Case studies:

#1 You were a county commissioner before being elected to the state legislature. As a commissioner you fought for years to receive state funding to widen a bridge over Muddy River and were not successful. You made this issue part of your platform in your election campaign, and you believe you won the seat because of this. The chair of appropriations agreed to include funding for the bridge in the budget bill, if you will not fight a proposal to build a state building on land that is now a park. You do not agree with building on park land.

Analyse the case from an ethical perspective.

- Who has the ethical dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)

- Describe the ethical dilemma. (On one hand…On the other hand)

- What values or principles are at stake?

- What values or principles may be in conflict?

- Among questions to discuss:
  - How far should you go to support something your constituents want?
  - If you agree, how do you explain it to your constituents?
  - To get funding for the bridge, what if you were asked to vote for an issue that you are moral against?

- What do you do?

- What values guide your decisions?
On the eve of an important vote on a bill in your committee, an old friend calls you. He is a lobbyist who represents an association that has been pushing for that bill. The lobbyist asks you to go out to dinner, at his expense, to catch up on old times. You long ago decided that you were in favor of the bill, so the dinner would not influence you in any way.

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#3 You have a bill in a committee that has been held up by the chair. The chair tells you that if you testify before the committee and propose an amendment that the chair wants, the committee will vote the bill out favorably. However, you must characterize the amendment as a technical correction of a “drafter’s error” in your original bill. In fact, the drafter did not make any error and the amendment has some substantive changes. You have no problem with the substance of the amendment, but you are faced with the choice of whether to misstate the nature of the amendment and use the drafter as a “fall guy” in order to get your bill passed out of committee. This looks like your only chance and the bill is very important to you personally and your constituents.

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  - What values or principles are at stake?
  
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