



VOCATION LESSONS

*An online curriculum supplement for
schools, parishes, and youth ministry*

INSPIRE GREATNESS.

VIANNEY VOCATIONS

Vocation Lessons is focused not just on education, but *formation*.

Well-crafted materials inspire students to discern God's call to marriage, priesthood, or religious life. Boys and girls develop a deep appreciation of each vocation and gain the tools they need to discover God's call in their own lives.

This unique curriculum supplement fits in easily with your existing education system—Catholic schools, religious education, and youth ministry—to “leaven” them with a very strong pro-vocations message. It's a low-cost, long-term solution to create a culture of vocations in your diocese.



Our experienced educators have developed age-appropriate material for K-12 students. For example, first graders hear a light-hearted tale titled “Super Priest,” while sophomores read historical fiction on St. John Vianney.

BASIC FEATURES

- K-12 lessons offer in-depth coverage of Christian marriage, priesthood, religious life, and principles of discernment.
- Created for Catholic schools, religious education, and youth ministry.
- 100% online for instant distribution and low cost (includes printable PDFs).
- Catholic schools units include four lessons per grade (about a week's worth of religion classes).
- Religious Education units include one lesson per grade (one class per year).
- Youth Ministry units include four options to span 2-4 years.
- Compelling lesson plans “teach teachers” about vocations.
- “Family Feature” spurs conversation among parents and children about God's call.
- Created by Vianney Vocations and a team of top-notch Catholic educators.

WHY VOCATION LESSONS?

- Presents the priesthood & religious life as compelling and rewarding vocations
- Offers in-depth wisdom on choosing a spouse and building a strong marriage
- Complements existing education structures
- Works on smartboards, tablets & phones
- Strengthens the work of the Vocation Office
- Costs just pennies per student
- Easily accessible at VocationLessons.com



HIGHLIGHTS

The curriculum is mostly original material, but also includes links to carefully curated videos, artwork, and articles online.

ELEMENTARY

- Original, engaging stories with titles like “The Ladybug and the Priest” and “A Princess Becomes a Nun” teach children about the meaningful lives of priests and religious.
- Classic artwork such as “Institution of the Eucharist” by Fra Angelico.
- Fun activities to teach virtue and charity in family life.

JUNIOR HIGH

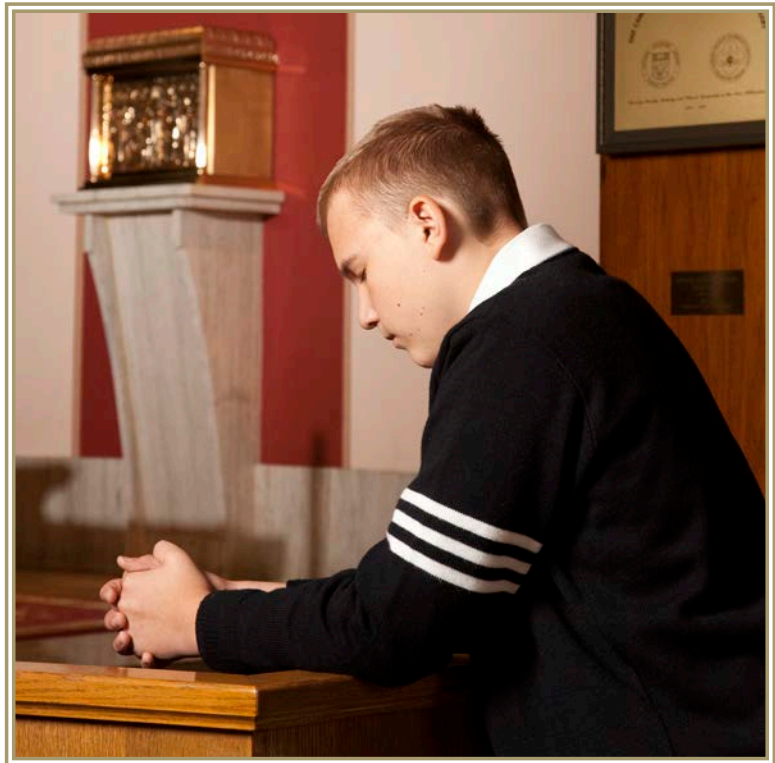
- In sixth grade, student homework is to create a video or audio recording for the kindergarten class explaining the different vocations.
- Video link to “A Day in the Life of a Priest”
- Eighth graders receive an age-appropriate primer on St. Ignatius’ discernment of spirits and write a creative “internal dialogue” about discerning one’s vocation.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Academically challenging excerpts from St. John Paul II, the Catechism, and other original source material.
- In tenth grade, students answer questions after visiting the web sites of the diocesan Vocation Office and religious orders.
- Students take a realistic look at the challenges and rewards of marriage, as well as the generous single life.
- “Tough Topics” section clearly and compassionately explains the Church’s teaching on homosexuality, contraception, divorce, and other important topics of our time.



