

Moral Perspectives

Common Points of Views that individuals might bring to conflict
and difficult situations

Intentions for this learning module

- You will learn five distinct perspectives that individuals may bring to a difficult situation.
- You will understand how each of the five perspectives leads individuals to different decisions.
- You will learn a decision-making approach which addresses multiple perspectives in conflict resolution.
- You will feel more comfortable in dealing with difficult decisions.

Perspectives

Five Common Point of Views

Utilitarian

- Least Harm to the Parties Involved

Rights

- Protection of Individual Rights

Fairness

- Equal Treatment for everyone

Common Good

- What is best for the majority

Orthodox Virtues

- Journey to salvation

Scenario A

Over the past few weeks, several board members, who all just happen to be Greek like you, have talked to you about the lack of efforts of a board member. These members are very connected in the church, so it is possible they are not the only ones who have noticed. The concern they express is over the possibility that the board member in question will be nominated by the election committee for another term on the board.

The board member, who is not Greek, but married to your cousin, has several responsibilities and does a very good job in most of them. He has been very committed to the church and he is well liked, especially by many of the non-Greeks who have married into the community. He has told you recently that he has never felt closer to the church and deeply desires continuing on the board. He does struggle with supporting weekday services and you have heard stories of him coming late and sometimes leaving without cleaning up completely. He has come to you at times and asked if you could help him find someone to take his weekday duty because of the demands of taking care of his three young children.

You chair the nominations committee and tonight you will meet with the other members of the committee to develop your list of nominees. You know at least one of them does not want him to be nominated. How do you handle it?

This Scenario is fictional and intended to explore the conflict created between different perspectives.

Self Assessment Scenario A

How would you handle this and why?

Utilitarian Moral Perspectives

- The principle states: "Of any two actions, the most ethical one will produce the greatest balance of benefits over harms."
- Focuses on the consequences that actions or policies have on the well-being ("utility") of all persons directly or indirectly affected by the action or policy.

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Utilitarian Moral Perspectives



Identifying the needs of both Egypt and Israel, Carter and the negotiators found a solution that would bring the most happiness to Egypt and Israel. They sadly left out Jordan and Syria.

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And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely [1] die. – Genesis 2:16-17

Not all happiness is holy and not all pain is necessarily bad for us. For example we fast and experience greater connection with the Lord. It is important that we apply the perspective of utilitarian in harmony with our Orthodox faith.

