus dzarayeets kots, untoonelov zaghachanus mer. Antso ee mench uzsaoomun badoohasee hantsanats merots parerarootyamp kov. Nerya yv loor mez, kavya yev togh uzmeghus mer, arjhanavorya kohootyamp paravoreyl uzkez unt Hor yev unt Vortvoyn Meeadznee, ayjhm yev meeshd yev haveedyanus haveedeneets. Amen.

Activity 1: Build Your Personal “Code”

Materials: Paper, markers, colored pencils

Each student creates their own personal code: a visual guide for how they want to live.

Divide your paper into three sections:

1. THOUGHTS (What I let into my mind): Example: “I will pray when negative thoughts come.” Example: “I will not scroll through stuff that makes me jealous.”
2. WORDS (How I speak to and about others): Example: “I will not gossip.” Example: “I will encourage someone every day.”
3. ACTIONS (What I actually do): Example: “I will include people who are left out.” Example: “I will tell the truth, even when it’s hard.”

Make it visual. Draw symbols, use colors, make it something you’d want to keep.

Optional: Take a photo for your phone wallpaper or locker.

Activity 2: This Week’s Challenge: The 3-Part Daily Check-In Journal

* You can start this in the classroom (optional)

Every day this week, do this quick check:

Morning: Start with one good thought. Read a Bible verse, pray, or remind yourself: “God made me. God loves me. I can do this.”

During the Day: Speak one kind word to someone. Find one person and say something real and encouraging.

Evening: Do one loving action. Help without being asked. Forgive someone. Text someone who’s strugglin. Pray for someone who annoyed you.

At the end of the week, notice: Did anything change?

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)

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Life Application

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

This isn't just a lesson for Sunday school. This is how your life actually works every single day. Right now, you're making dozens of small choices about what thoughts to keep and what thoughts to kick out. When you're lying in bed scrolling at night, you're choosing what to put in your mind. When you're in the hallway between classes, you're choosing what to say about the people around you. When you're at home and no one's watching, you're choosing what kind of person to be. The beautiful thing is that you don't have to be perfect at this. You just have to start paying attention. Notice your thoughts. Catch yourself before mean words come out. Choose the right action even when it's hard. Every single time you do this, you're building the person you're going to be. The Holy Spirit is ready to help you every step of the way. You just have to pause, breathe, and ask.

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. Why are thoughts so powerful? Can a thought really change your whole day? *(Yes, because thoughts lead to feelings and actions. One negative thought in the morning can make you grumpy all day. One grateful thought can make you notice good things everywhere)*
2. Have you ever said something you didn't mean to say? Where did that come from? *(It came from thoughts we'd been thinking but didn't realize were building up inside. Sometimes anger or jealousy we've been feeding just bursts out)*
3. What's one action you've taken that you're proud of? What thought or value was behind it? *(Answers will vary: helping someone being bullied came from thinking “that's not fair, someone should do something”; being honest when it was hard came from valuing integrity, etc.)*
4. If you could change one pattern in your thoughts, words, or actions, what would it be? *(Answers will vary: stop comparing myself to others, stop complaining, be kinder to my siblings, stop procrastinating, control my temper, etc.)*
5. Who in your life is someone whose thoughts, words, and actions all match up? *(Could be a parent, teacher, church leader, friend. Someone who lives with integrity and doesn't just talk about values but actually lives them)*
6. How do you think the things you watch, listen to, or scroll through affect your thoughts? *(They plant seeds. If we watch mean content, we start thinking mean thoughts. If we listen to negative music, we feel more negative. What goes in our minds shapes what comes out)*
7. Why do you think Jesus cared so much about what comes out of our mouths? *(Because words reveal what's really in our hearts. Also, words have power to hurt or heal. Jesus knew that our words shape our relationships and our character)*

* *Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.