Several lessons include creative role-play activities. For example, after learning about principles of discernment, a student counsels a friend who is considering religious life. In another scenario, two students play mom and dad as their son “breaks the news” that he is considering going to seminary. Seniors re-enact the rite of ordination, a solemn profession, and the marriage rite.



Vocation Lessons goes beyond academics to inspire students to follow Christ and become open to God’s call. For example, in 9th grade, worksheets help students to build a realistic “spiritual plan of life.” Several assignments require students to imagine their future lives as priests, religious, or committed spouses.



KINDERGARTEN

God Calls

- Objective: To begin listening to ways that God calls us.
- Is 43:1 "I have called you by name"
- Game: blindfolded students are called by their classmates
- Activity: Draw a picture of God calling you
- Art: "Virgin and Child" by Bartolome Esteban Murillo
- Simple meditation on the Creation

Marriage

- Objective: To gain a sense of each person's helpful and loving purpose in his or her own family
- Mt 2:10 "They saw the child with Mary his mother"
- Game: pretending to act out aspects of marriage and family
- Story/Video: The Best Nest, by P.D. Eastman
- Activity: Helping hands in my family
- Art: "The Return from Egypt of the Holy Family" by Jacob Jordaens
- Simple meditation on the birth of Jesus

Priesthood

- Objective: To know to address a priest as "Father," and to know a few things that priests do
- Jn 21:15 "Feed my lambs"
- Game: Student feeds the lamb a piece of straw each time they think of a thing priests do
- Story: Ladybug follows Fr. Gilbert for a day and reports back to chipmunk and bunny
- Activity: practice the responses of the preface dialogue from Mass
- Art: photos of priests

Religious Life

- To know to address a consecrated religious person as "Brother" or "Sister," and to know a few things they do
- 1 Jn 4:19 "He first loved us"
- Game: teacher shows students how to make cutout dolls and pretend they are sisters and monks
- Story: A Princess Becomes a Nun
- Coloring page: St. Angela Merici or Blessed Junipero Serra
- Art: photos of religious sisters and brothers
- Simple mediation on God's love and call

Assessment: Worksheet to match the object to the person (i.e., match priest to chalice)

Family Feature: Activity: find two objects in your house that make you happy. Discussion of how friendship with God makes us truly happy.

FIRST GRADE

God Calls

- Objective: To begin listening to the ways God calls us.
- Ephesians 2:10
- Story: Jesus as a Boy, with questions about being a "little Christ"
- Activity: slideshow of baby photos
- Art: Road to Emmaus, by Robert Zund
- Reflective prayer: Don't worry about food or drink
- Seek first the kingdom of God.
- Simple vocation prayer

Marriage

- Objective: To recognize that marriage is about helping each other.
- Eph 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives"
- Story: "Mouse Help," about a mouse couple who help each other in danger
- Activity: find complementary objects as an analogy to show that husbands and wives compliment each other
- Drawing: Draw a mom and dad working together and explain what you drew
- Pray simple litany for families
- Simple vocation prayer

Priesthood

- Objective: To foster admiration for the courage needed to be a priest
- John 15:15 "I have called you friends"
- Game: "Father Says," like Simon Says
- Original Story: "Super Priest," a light-hearted tale that shows the power of priesthood
- Activity: Dice game about the bravery of priests
- Coloring: priest coloring page
- Closing meditation on Joshua 1:5-9, "Be strong and courageous"

Religious Life

- Objective: to gain a simple understanding of the lives of religious brothers and sisters
- Eph 6:10 "Put on the full armor of God"
- Activity: make a belt with three knots out of string, and make three promises to God
- Story: "Little Polly" plays with siblings as she imagines being a religious sister
- Explore: Think about the religious scapular by drawing pictures of Mary's mantle or playing "Mary's Mantle" with a blanket or sheet
- Closing prayer, practice genuflecting

Assessment: Memorize a Bible verse about being called.

Family Feature: Parents and bring out the child's baptism candle, gown, or photos, and talk about their day of baptism. They read aloud the words of baptism, and trace the cross on their child's forehead. Parents remind their child, "God has great plans in store for you!"



SECOND GRADE

God Calls

- Objective: To begin a few practices that will make hearing God's call easier later in life
- Eph 4:11 "He gave some as apostles, others as prophets"
- Discussion: Treasure Hunt. To discover your vocation, you need certain things, like a good map!
- Drawing: Your Vocation Treasure Map
- Game: "Good Deed Bead" Pictionary
- Video: brief St. Margaret Mary cartoon
- Activity: The different postures of Mary as she said yes to God throughout her life
- Simple rhyming vocation prayer

Marriage

- Objective: To identify ways that our families meet our needs.
- 1 Pet 5:7 "Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you."
- Activity: use smiley face cutouts to identify ways students bring joy to their families
- Reading: "Families are like Building Blocks!"
- Activity: Write a thank you note to someone in your family
- Art: "Thanksgiving Mother and Son Peeling Potatoes" by Norman Rockwell
- Prayer litany for all members of our family
- Simple rhyming vocation prayer



Fra Angelico's "Institution of the Eucharist" helps First Communion students focus on the gift of the priesthood in connection with the Eucharist.