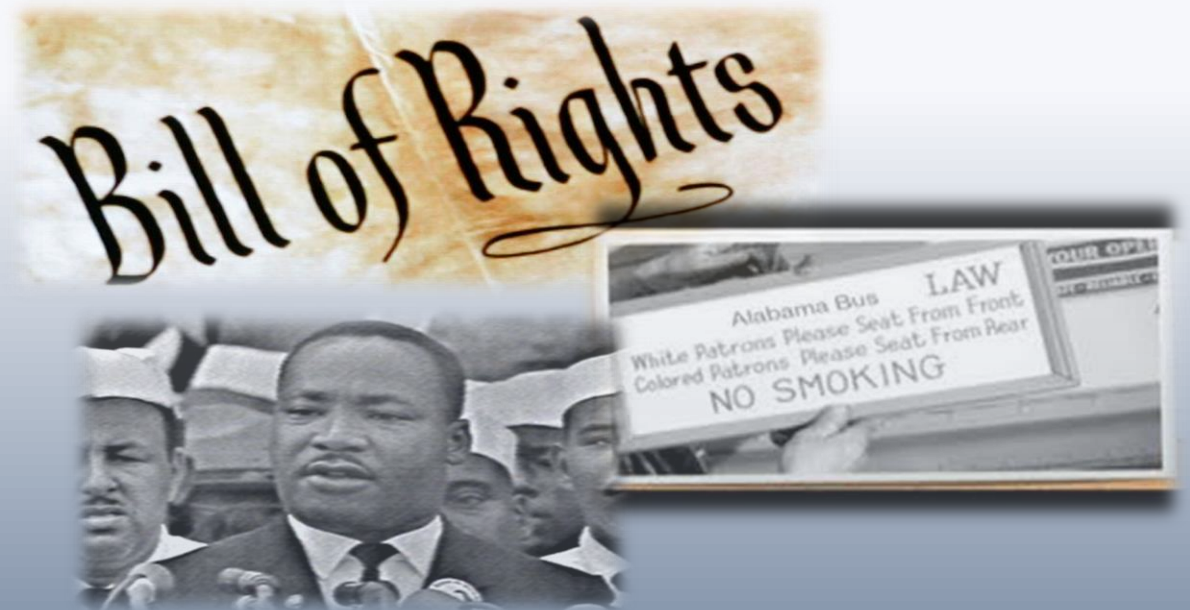
Rights Moral Perspectives

- The principle states: Act in ways that respect the dignity of other persons by honoring or protecting their legitimate moral rights.
- Identifies certain fundamental religious, civil, political and economic rights that merit protection or respect.
- The dignity of the human person. [the right to privacy, autonomy, the right to subsistence, freedom of conscience, the right to physical integrity, etc.]

Founding Fathers

Rights Moral Perspectives

American leaders who have used this approach effectively include our founding fathers and the Bill of Rights. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement is based on this principle. The NRA's efforts to protect the right to have guns is yet another example.



For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-28Ad

Fairness & Justice^{Moral Perspectives}

- The principle states: "Treat people the same unless there are morally relevant differences between them."
- Focuses on how fairly or unfairly our actions distribute benefits and burdens among the members of a group.
- Fairness requires consistency in the way people are treated.

Judicial System of USA

Fairness & Justice Moral Perspectives



Much of our legal system is founded on this perspective approach to ethics. The symbol of the justice, a blind woman holding balanced scales, expresses that only morally relevant differences between individuals should be justification for different treatment under the law.



But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Luke 10:33-34

Common Good^{Moral Perspectives}

- The principle states: "What is right is what advances the common good."
- Presents a vision of society as a community whose members are joined in a shared pursuit of values and goals they hold in common.
- The community is comprised of individuals whose own good is inextricably bound to the good of the whole.

Public Health System - TVA

Common Good Moral Perspectives

The focus is on making decisions that allows for the good of everyone over any need of an individual. General Patton is often cited as a leader who expected and got tremendous sacrifices from his troops in the pursuit of a greater common good for man (the defeat of Nazi Germany).



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And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. - Mark 9:33-35

Orthodox Virtue Moral Perspectives

- The principle states: Answers should be formulated so as to preserve our salvation in Christ and to reflect the truths of the Faith.
- Focuses on salvation, attitudes, dispositions, or character traits that enable us to be and to act in ways that develop our potential.
- Examples: salvation, hope, faithfulness, trustworthiness, humility, integrity, love, etc.

The Orthodox approach is understood from the perspective that salvation is the ultimate goal of man.
-Fr. Peter Andronache

Orthodox Virtue Moral Perspectives



Do we condone behavior that can leads to poor virtues. Do the decisions we make drive others to lead good orthodox lives and to stronger spirituality. Most importantly, do our decisions support the journey to salvation for all those involved.

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Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, [1] nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; [2] and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. - Psalm 1:1-3

Five Questions?

Exploring the perspectives

- What benefits and what harms will each course of action produce, and which alternative will lead to the best overall consequences? (**Utilitarian**)
- What moral **rights** do the affected parties have, and which course of action best respects those rights?
- Which course of action treats everyone the same, except where there is a morally justifiable reason not to, and does not show favoritism or discrimination? (**Fairness & Justice**)
- Which course of action advances the **common good**?
- Which course of action supports the journey to salvation of all those involved and strengthens Orthodox Christian **virtues**?

Debrief on Scenario A

Over the past few weeks, several board members, who all just happen to be Greek like you, have talked to you about the lack of efforts of a board member. These members are very connected in the church, so it is possible they are not the only ones who have noticed. The concern they express is over the possibility that the board member in question will be nominated by the election committee for another term on the board.

