

GOAL

The goal of this session is to help the teens develop a better understanding of universal vocation and particular vocation, specifically how they apply to living out the call to holiness as a teen.

KEY CONCEPTS

Catholics use the word “vocation” a lot, but many teens do not know what it actually means; it includes both universal and particular vocations.

Each person has the same universal vocation: the call to holiness. We must respond to this vocation during every moment of our lives.

Our particular vocation is a specific and individual vocation from God, a calling to live out His will for our lives. This includes the Sacrament of Marriage, the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and consecrated life.

Teens should begin discerning their particular vocation by asking God what He wants for their lives and learning more about the different vocations within the Catholic Church.

KEY TERMS

Consecrated Life: A permanent state of life recognized by the Church, entered freely in response to the call of Christ to perfection, and characterized by the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Holy Orders: The Sacrament of Apostolic Ministry by which the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles continues to be exercised in the Church through the laying on of hands. This sacrament has three distinct degrees or “orders”: deacon, priest, and bishop. All three confer a permanent, sacramental character.

Matrimony: A sacrament that joins one man and one woman in marriage with promises that the couple will be faithful to each other, open to life, and commit to living out their faith as a representation of the love Christ has for the Church.

Vocation: The calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. The vocation of the laity consists in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will.

Vow: A deliberate and free promise made to God, concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:15-23, 1 Samuel 3

CATECHISM: 1, 27, 542-543, 1533-1535

ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Engage is a modified *Summit* session followed by a fast-paced game where the teens explore their initial reaction to words that relate to different vocations. The Reflect covers our universal and particular vocations, emphasizing how the teens can begin opening themselves to the Lord's call at this stage in their lives. The Respond involves an activity where the teens reflect on the different vocations they have seen in their lives and how those vocations have built them into who they are. The teens then have a chance to ask God what He is calling them to do in their lives right now as they live out the universal call to holiness. The session ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer.

ENVIRONMENT

Gather together in a comfortable environment where you are able to all sit in a circle facing one another. Consider meeting somewhere at the parish, or at a local coffee shop — always consult and follow your diocesan safe environment rules.

AS YOU GET STARTED

For more variety in the Engage, add random words to the list of vocation-centered words to be used during the game.

In preparation for the Reflect, consider reading chapters five and six of *Lumen Gentium*, which can be found online at vatican.va.

ENGAGE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the session, and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a *lectio divina* based reflection on the Sunday readings.

First Thing (15 min)

Using the list below, read a word and ask one teen to immediately say the first thing that comes to mind. Continue this process until all of the teens have answered or all of the words have been used.

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|--------------|-------------|
| • Habit | • Collar |
| • Vocation | • Vestments |
| • Ordained | • Calling |
| • Wedding | • Universal |
| • Vows | • Holiness |
| • Cloistered | • Saint |

- Consecrated
- Spouse
- Family
- Path
- Union
- Promise
- Poverty
- Chastity
- Obedience

REFLECT

“Meaning” Teaching (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

What Is a Vocation?

Ask the teens to imagine what their lives will be like in ten years. Give them a few minutes to reflect, and then invite them to share what they envision their lives will look like with the person sitting next to them.

How many of you said something about which college you will attend? The job you will have? The vocation you will be living out? Being a wife, a husband, a priest, or a religious sister?

Briefly share what you thought your life would be like when you were a teen.

In the Catholic world, we talk a lot about vocations, but what does the word “vocation” even mean? We use the word when we talk about the vocation of a priest, religious, or married person. But it does not end there. Vocation also means God’s call for how He wants you to live out His will.

Universal Vocation

Many of you were able to easily envision what your life will be like ten years from now, but sometimes it is harder to figure out who we are meant to be in this moment. Many of us are not even asking the most important question: Who does God want me to be right now? We each have the same universal vocation, the same call to holiness. The call to holiness is that God “calls man to seek Him, to know Him, to love Him with all his strength” (CCC 1). It is my call, it is your call, and it is the call of the person sitting next to you. We are called to seek, know, and love the Lord. “But as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15).

CCC 1533

You are not meant to answer this call in ten years; it is time for you to respond right now. But how do you live a holy life in this moment, as a teen in high school? An easy way to gauge if you are living out holiness in your daily life is to look at how you treat people. Do you take away people’s dignity by talking badly about them? Have you taken time to get to know the lonely student at school? Do you go out of your way to help those in need?

Another important part of living out holiness is being the best student you can be by completing your homework, behaving in class, and taking your education seriously. This does not necessarily mean that you have to be a straight A student, but it does mean that you always do your best.

As Catholics, we have been given the great gift of the sacraments to help us live out our universal call to holiness. By going to Mass every Sunday and receiving the Lord in the Eucharist, we become more like Him. By partaking in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are able to more fully live out our call.

Consider using CCC 2447 to discuss the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as ways of living out the call to holiness.

- Were you surprised by anything about the future that you or your partner envisioned?
- Do you ever feel like you are constantly waiting for your life to begin? Explain.
- How does the universal call to holiness give you purpose now?
- What is one thing you want to do today to better live out your call to holiness?

Particular Vocation

We are all called to live out our universal vocation, but we are also called to live out our particular vocation. This is the vocation that was meant specifically for you. Look around at the people sitting next to you. You all have different gifts.

Name some of the gifts particular to the teens.

The Lord made each of you unique and thus, He has a specific way for you to live out your particular vocation on Earth. There are many times in our lives when we think God is trying to trick us when we cannot figure out what He is calling us to do. The reality is that God is calling us to something specific, but sometimes we do not listen to Him. One of the gifts of the Sacrament of Confirmation is that you will become more firmly united to Christ. This gift allows you to hear His call more clearly, but only if you truly listen to what He is telling you to do.