NOTE

The curriculum overview presented in these pages is for Catholic Schools. The units for Religious Education and Youth Ministry are shortened adaptations of this material.

Priesthood

- Objective: To associate a priest with celebrating Mass, healing people, and teaching.
- Luke 9:1-2 "He summoned the twelve and gave them power and authority"
- Activity: Talk about Anointing of the Sick. Students act out one of Jesus' miracles
- Reading: Excerpt from "The Pope of Little Children" by Fr. Francis
- Activity: write a note of encouragement to a local priest
- Art: "Institution of the Eucharist" by Fra Angelico
- Meditation prayer using Jesus' healing of the cripple in John 5:2-9
- Simple rhyming vocation prayer

Religious Life

- Objective: To associate the evangelical counsels with the vocation to the religious life
- Deut 15:7-8 "You shall freely open your hand and generously lend"
- Reading & Discussion: Jesus Challenges the Rich Young Man
- Activities: various options to teach working together for the common good
- Art: "The Nativity of Christ" by Vladimir Borovikovsky, with discussion of the poverty of the Holy Family
- Game: a version of Hot Potato that teaches practical aspects of living out vows
- Intercessory prayer based on the evangelical counsels
- Simple rhyming vocation prayer

Assessment: Crossword puzzle with words learned in this unit.

Family Feature: Discussion - parents talk with their child about his or her unique gifts. Together, they identify how to use those gifts to build up others.



THIRD GRADE

God Calls

- Objective: To marvel at God's purpose and love in creating each of us for Himself
- Ps 27:4 "One thing I ask of the Lord: to dwell in the Lord's house all the days of my life"
- Activity: Golf Theater (shows how prayer is the only way to hear God)
- Reading and Discussion: "Keeping Company with God"
- Activity: write a psalm or poem about being in heaven with God
- Simple meditation: What is the "one thing" you would ask God if you were face-to-face in heaven?
- Closing: simple vocation prayer



Marriage

- Objectives: To reinforce the purposes of family to 1) meet each other's needs, and 2) help each other reach heaven
- Rom 8:28 "All things work for good for those who love God"
- Activity: Draw your family members helping each other
- Original story: The Grumpy Family
- Activity: Sorting the Family Jewels (shows how all sorts of fun or normal things can build family life)
- Art: "A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids"
- Simple meditation: How God uses all things for good
- Closing: simple vocation prayer

Priesthood

- Objective: To be able to recognize a priest's connection with Jesus Christ
- Jn 15:13-17 "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit"
- Reading: "Jesus Christ, the True Priest" explains *in persona Christi* in very simple terms
- Activity: brainstorm the similarities between Jesus and priests, then express by drawing
- Writing: describe how someone you know "lays down his life" for others
- Art: "Crucifixion" by Nardo di Cione
- Meditation: How can you serve others with your life?
- Closing: simple vocation prayer

Content for some lessons in the curriculum may change slightly before publication, or be altered based on feedback from teachers and Vocation Directors.

Students examine the painting titled "A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids," then answer questions about how families work together for the good.

Religious Life

- Objective: To appreciate the way consecrated brothers and sisters live
- Mt 10:7-10 "Take no gold, silver, nor copper in your belts"
- Activity: Mystery Cloth (guess what religious objects are under cloth)
- Art: "At the Monastery Gate," by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller
- Reading: "Fun Friars," about the life of religious brothers in NYC
- Activity: draw a map of a religious order's neighborhood. Include a map key that shows how the brothers or sisters serve their neighbors
- Simple meditation: Imagining when Jesus sent out the 72
- Closing: simple vocation prayer

Assessment: Children draw a church, then create a puzzle by writing how people in different vocations serve the Church.

Family Feature: Board Game: "Journey to the Kingdom of God." Parents and student play simple board game on printed paper. Game encourages discussion about whom they admire: single people, married people, priests, and religious.



FOURTH GRADE

God Calls

- Objective: To understand the importance of having a prayer plan
- Phil 4:6-7 “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”
- Activity: simple origami, without instructions, then with instructions, to show the importance of a plan
- Reading: Having a Prayer Plan, with examples of plans for people of different ages
- Activity: Develop a reasonable prayer plan
- Art: “Grace before Meal” by Franz Defregger
- Meditative prayer: A slow reading of Philippians 4:6-7, with meditative commentary
- Closing: Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius

Marriage

- Objective: To appreciate ways that helping each other and loving God can be the focus of marriage, family, and the single life
- Proverbs 17:17 “A friend is a friend at all times”
- Activity: “Family Objects,” where students explain how everyday objects symbolize aspects of marriage and family
- Reading: The marriage of Louis and Zélie Martin
- Activity: Secret Mission, in which students write a letter from the Pope to their family
- Art: “The Angelus” by Jean Francios Millet
- Song and lyrics: Take My Life and Let It Be
- Meditative prayer: Saint John Paul’s Challenge to Youth
- Closing: Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius