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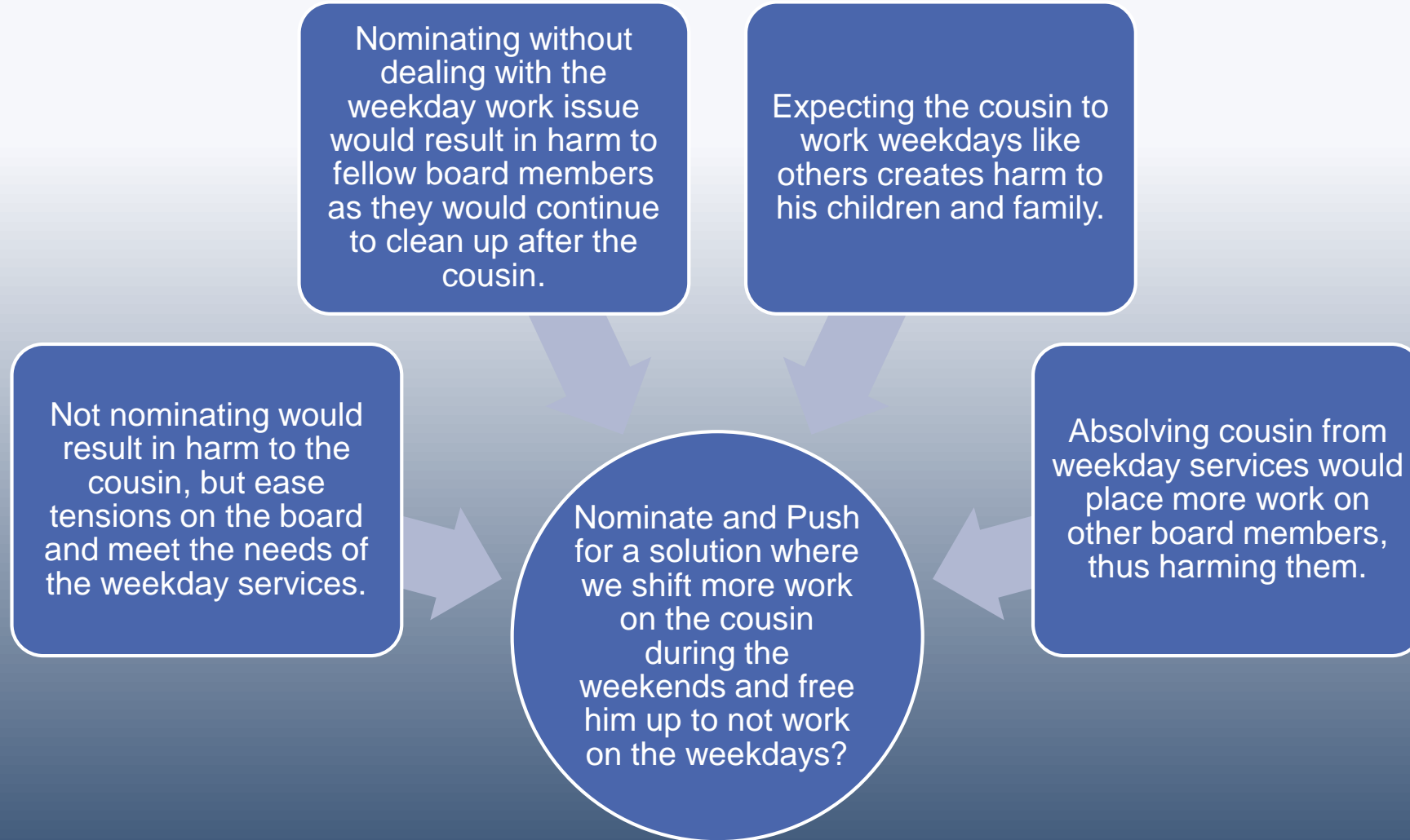
Self Assessment

Keep in mind that none of these answers are perfect, but designed to help you see different perspectives on the issue.

As I present the various moral perspectives, please note which perspective is closest to your viewpoint and also which you found least likely to be your approach?