CCC 1303

Share an example of when you listened to God's call in your life.

Types of Vocations

We have all probably experienced married couples living out the Sacrament of Marriage and our parish priests living out the Sacrament of Holy Orders, but these are only two of the many vocations within the Catholic Church.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders includes our diocesan bishop, parish priests, and deacons, but it also includes religious priests who are living out a different charism in their ministry, such as the Franciscans, Norbertines, and Dominicans. The Sacrament of Marriage includes couples who are married in the Church. Consecrated life includes people who have chosen to live a life of virginity for the Lord. Some examples of consecrated life are religious sisters, consecrated virgins living in the world, and secular institutes.

- Do you know anyone who is living out one of these particular vocations?
- How has that person's example inspired you or impacted how you think about that particular vocation?
- Do you struggle to understand any of these vocations?

Your Personal Discernment

You might be wondering, “What does all of this mean for me?” Well, it is important to keep in mind that God calls you to the vocation that will be your surest path to holiness. Although we sometimes feel like God is going to force us into a vocation we do not want, we need to begin discerning our vocation. The process of discernment may seem intimidating, but there are simple steps you can take to begin this process. First, ask the Lord to open your heart so you will be ready to say “yes” when He starts you on the path toward your vocation.

Share about your discernment as you found or continue to seek your vocation.

Second, learn about and experience as many different vocations as you can. The more you learn about them, the better you will hear the Lord when He begins directing you toward your vocation. You can start by researching the different types of religious orders and charisms. For example, some religious are active in education, serve the poor, or take care of the sick. Other religious are cloistered and commit their entire lives to prayer for the Church.

Once you find some vocations that you feel fit your gifts and personality, start getting to know people who are living them out. Spend time with a married couple who is living out the Lord’s will in their family. Get to know our parish priest and see what his day-to-day life is like. Visit different religious orders. Get to know a consecrated virgin.

The idea of visiting a religious order may seem overwhelming, and the people around you might make a big deal out of it, but visiting a convent or monastery does not mean that you will become a sister or priest. It simply means that you are opening yourself up to whatever path the Lord is calling you to. One day you will enter into your vocation. It will be an outward “yes” to the Lord in following His will for your life. For now, these smaller steps are just that: small steps to help you learn how to live out your call to holiness.

- Have you ever thought about your particular vocation? Explain.
- Do you think the opinions of others will affect your process of discernment? What can you do to work through this?
- What resources can help you get to know people in different vocations?
- Is there a particular vocation that currently stands out to you? Is there one that you find more challenging? Why?

RESPOND

Surrounded (20 min)

Give each teen a blank piece of paper and drawing utensils. Use the following to introduce the activity:

We are all cultivated and surrounded by different vocations. God has a specific vocation for every human being that He created, one that exemplifies the gifts and talents He has given us and a path that will make us holy. Sometimes we have seen great examples of people living out their vocations, and we may have also seen instances of those who have struggled to live out their vocations. Regardless, the fabric of our lives is woven with threads of those human relationships that surround us and inspire us now as well as all those who have gone before us. There are people in our lives who have built the story of who we are:

the marriages and families in our family history, the friends and mentors we have now, the people we surround ourselves with, etc. We are part of a long history of people who have used their gifts and talents to build the world we live in. We are affected in obvious and subtle ways by all of the vocations that surround us. All of these people have created us into the particular people we are right now.

Use the following questions to help the teens reflect on the vocations they have seen in their lives:

- Who are the people in your life that you are in direct contact with on a regular basis? (E.g., parents, siblings, friends, teachers, coaches, youth minister, core members, aunts, uncles, priests, religious.)
- What vocation are each of these people currently living out?
- How do they use their gifts and talents in their vocation?
- How does that vocation affect or inspire you? What about these people are you most grateful for?

Ask the teens to call to mind all of these people and how each individual — the gifts and talents they have and the vocations they are living out — has had an impact on them and who they are. Then, using their piece of paper and drawing utensils, ask the teens to create an artistic representation of all these people who surround them and have formed them into who they are. This can be whatever they want it to be, whether they create symbols for the different people in their lives, make a family tree, write their names, or any other way they want to express what they see.

After all of the teens are finished, ask them to share their creation with the rest of the group.

Your Call (10 min)

Transition into a time of prayer by asking the teens to clear their space, sit up straight, and take a few deep breaths. Use the following to transition into the time of prayer:

Today we talked about the universal vocation and your specific vocation. Many of us struggle to hear God's call because we are always so busy — we have music in our ears, activities we have to be at, and social media constantly drawing our attention. However, this is not a new problem. Even people in the Old and New Testaments had a hard time hearing God's call. This struggle is real, but if we learn to listen, we will hear the Lord's voice.

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-11.

The Lord had to call out to Samuel four times before he finally said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." Oftentimes the Lord has to call our names many times before we turn to Him and say, "Speak, Lord." Take this time to listen to the Lord. Where is He calling you? Listen to Him and respond, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Give the teens a few moments to silently listen to the Lord, specifically where He is calling them. This might make some teens uncomfortable because they do not often spend time in true silence. Encourage them to lean into the discomfort. When they are ready, use the following to continue the activity:

We all have a vocation. What is God specifically calling you to do so you can live out your universal vocation, your call to holiness? What is God calling you to do so you can make a step toward your particular vocation?

Give the teens a few minutes to reflect on and journal about their vocation, and close the session with the following prayer:

Lord, you have called each of us to live a life of holiness. Show us how to live out that call in this stage of our lives. You have a specific vocation for each of us. Help us be open to your call and begin learning more about the different types of vocations in the Church. Give us the strength to always say “yes” to whatever it is you are calling us to. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer together, and give any final comments or instructions for upcoming meetings.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the Earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.