Priesthood

- Objective: To appreciate ways priests share in the mission of Christ
- Philemon 1:4-5 “I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus”
- Activity: Priest Alphabet, naming a place or action of priests, A-Z
- Reading: “Fr. Matt Foley: Afghanistan to Arlington Heights”
- Activity: Boys create a flowchart showing how they can increase their knowledge of the priesthood. Girls make chart about religious life
- Art: “Before Saying Mass, Ignatius is Overcome with Tears” by Carlos Saenz de Tejada
- Meditative Prayer: “Here I am, send me!” Do you want to volunteer for a mission from God? If so, tell him Yes!

Religious Life

- Objective: To appreciate ways people in the consecrated life share in the mission of Christ
- Jer 29:11 “I know well the plans I have for you, says the Lord”
- Activity: Find the Truth, where students must distinguish between false and true statements about religious life
- Reading: WNBA Star becomes a cloistered nun (with definitions of aspects of religious life)
- Art: Franciscan colonnade leading to cloister. Discussion of how architecture can help us think of God.
- Meditative prayer: Acts 2:24-47, “Could God someday be calling you to the religious life, where you live in common with others?”
- Closing: Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius

Assessment: Students create a packing list for someone in each vocation who is going on a month-long trip

Family Feature: Parents and child rank statements about how they pray. Encourages discussion about drawing closer to God through daily prayerfulness.



Teachers can print out reading assignments for students, or the students can login to Vocation-Lessons.com to read on a computer or tablet.



FIFTH GRADE

God Calls

- Objective: To be inspired to pray more and to begin to sense God's voice through peace, joy, and courage
- Is 43:1-7 "I have called you by name; you are mine"
- Lecture: How God speaks through giving peace and courage, not fear or anxiety
- Roleplay: One student prays aloud, then other students play the part of God or the Enemy, encouraging or discouraging
- Reading & Discussion: Quotes on prayer from various saints
- Activity: students choose various quotes and create placards to decorate the classroom
- Art: "Prayer at Sainte Anne d'Auray" by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, followed by discussion
- Meditative prayer using Isaiah 43:1-7
- Closing prayer: *Actiones Nostra* (in English)

Marriage

- Objective: To internalize the reason God created me, and to apply that purpose to my current family and single state of life
- 1 Cor 2:7 "We speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory"
- Activity: Students collaborate to write a story of how a couple met, got married, and raised children
- Reading: simple excerpts from the Catechism on marriage and the meaning of life
- Activity: memorize one passage about marriage from the Catechism



Students examine the photo titled "Marriage is Holy" and discuss the symbols and meanings conveyed.

- Art: "Marriage is Holy" photo of a Catholic wedding, followed by discussion
- Meditative prayer using 1 Cor 2:7
- Closing prayer: *Actiones Nostra* (in English)

Priesthood

- Objective: To grow in awe and appreciation of a priest's unique ability to consecrate the Eucharist
- John 6 "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life"
- Activity: Card tricks, followed by discussion of how the Eucharist requires faith to see; it is not a "trick"
- Reading: "It's all about the Eucharist," with excerpts of a priest's vocation story, followed by discussion
- Roleplay: A priest speaks to his mother over the phone, describing his busy day
- Art: "The Supper at Emmaus" by the Le Nain brothers
- Meditation: students visit a chapel or church (if available) and have quiet prayer, asking God, "What do you want me to do with my life?"
- Closing prayer: *Actiones Nostra* (in English)

Religious Life

- To recognize the Liturgy of the Hours as a form of prayer that is part of religious life
- Psalm 63 "O God, you are my God, for you I long"
- Video: Benedictine monks chanting the Liturgy of the Hours
- Reading: "What is the Liturgy of the Hours?" followed by discussion
- Activity: Led by the teacher, the students pray a Psalm from the Liturgy of the Hours
- Reading: "Chant," an essay by a young man who first heard monks chanting, and how it affected him spiritually
- Meditation: Based on photos, students draw a chapel while listening to monks chanting
- Closing prayer: *Actiones Nostra* (in English)

Assessment: Based on the relevant Catechism passage, compose a song, make a bracelet, or design a symbol that represents that you exist only because of God's love.

Family Feature: Discussion between parents and students about how priests and religious have impacted their lives.



SIXTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objective: To identify ways to act in virtue and charity within marriage and family.
- Jn 15:13 “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”
- Activity: “Virtue Acting” in which two students dialogue in a common family situation, while displaying virtues and vices
- Reading: “Sacred Sacrifice in Marriage” about being realistic about married life, followed by discussion
- Activity: match the scripture passages to acts of charity within family
- Meditation: The Prayer of St. Francis, as applied to family life
- Closing prayer: The Angelus

Priesthood

- Objective: To be able to identify good characteristics needed for the priesthood
- Mt 9:35-28 “They were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd”
- Discussion: photos of priests spark discussion of the importance of priesthood
- Video: A Day in the Life of a Priest
- Reading: Traits of a Good Priest
- Activity: Aristotle’s Four Temperaments (helps students begin to think about their own personalities)
- Meditation: Saint John Paul II’s challenge to young people
- Closing prayer: The Angelus

Religious Life

- Objective: To trust in God’s plan if he calls you to religious life
- Psalm 42:7 “Deep calls to deep in the roar of waters”
- Activity: Hangman with the names of religious orders
- Reading: God the Gardner (how God calls us based on how he made us)
- Reading: St. Macarius and the Grapes
- Video: Trailer for Imagine Sisters
- Activity: Students write their “vocation stories” about becoming a religious, then another student interviews them about their story
- Meditative prayer: Litany of the saints
- Closing prayer: The Angelus



Activity excerpt: “After watching the promotional video for ‘Imagine Sisters,’ have the students imagine that they become religious brothers or sisters later in life. Ask them to write their ‘vocation story’ in a couple of paragraphs. Then, in front of the class, have a student interview some of the ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ about how God led them to their vocations.

Discernment

- Objective: To prayerfully ask questions about life, then listen for God’s answers
- Is 55:2 “Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what does not satisfy?”
- Game: Question Ball, where students throw a ball around the room and call out questions people ask themselves in life
- Videos: Rachel’s vocation story and Nathan’s conversion story
- Reading: Asking the Right Questions in Life
- Activity: Bread or Wasted Wages? Students sort out concepts according to how meaningful they are
- Meditative prayer: Students read Isaiah 55 to themselves, as if it were a letter from God to them.
- Closing prayer: The Angelus

Assessment: Students create an audio or video recording of themselves reading one of the vocation stories for Kindergartners or 1st Graders to use.

Family Feature: Student and parents read “The Boy and the Starfish” together, then discuss how one person can make a difference in the world.

Note: In sixth grade, the lesson title changes from “God Calls” to “Discernment.”



SEVENTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objective: To recognize the Church's teaching on marriage and divorce as originating from Jesus' words
- Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
- Activity: Tell "friend stories" to illustrate how marriage is like a deep friendship
- Reading: Matthew 19:3-9, Jesus teaches on divorce, followed by lecture and discussion
- Activity: Creating a fictitious family tree to illustrate the life-giving aspect of marriage. Describe how people in the tree affect others
- Song and lyrics: "I Have Always Loved You," by Third Day
- Closing prayer: Come, Holy Spirit

Priesthood

- Objective: To marvel at Christ's power at work in the priesthood
- John 15:5 "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit"
- Video: Catholic comedian Max Weber tells funny stories about altar serving; students tell their own stories.
- Reading: "The Sacred Power of Priesthood," excerpted from *To Save a Thousand Souls*, followed by student discussion.



Most lessons contain "meditative prayer" guided by the teacher. For the Discernment lesson in 7th Grade, the teacher reads inspiring excerpts of Pope Francis' message from World Youth Day, such as: "The Church needs you, your enthusiasm, your creativity and the joy that is so characteristic of you!"

- Art: draw an object associated with the priesthood (chalice, monstrance, etc.) and explain any symbolism
- Prayer: Intercessions for seminarians, priests, and young people discerning their vocations
- Closing prayer: Come, Holy Spirit

Religious Life

- Objective: To learn how religious life fosters depth of character
- Luke 5:4 "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch"
- Discussion: What is "depth of character"?
- Reading: The life of St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross, plus quotes from her writing
- Optional reading: The Vocation Story of Sr. Lucia Marie of the Nashville Dominicans
- Activity: Students write a "help wanted" for the religious life
- Reflective prayer: Display paintings of men fishing while reading Luke 5:1-11, "Put out into the deep"
- Closing prayer: Come, Holy Spirit

Discernment

- Objective: To be inspired to answer the call to holiness now, and to learn helpful ways to discern one's vocation
- 1 Cor 9:24-27 "Run so as to win"
- Video: "Pray, Listen, Act" a video on discernment produced by the USCCB
- Reading: Vocation Stories of a diocesan priest and two sisters
- Role play: students act out a conversation about growing closer to God and considering a vocation within the Church
- Meditative prayer: Teacher reads excerpts of Pope Francis' message during World Youth Day
- Closing prayer: Come, Holy Spirit

Assessment: Demonstrate mastery of the Vocation Glossary by matching the word to its definition. ~or~ Students create an audio or video recording of themselves reading one of the vocation stories for Kindergartners or 1st Graders to use (readings are different than 5th grade assessment).

Family Feature: Teacher emails parents a link to the video "Pray. Listen. Act. Repeat." with questions to discuss with their child.



EIGHTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objective: To trust in God's plan of complementarity in marriage. To be grateful for my own gender attributes
- 1 Cor 13:4-7 "Love does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth"
- Art: examine three paintings of families and discuss which would be appropriate as Christmas cards
- Quotes from Catholic leaders about gender and marriage
- Reading: Mother Teresa's address at the World Conference on Women in Beijing
- Discussion: differences and complementarity between men and women
- Prayer: Write a prayer for a future companion in whatever vocation God calls you to
- Closing prayer: The Magnificat

Priesthood

- Objective: To appreciate the ways that priests makes a difference in our lives
- Is 55:10-11 "My Word will not return to me empty"
- Activity: Name some heroes and in your life and explain why they are heroic
- Reading: "Making a Difference" by Fr. Gerard Francik, about how he dramatically affected a woman's life without knowing it
- Video: "To Be a Priest" followed by questions about discernment
- Reflective prayer: Prayer for Priests
- Closing Prayer: The Magnificat

Religious Life

- Objectives: To be inspired by people in the religious life, and to foster the interior call of God to become holy
- Jer 31:33-34 "I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people"
- Activity: share childhood memories of prayer
- Reading: Real-life letter of a young woman to her married brother, explaining why she is considering religious life
- Meditative prayer: play audio of monks chanting, while reading a passage from St. Augustine's Confessions
- Closing Prayer: The Magnificat

Discernment

- Objective: To recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit in your own life through Saint Ignatius' rule for discernment of spirits.

- John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me"
- Activity: recognizing subtle messages in advertising
- Reading: Introduction to Discernment of Spirits, with discussion questions
- Writing: Students write a dialogue between their conscience, the good spirit, and the bad spirit
- Reflective prayer: In your life, what are some lies being told to you by the enemy? What good resolutions is God calling you to make?
- Closing Prayer: The Magnificat

Assessment: Write a one-page story or essay to explain the concept of the universal call to holiness to second graders. ~or~ Watch one of the videos from Religious Orders and write your reaction to the video.

Family Feature: Teacher emails parents a link to a chapter from *A Priest in the Family* titled, "Why Would Anyone Want to Be a Priest?" to give a sense of the role and dignity of priests.



In the 8th Grade lesson on Religious Life, students read a real letter, written by a woman in her twenties, explaining to her brother her "crazy idea" of entering a cloistered community. Excerpt: "As I look at the decision I have made to give the religious life a try after this spring semester, it sometimes leaves me feeling scared, nervous, and excited all at the same time, and even doubtful at times. I can understand that a decision like this is very foreign to what you can understand and relate to. I wish I could explain to you exactly how I feel, but the only way I know how to even begin to explain to you how and why I feel the way I do is to compare it to marriage..."



NINTH GRADE

ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1) The curriculum at the high school level is intensive and academically challenging. Teachers and students will sometimes need extensive preparation for the lessons. Most lessons include enough material that they can be spread over two or more classes if desired.

2) Instead of an assessment for the entire unit (as in grades K-8), homework is assigned after each lesson, to help the student delve more deeply into each vocation.

3) The Family Feature at the high school level is an optional email from the teacher to the students' parents, containing a link to an interesting essay or video about vocations.

4) The lessons on priesthood include a note to teachers inviting them to form discernment groups for teenage boys as part of the Melchizedek Project (a ready-made program that includes free materials to guide discussion.)

Priesthood

- Objectives: 1) communicate a reverence for the priesthood, 2) pray for people called to the priesthood, 3) be encouraged to pray for God's will in their own lives
- Isaiah 6:1-8 "Here I am; send me"
- Video: Fishers of Men, followed by discussion based on USSCB material
- Lecture notes: definition, purpose, and fruits of priesthood
- Reading: Pope Francis canonizes "Gaucha Priest" Fr. José Gabriel Brocher
- Optional reading: St. Margaret Clitherow in Reformation England
- Homework: Research and write a short essay about another priest saint

Religious Life

- Objectives: 1) communicate a reverence for the religious life, 2) pray for people called to the religious life, 3) be encouraged to pray for God's will in their own lives
- 1 Sam 3:1-10 "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening"
- Video options: Light of Love, Franciscans, or Clear Creek Abbey
- Group discussion of videos
- Lecture notes: definition, purpose, and fruits of religious life
- Closing stories: the Cristero families during persecutions in Mexico
- Homework: Decipher the code words in Mother Luisita's letters

Marriage

- Objectives: 1) communicate a reverence for marriage, 2) pray for people called to marriage, 3) foster an awareness for marriage as a possible vocation
- Tobit 8:4-8 "I take this wife... for a noble purpose"
- Original story: Sts Hadrian and Natalia
- Original story: St. Philip Howard
- Lecture notes: Definition, purpose, and fruits of marriage; commentary on sexuality and tough topics surrounding marriage
- Video: Chastity and marriage by Jason Evert
- Original story: St. Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher, martyred defending marriage and the papacy
- Homework: Research and write a short essay about another married saint

Discernment

- Objectives: help students to develop a list of habits that are conducive to discernment, to a life lived well, and to holiness
- Lk 1:26-38 "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord"
- Story excerpt: Fr. Walter Ciszek's *With God in Russia*
- Discussion of practices by Fr. Ciszek and other saints from the unit. Includes prayer, penance, service, etc.
- Worksheet for Building a Spiritual Plan of Life
- Closing: Summary of St. Theresa of Avila on developing a prayer life
- Homework: Complete your plan of life

Family Feature: Email parents a link to Fishers of Men video.



TENTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objectives: 1) develop a reverence for holy matrimony
2) think clearly about the qualities of a future spouse
- Jer 1:4-8 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you"
- Original story: Blessed Louis & Zélie Martin
- Letters of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter to his wife, while he was in prison
- Discussion: the highs and lows of marriage. Rich content includes lecture notes on fidelity, openness to children, etc.
- Activity: Examine and discuss a couple's "to do" list on a fictitious message board
- Section on chastity
- Original story: A re-telling of the legend of Lancelot and Guinevere, restoring the original legend's emphasis on the destructiveness of adultery
- Homework: make a list of desirable qualities in a good spouse, with reference to "The Dump Him List" by Crystalina Evert

Priesthood

- Objectives: 1) develop a reverence for the priesthood, and 2) help young men to be open to praying for God's will in their own lives regarding the priesthood
- Mt 16:24 "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it"
- Historical fiction: A powerful re-telling of the story of St. John Vianney from the perspective of Madame Des Garrets
- Optional reading: "Priests Bury the Dead," from *To Save a Thousand Souls*
- Discussion: the highs and lows of the life of a priest. Rich content includes lecture notes on celibacy, simple lifestyle, changing assignments, etc.
- Activity: students examine priestly roles of priest, prophet, and king
- Closing story: St. Francis on the priesthood
- Optional closing: Saint John Paul II on the priesthood
- Homework: visit your diocese's vocation office web site and answer a series of questions

Religious Life

- Objectives: 1) develop a reverence for religious life, and 2) help students to be open to praying for God's will in their own lives
- Reading: Letter from Dom Christian de Chergé, which was be opened after his martyrdom
- Original stories: St. Damien of Molokai and Blessed Marianne Cope
- Discussion: the highs and lows of religious life. Rich

content includes lecture notes on poverty, chastity, and obedience

- Activity: examining the daily schedule of various religious orders
- Reading: Religious men and women address the issue of childlessness
- Stats from CARA on religious who received encouragement from friends and family
- Letter from St. Ignatius concerning the vow of obedience
- Homework: Research 1-2 religious orders and answer questions about their charism and life

Discernment

- Objective: to prepare students to complete a meaningful meditation on the vocation to which God may be calling them
- Mt 19:16-30 "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven"
- Discussion: review highs and lows of each vocation
- Revisit most poignant stories from the unit
- Complete the "What Can I Live Without" meditation from *To Save a Thousand Souls* (modified for girls' use also)

Family Feature: Teacher emails parents a link to a chapter from *A Priest in the Family* titled, "Why Celibacy?" to give a sense of how this sensitive topic is being addressed.



Writing assignments help students to think clearly about each vocation. They write about qualities to look for in a future spouse, what it would be like to be a priest, the charisms of various religious orders, etc.



ELEVENTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objectives: 1) Learn the basic characteristics a person needs to succeed in marriage, 2) Review the process of being married in the Church
- John 2:1-11 The wedding feast at Cana
- Teacher lecture notes: in-depth explanation of the Church's teaching about the nature of marriage
- Activity: Checklist of qualities of a good candidate for marriage
- Reading: How to choose a good spouse; details on the process of preparing for marriage in the Church
- Optional reading: St. Francis de Sales on the goods of marriage
- Optional reading: Excerpts from Letters to a Young Bride by Alice von Hildebrand
- Homework: Review your checklist, paying special attention to your lowest scores; or answer questions based on the optional readings

Priesthood

- Objective: 1) Learn the basic signs that a man might be called to priesthood, 2) Review the application process for the diocese
- Mt 4:18-22 "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men"
- Teacher lecture notes: in-depth explanation of how to discern priesthood
- Activity: Checklist of qualities of a good candidate for priesthood (Activity for girls is adjusted to focus on recognizing these qualities in others)
- Reading: the process of applying to seminary; what to expect in seminary
- Optional reading: Bishop Maurice Couve de Murville: short reflection on priesthood
- Excerpts from Holy Thursday, by Francois Mauriac
- Homework: Guys review their checklist, paying attention to their lowest scores; girls answer questions based on the readings.