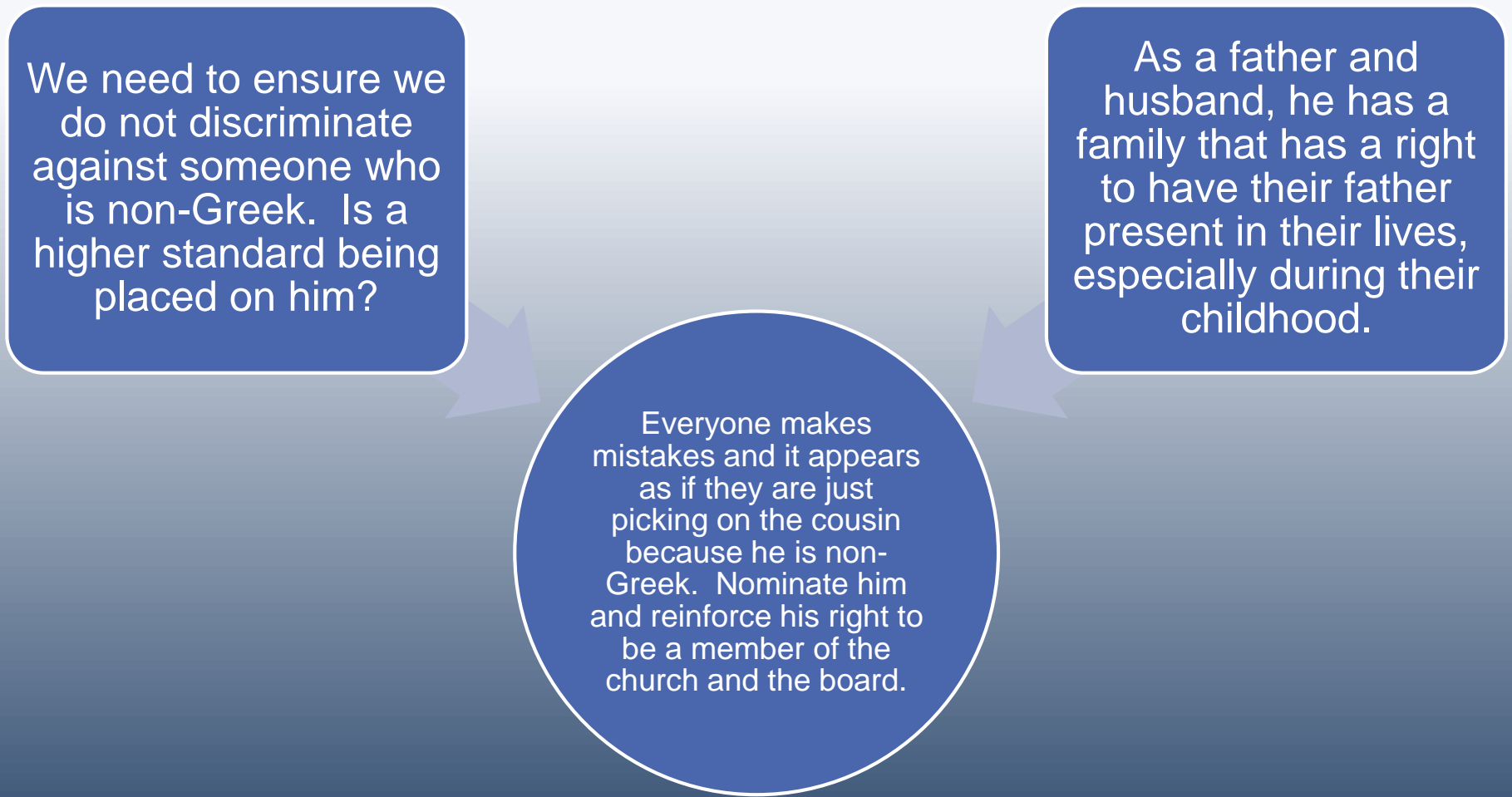
Scenario A - Utilitarian Debrief

What benefits and what harms will each course of action produce, and which alternative will lead to the best overall consequences?



