

“Let the Children Come”

Lessons and Activities for Vocational Awareness

GRADE: FIVE

Service in the Church

GRADE FIVE LESSON

SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

Objectives:

To understand that we each receive a personal call from God called a vocation.

To understand that within our vocational call there are many different ways to serve the Church.

To understand the difference between a vocation and a career.

Teacher's Notes:

Each of us receives a personal call from God to a specific state of life in which we will grow in holiness. This state of life as a call can be to the single, married, religious or ordained (priesthood, diaconate) life and is our vocation. Within each vocation there are many ways to serve the Church. Our interests, our God-given talents and gifts help us to know the way that is best for each of us. Sometimes we need others to help us see the gifts and talents we have and we always have to look to God in prayer, Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church to learn the best way to serve God. God calls us to be a light for the world and be a light for others. Following Jesus in holiness is all about serving God and others.

Procedure:

Write the word "Vocation" on the board. Ask the students if they remember what a vocation is. Explain to the children that God calls each of us to serve Him in a particular way in life. That special call is our vocation. Review what the main vocations are: single, married, religious (sister or brother) or ordained (priest, deacon). All Christians, no matter what their particular vocation is, are called to give service to the Church and to be holy.

Ask the students to think of all the ways people are involved or give service within the parish community. List these on the board with the names of some of the persons (if known). (*Some examples might be lectors, musicians, choir, parish committees, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, fundraising, Christian Service, visiting the sick, youth ministry, catechists, etc.*)

Explain that each one of these people have a vocation and have been given various gifts and talents that they have put to the service of the Church and other people.

We all have been given gifts and talents to put to the service of the Church and one another. Learning what our gifts and talents are is one way of finding our true vocation and putting them to use for God.

Scripture: Listen to what St. Peter tells us about our gifts: 1 Peter 4:8-10

"Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

Materials:

Worksheets: "*shares the gift...*" run off enough copies in two different colors and cut to size so that every student has one slip of each color. (e.g. yellow and orange).

Activity 1:

Have the students think about their friends and others in the classroom. Have them brainstorm and list the gifts and talents they see in each other. Remind them that gifts and talents are given by God and come from our parents to help build up the Church and to make the world a better place. Write them on the board. (*Examples might be: courage to do good, gentleness, positive attitude, friendliness, saying kind things, being strong, cooperation, playing fairly, helpfulness, generosity, working quietly, patience, being full of energy, being a good talker, being a good worker, being a good listener, being a good reader, musician, good at math, English, etc.*).

After brainstorming, pass out the orange slips and have every student write their name on the top. Collect all the slips and hand them out so that everyone has a different name. Students are to write a gift or talent they recognize in the person whose name they receive. Now pass out the yellow slips and have everyone write their name on the top. On the yellow slip have them write down a gift or talent they see in themselves. Have the students tape (or pin) their gifts and talents to a board. Invite them to think about how they can use their gifts and talents now to serve God and one another.

Activity 2:

Write the four different vocations on the board: *married, single, religious sister or brother, priest* to create four columns. Ask the students to think about and list what type of service in the Church each person called to a specific vocation might be able to do. Share with them the following:

Vocation to the Religious Life: Certain men and women in the Church are called to live as religious brothers or sisters. They choose to follow God in holiness in a special way by living in community with others, taking vows of poverty, celibate-chastity and obedience. Ask the children if they know of any religious sisters or brothers by name. If yes, ask them how that person gives service to God and to God's people. (*Also let them know that some are called to serve in hospitals, schools, working with the poor, at nursing homes, in the parish, etc.*) Think of modern day religious who exemplify some of these examples of service. A religious may hold a paid position in the secular world, but the money earned belongs to the community, they hold nothing of value in their own name. A religious spends time every day in prayer either alone or with the religious community. The Eucharist is the center of his or her prayer life. By devoting more time in prayer, the sisters and brothers grow in their love for God and to share God's love with those whom they have been called to serve.

Vocation to the Single Life: Not every one is called to follow God as a married person. Some live out their lives fully in the service of God and the Church as a single person. They have the freedom to give a great deal of their time to assisting others in the community, family and parish.

Vocation to the Ordained Ministry: Still others have been called to serve God and the Church by becoming priests and deacons. They are what we call ordained ministers. They are men, called by God, entering years of study and formation to prepare them for their special service to God and the Church. Both priests and deacons are ordained by a bishop who lays his hands upon and prays for God's special blessings to be upon them in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Priests and/or bishops bring us the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony and Confirmation. A priest is given the responsibility of being the pastor of a parish and providing spiritual and pastoral guidance to members of the parish. A deacon may baptize and perform the marriage ceremony. A priest is called to be another "Christ" and is allowed to consecrate the bread and wine to become the holy Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. A deacon may or may not be married. He usually has another job. He assists at the liturgy and may give a homily. A deacon may also serve in the Church in other ways, such as helping with the RCIA programs, marriage preparation or being involved in some of the other ministries.

Vocation to the Marriage: A man and a woman called by God to the vocation of marriage serve the Church in a special way. They profess a vow to one another to love, honor and to be faithful to one another throughout their lives. Married couples can be very involved in the Church. They are the first educators of the faith with their children at home and have the duty and responsibility to provide for their children's needs to grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually in holiness and grow closer to God in love. A married couple witness to their children what it means to follow God in holiness and to sacrifice in love and service. Ask the student to list some of the ways they see their parents serving God and others.

Help the children see that they already possess some of the gifts and talents that can be used in the service of the Church and others. Help them realize that they need to continue to develop and use these gifts and talents for God's glory and for the good of the Church and one another. (Optional exercise: have them write a paragraph and how they can serve God and one another right now)

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, You call each one of us to listen to Your voice and answer Your call to follow You in holiness. Help us to place our gifts and talents at the service of God and the Church all of our lives. Help us to be bold and brave to answer Your call to a particular vocation, especially if You are calling us to be priests, deacons or religious sisters and brothers. If you are calling us to the vocation of marriage or to be single, help us to always be considerate of others and to be generous and giving. Show us the ways to serve Your Church in whatever way is pleasing and helpful. May our words and actions always be a reflection of Your love in our lives that we give to others. Amen.

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