

“Let the Children Come”

Lessons and Activities for Vocational Awareness

GRADE: FOUR

Signs of a Vocation – Following Jesus

GRADE FOUR LESSON
SIGNS OF A VOCATION - FOLLOWING JESUS

Objective:

To establish an awareness of the fact that God calls each of us to serve Him and others and that He calls us to a specific vocation given to us at Baptism.

To learn the signs of a religious vocation - a real desire, the right motivation and fitness for life.

Teacher's Notes:

Signs are all around us. In the Spring, flowers and trees begin budding and blooming; flashing lights warn us of an approaching train; a threatening sky warns of the coming of a storm. Some signs, such as traffic signs, are meant to guide us in safe travel. Other signs inform us of upcoming events.

We also have signs to guide our spiritual lives. The Gospels are a guide; and God has given us parents and friends whom we trust to help us along the way; the Sacraments have been given to us to give us the grace to be open to God's will in our lives; and we learn to pray as a special way to talk to God. As we become more attentive to these spiritual signs, we will learn to trust in God more, understand ourselves better, and come to know the path of life laid out for us by God.

As Christians, we are all called to walk with Jesus, to consider the needs of the people of God and to serve the Church in a particular way. Finding our true vocation in life will ultimately lead us to true happiness.

Materials:

Construction paper, straws (one for each student), yarn or string, markers, scissors, and a Bible (one for each student if possible).

Instructions:

Invite the students to get up and move around the room in whatever direction they wish. After a couple of minutes, have them return to their seats. Ask them what they observed while moving about: did they bump into one another; could they always go where they wanted to go; did they feel frustrated; or did they fall into a pattern and everyone began to move in the same direction? What could they have done to make their movement easier? Discuss how establishing some rules and signs might have helped them move around better. Ask them what it would be like if there were no signs or rules for driving - what would be the result? Help them to see that order and direction are an important part of our society so that we live in peace and can accomplish things - like going from one place to another. Signs and rules are necessary in our lives.

Grade Four Lesson, cont.

Procedure, cont.

Expand the concept of signs by asking the students what signs or directions already exist in their lives to help guide their choices in life. (*Possible responses may include: parents, teachers, their own talents and interests, the teachings of the Church, prayer, the commandments, the Bible, etc.*)

Remind the students that God has a special plan for each of us which is our call or vocation.

Explain that some of the signs helping us to know God's plan for us are external and others are internal. Write these two words on the board and explain what they mean: External: outside ourselves. Internal - inside ourselves. Discuss with the students examples of both:

External - parents, teachers, the Word of God, friends, priests, sisters, etc.

Internal - a feeling or a sense that this is the right way to go, properly for conscience

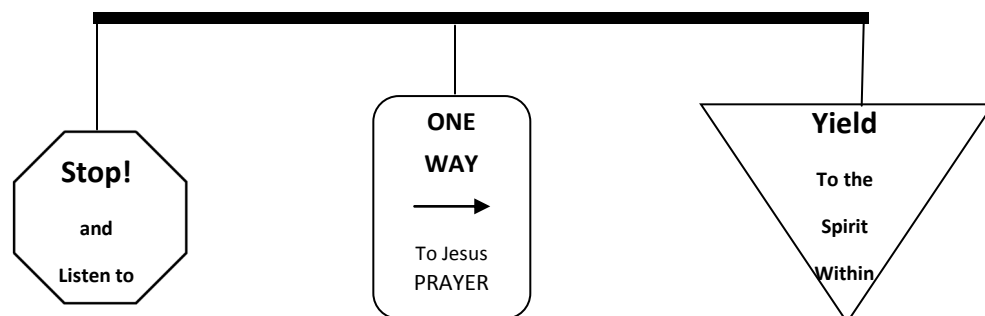
Tell the students that many of the things they do in life will help them to learn more about themselves. Knowing their likes and dislikes will help them to decide whether God is calling them to marry, be single, or to become a sister, brother, priest. Remind the students to pray for the knowledge of which vocation God has given to them.

Activity: Sign Mobiles

There are ways and signs that help us know what God wants us to do with our lives. Have the students recall the shapes of some road signs. Draw these on the board and put the road sign words and symbols on them (STOP, ONE WAY, YIELD). How can these signs be used to impact our spiritual lives and play a role in discerning one's vocation. Help them come up with phrases that flow from the road signs. After brainstorming - direct the students to make a "Sign Mobile".

1. Using construction paper, cut out "signs" and add the phrases to the words usually seen on the signs (Stop, One Way, Yield, Caution, Do not pass, passing allowed, etc.)
2. Punch a whole on the top of each sign.
3. Slide two pieces of string through the straw (length should be twice the length of the straw). One will be tied at the top for the mobile hanger, the other will be used for the two signs at the end of the straw.
4. Tie a longer string than the two ends near the middle of the straw.
5. Tie a sign to the end of each of three pieces of yarn hanging down from the straw.
6. Hang the Sign Mobiles throughout the classroom

(example below)



Scripture Reflection:

Have the students read Luke 6:12-16; Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 5:2-11

Think about it:

What was the first thing Jesus did in preparing to choose the twelve apostles. (*Went to the mountain to pray*).

What do we learn about the chosen men from this reading? (*One had their name changed Simon to Peter, some were brothers, came from various professions, one was a traitor, etc.*).

What do you think God looks for in calling people to be His followers today? (*God calls everyone to follow Him in some manner - it is our free will to follow Him*).

How is God calling us today to follow Him - how is God calling you? (*Have students share the many ways that God may be calling them - service, obedience, sacrifice, prayer, holiness, etc.*)

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Jesus, You want all of us to love God the Father as You did. Help us to follow Your example.

Response: Jesus, help us to trust in You.

Leader: Jesus, You were obedient to the will of the Father.

Response: Jesus, help us to trust in You.

Leader: Jesus, You know what is best for each one of us, help us to follow You.

Response: Jesus, help us to trust in You.

Leader: Jesus, you are calling us to a special vocation, help us to hear it in our hearts and minds.

Response: Jesus, help us to trust in You.

Amen