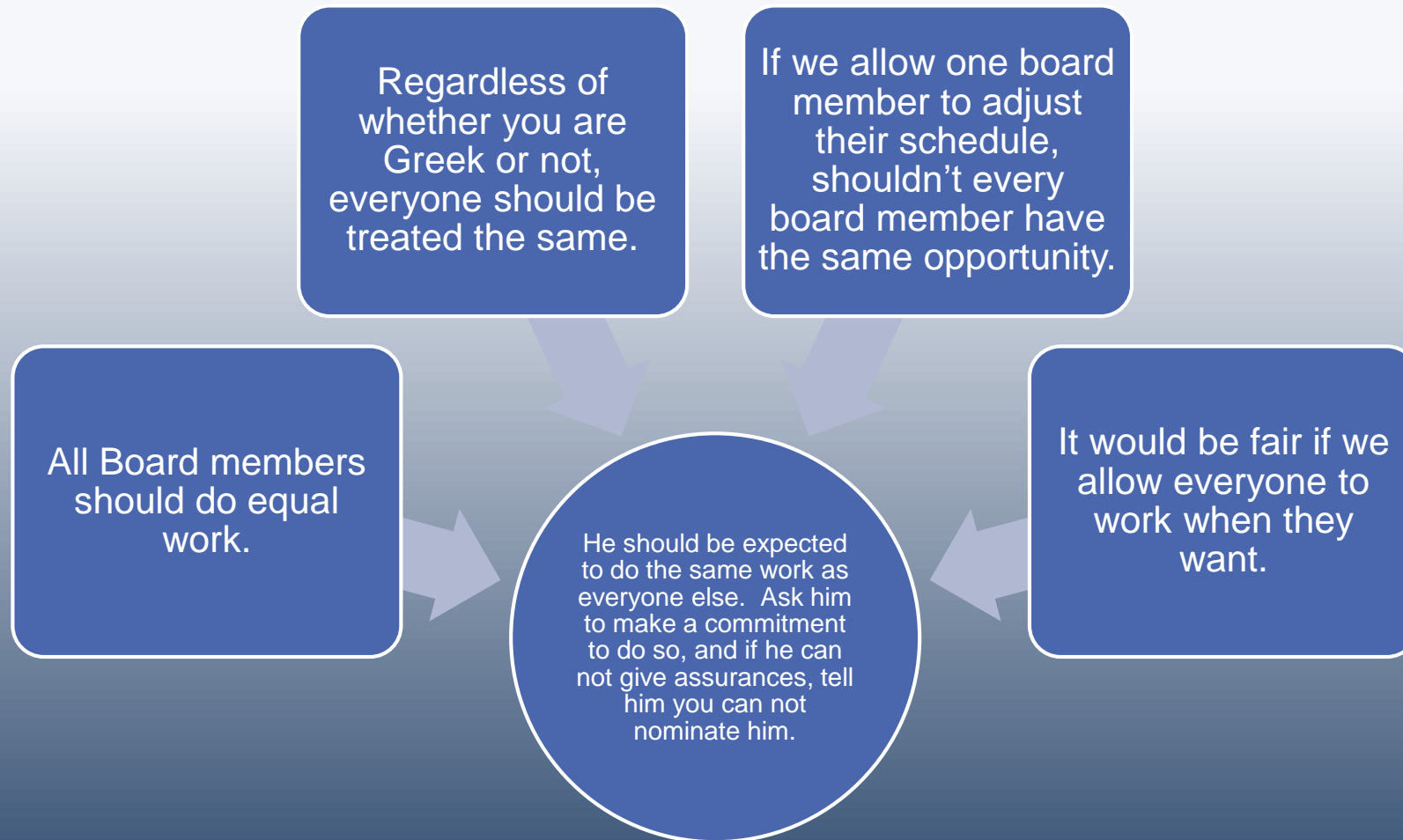
Scenario A - Rights Debrief

What moral rights do the affected parties have, and which course of action best respects those rights?