Religious Life

- Objective: 1) Learn the basic characteristics a person needs in religious life, 2) Review the application process for religious orders
- Jer 29:11-15 "When you look for me, you will find me"
- Teacher lecture notes: reviewing the nature of religious life
- Activity: Checklist of qualities of a good candidate for religious life
- Reading: the process of approaching various orders, ap-

plying, and making vows

- Video: Mother Teresa's famous interview with Nodlaig McCarthy
- Optional reading: Excerpt from Michael Casey's *Strangers to the City*
- Homework: Review your checklist, paying special attention to your lowest scores; or answer questions based on the optional readings.

Discernment

- Objective: 1) To examine the single state of life, as "a time of an especially intensive discovery of a self and a choice of life," and 2) further identify characteristics of a person in various vocations
- 1 Jn 4:16-19 "There is no fear in love"
- Debate: Students work in teams to examine the characteristics of "mystery persons" and determine which vocations they were called to. Features St. Gianna Beretta Molla and St. Gabriel Possenti
- Optional reading: Excerpt from Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God"
- Homework: Compare your checklists from the previous lessons. Express gratitude to God for strengths; consider practical ways to work on weaknesses.

Family Feature: Teacher emails parents a link to "How to Choose a Good Spouse" to show what the student is learning in class.



In 11th grade—the year during which many students are contemplating major life decisions—students learn about the process of getting married in the Church, how to apply to seminary, and how to investigate and join a religious community.



TWELFTH GRADE

Marriage

- Objectives: 1) Familiarize students with remote preparation for marriage, and 2) To more deeply understand marriage by role-playing the marriage rite
- 1 Cor 13:4-7 "Love is patient, love is kind"
- Lecture and discussion: preparing for marriage now; the difference between falling in love and getting married
- Reading: "Preparing for Marriage Before you Meet Someone" (chaste dating, prayer life, etc.)
- Reading: "Preparing for Marriage After You Meet Someone" (consult family, examine right and wrong reasons for marriage, etc.)
- Role-play: Offer advice on dating and marriage
- Reading: Must-have Conversations with Someone You Are Dating
- Role-play: The Marriage Rite
- Optional Tough Topics: cohabitation, contraception, life-long fidelity
- Homework: Write a letter to potential future spouse

Priesthood

- Objectives: 1) To help students respond to common objections to priesthood, 2) To more deeply understand priesthood by role-playing an ordination
- Luke 9:61-62 "First let me go and say farewell to my family at home"
- Lecture and discussion: Story of St. Alphonsus Liguori; How would you imagine friends and family would react if you had a call to the priesthood?
- Reading: How to prepare to "break the news" to family and friends"
- Role-play: young man talks to parents about his interest in the priesthood (several variations)
- Role-play: students enact the Ordination Rite for the diocesan priesthood
- Optional Tough Topics: celibacy, male priesthood, the sexual abuse crisis
- Homework: Write a letter (mailing optional) to the Vocation Director asking questions and seeking advice; includes variation for girls, too

Religious Life

- Objectives: 1) To help students respond to common objections to religious life, 2) To more deeply understand religious life by role-playing a solemn profession
- Phil 3:8, 11-14 "I consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"
- Lecture and discussion: How would you imagine friends and family would react if you had a call to religious life?



The Senior lessons are packed with practical activities. In one activity, students practice writing letters to the Vocation Director or Religious Superior.

- Reading: How to "break the news" to family and friends
- Role-play: young woman talks to parents about her interest in religious life (several variations)
- Role-play: students enact the Rite of Solemn Profession. Rites taken from the Passionists and Dominicans
- Optional Tough Topics: Enclosure, Contemplative Life, Defending Mother Teresa against critics
- Homework: write a letter to the Founder or Superior of an order(does not need to be mailed), asking for guidance

Discernment

- Objectives: to give senior students parting advice about discerning God's will for their lives
- Romans 8:24-27 "The Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness."
- Reading: Overcoming Four Fears (family background, personal sin, choosing the wrong vocation, fear of failure.)
- Optional Reading: Blessed Charles de Foucauld's unlikely vocation story
- Reading: How will I really know my vocation? Includes 9 points of advice, drawn from St. Ignatius on discernment.
- If possible, students spend time before the Blessed Sacrament to complete the reading or start the homework
- Homework: write a letter to an imaginary younger student with your advice for discerning his or her vocation.

Family Feature: Teacher emails parent a link to "How Will I Really Know?," an article about varying levels of certainty when discerning one's vocation.



OUR TAKE ON COST

Why is Vocation Lessons relatively inexpensive? The primary reason is because our mission is to effectively address the vocation crisis, and so we want as many students as possible to seriously consider every vocation in the Church.

We understand that not every teacher and catechist will immediately use the curriculum; *thus the pricing is so low that the diocese can purchase it for them anyway, knowing that you will be inviting them to use it for years to come.* In the long term, we think this is a better approach than trying to elicit buy-in from each parish or school individually.

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Implementing Vocation Lessons is an opportunity for collaboration between the Vocation Office and other diocesan departments, including Catholic Schools, Religious Education, and Youth Ministry. We believe a concerted effort is warranted to ensure robust formation on how to discern God's call.

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