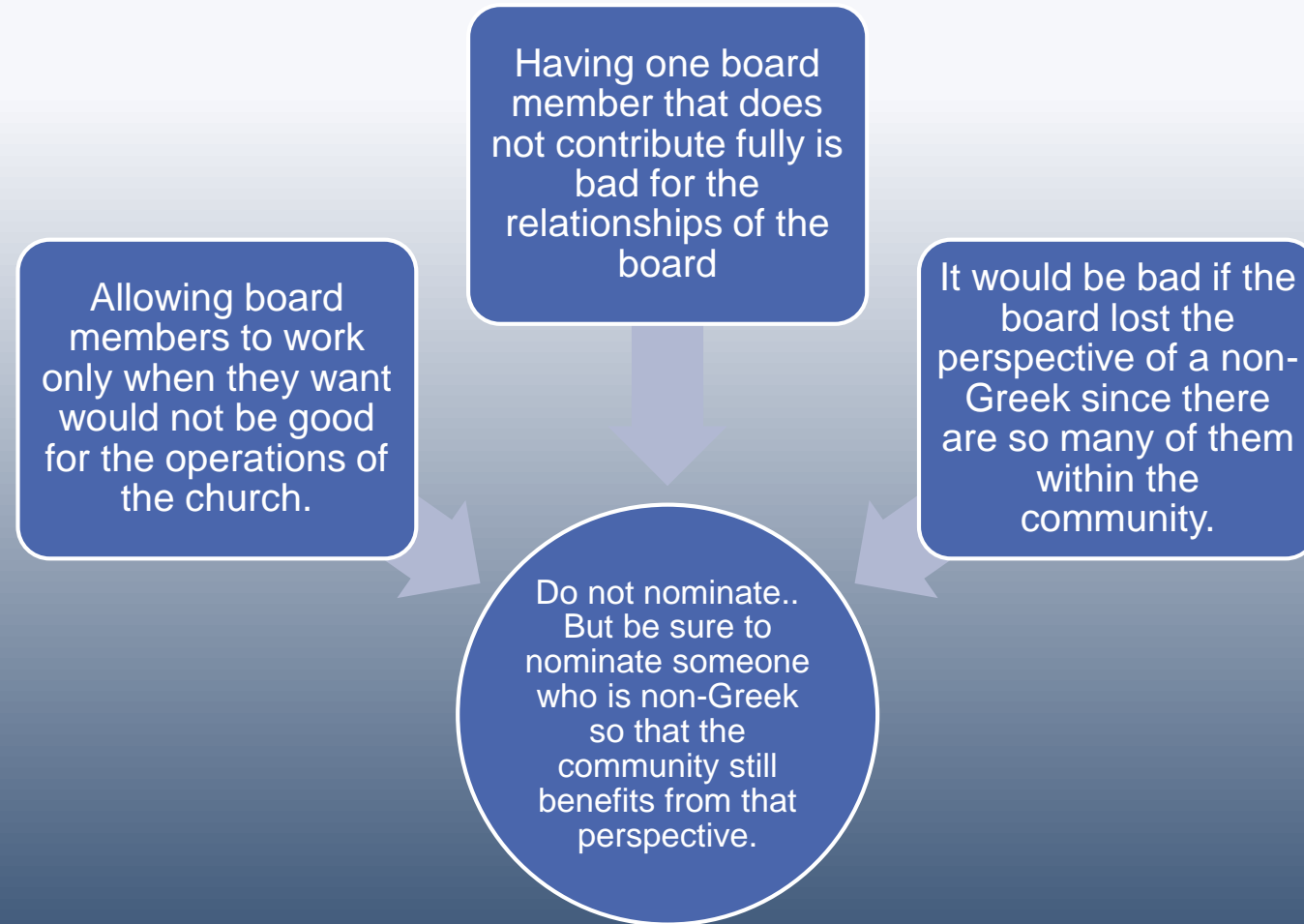
Scenario A - Fairness Debrief

Which course of action treats everyone the same, except where there is a morally justifiable reason not to, and does not show favoritism or discrimination?



Scenario A - Common Good Debrief

Which course of action advances the common good?



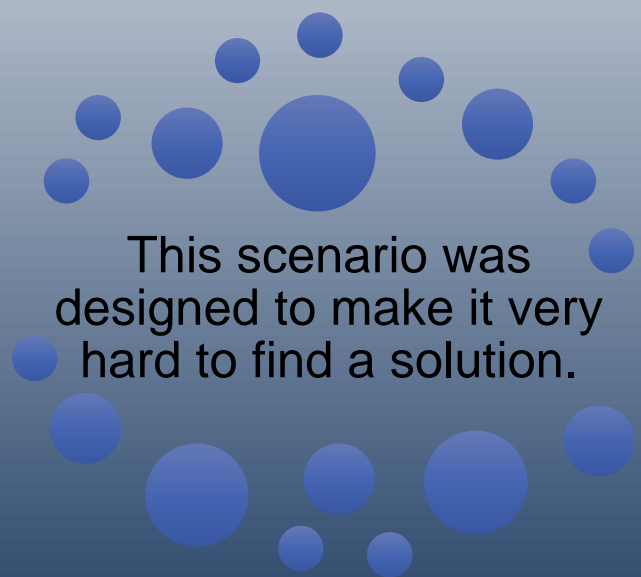
Scenario A - Orthodox Virtue Debrief

Which course of action supports the journey to salvation of all those involved and strengthens Orthodox Christian virtues?



Scenario A - Discussion

- Which perspectives might indicate where conflict might occur for those involved?
- Is there a solution that draws from several of the perspectives?
- In what ways should you show empathy and understanding in addressing the situation?



This scenario was designed to make it very hard to find a solution.

Case Studies

In Groups of 3-4 people, read and address the case assigned. These cases are designed to have no clear answer, but more to stretch your discussions to look at the competing perspectives. Please come to consensus on the following questions:

1. Who will be impacted by the situation and any decision?
2. Answer the five questions of moral perspectives?
3. What action(s) you should take?

In 10 minutes, be prepared to report your answers!

Scenario B

The 28 year old granddaughter of a long-time member of the church wishes to reserve the church hall for a series of dance classes she is starting. The two-hour classes will be open to members of the church as well as non-members willing to pay the tuition for dance classes. Because of the age level, you can anticipate that the majority of participants will have to be non-members if the class will be large enough to return an income.

The granddaughter is currently not a practicing member of the church and does not contribute to stewardship. She has only attended church with her grandparents for special family events and once on Easter a couple of years ago when her parents, who live several hours away, attended. Your only interaction with her was an email request.

The grandmother has called the church office several times and offered to reserve the space in her name. The grandparents are very committed to the church and have always been good stewards. You sense they have a strong need to help their granddaughter in that she has struggled until recently. For tax purposes, the grandmother has told you that the rental has to be paid for by the granddaughter.

The church rental rates for members is a small \$50 clean up cost. Non-members pay a much much higher \$200 per hour fee. The policy specifically states that you must be a member in good standing to receive member rates on hall rentals. In developing this policy last year, strong feelings were expressed over ensuring the facilities were used primarily for members of the church who practice good stewardship.

The grandfather, who is on the board, plans to bring up the issue at your meeting tonight. How should the board address it.

This Scenario is fictional and intended to explore the conflict created between different perspectives.

Scenario C

The church office secretary informs you that the Sunday School chairperson took 3 tables and 24 chairs yesterday. She is concerned because it is Friday and on Saturday the church will be hosting college young people from across the region in a charity day where they will put together packages for poor families in the community. While we can get around not having enough chairs, the missing 3 tables will make it difficult for the volunteers and collegians to do their work.

The Sunday school chairperson is a special person. She has done the job of 20 volunteers over the years and has built a wonderful program for the youth. It is not uncommon for her to pay for things out of her own pocket with the Sunday School needs it. She is also well thought of in the community. Her home is often one of the social spots for members of the community. In fact, you are invited to a large party at her home Saturday night. You know that this party is very important to her since she has mentioned it several times to you. She is excited, as the mayor will be in attendance.

The church member who is helping host the college charity event is a good friend also. This is a new effort which came from a request from the Bishop. Your friend was reluctant at first, but is now very excited since there will be over 30 young collegians and over 12 volunteers from the church helping with this charity event. There is also a chance that the Bishop will try and join them.

Your friend plans to setup for the collegians in about 1 hour, but you have to leave now. You do expect to see him at a ministry leaders meeting on Saturday morning. The Sunday school chairperson will also be there. You expect them both to come to you since you serve as the facilities chair and are responsible for the tables and chairs. How do you handle it?

This Scenario is fictional and intended to explore the conflict created between different perspectives.

When we face conflict, we can use the Perspectives as a reflection tool to ensure our decisions take into account all perspectives.

Five Common Approaches to an ethical decision

Utilitarian

- Least Harm to the Parties Involved

Rights

- Protection of Individual Rights

Fairness

- Equal Treatment for everyone

Common Good

- What is best for the majority

Orthodox Virtues

- Journey to salvation

Slide linking to the next module?