

Grade 8 - Lesson 6

St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Proclamation:

God calls each of us to a vocation that allows us to follow Christ most perfectly on earth.



Catechetical Points

- God has a plan for every person.
- Religious life, by which one imitates Christ through the three evangelical counsels, is the highest calling.
- Holy Orders is the vocation in which a man is called serve the People of God.

Materials

- Prayer for Vocations handout
- YouTube (Please bring your own laptop or tablet)
 - Wi-Fi: StMichaelGuest
 - Password: 6084375348
 - What's My Vocation by Fr. Mike Schmitz
 - <https://youtu.be/vJz9PbakIzY>
 - A Day in the Monastery by MississippiAbbey
 - <https://youtu.be/E3FyflW3btQ>
 - The Mission of Charity by Catholic News Service
 - <https://youtu.be/qa3mVUgV05s>

Before class starts:

- Students who arrive early can play Train Wreck with students from the other grades.

[5 min] **Opening Prayer**

- Prayer for Vocations
- O Holy Spirit, Spirit of wisdom and divine love, impart Your knowledge, understanding, and counsel to youth that they may know the vocation wherein they can best serve God. Give them courage and strength to follow God's holy will. Guide their uncertain steps, strengthen their resolutions, shield their chastity, fashion their minds, conquer their hearts, and lead them to the vineyards where they will labor in God's holy service. Amen

[20 min] Vocation

- God knows each of us and has a plan for each of our lives.
- Watch **What's My Vocation** by Fr. Mike Schmitz
- <https://youtu.be/vJz9PbakIzY>
- What is the Universal Call to Holiness?
- Divide the group into pairs to discuss:
 - What are your gifts and talents?
 - How can you use your gifts to serve God and others?
 - When do you experience true joy and peace?

[20 min] **Religious Life**

- There are several different vocations that people are called to:
 - Clergy (Leaders in the Church)
 - Pope – head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ guided by the Holy Spirit
 - Cardinals – second-highest office in the Church, responsible for electing a new pope
 - Bishops – third-highest office in the Church, leaders of a particular Diocese. Bishop Robert Morlino is the bishop of the Diocese of Madison.
 - Priests – parish leader.
 - Deacons – assist parish priests, can be married.
 - Religious (Live in community in monasteries or missionary work)
 - Monks (Brothers)
 - Nuns (Sisters)
 - Laity
 - Married

- Single (Includes Consecrated Celibacy, in which a person officially commits their single life to God.)
- Read Matthew 19:17-21.
- In this passage, Jesus was speaking of the call to the religious life, and taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- Even though most people are called holiness through married life, the Church recognizes that consecrated life is the most perfect path to holiness.
- Religious life involves three evangelical counsels. Use the Chalk Talk diagram on page 192 of the teacher's manual to explain:
 - The vow of poverty - giving up possessions to follow Christ.
 - The vow of chastity - giving up marriage to give oneself fully to God and neighbor.
 - The vow of obedience - giving up one's own wishes and preferences and submitting oneself to a religious superior in order to do God's will more perfectly..
- Read page 117 about religious life (page 197 in the teacher's manual). Stop after the second to last paragraph.
- Watch A Day in the Monastery by MississippiAbbey
 - <https://youtu.be/E3FyfIW3btQ>
- **What are some of the good things about religious life? What are some of the challenges?**
- **Why do you think these orders are considered the heart of the Church? See the notes on page 193 of the teacher's manual.**
- Read the last paragraph on page 117 about active service.
- Watch The Mission of Charity by Catholic News Service
 - <https://youtu.be/qa3mVUgV05s>
- **What did Mother Teresa do to spread the love of God to others?**

[15 min] **Priesthood**

- Read page 118 about the priesthood.
- **Do you think it's easier for laypeople or for priests and religious to live holy lives?**
- **Why can only men be priests?** In the same way that men can't be mothers, and women can't be fathers, there is a unique role that men play in religious life to be the

spiritual father of a community. A priest acts *in persona Christi* to take the place of Christ in administering the Sacraments, especially in the sacrifice of the Mass.

- This week is National Vocation Awareness Week. Here are some vocation statistics:
 - <http://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>
 - There are 74 million Catholics in America, and 1.2 billion Catholics in the world.
 - There are 37,192 priests in America today. Two-thirds of these work as parish priests, and the other third live in religious communities (i.e. monks living in monasteries).
 - Last year, there were 548 new priests ordained.
 - There are 18,173 deacons in America.
 - There are 47,170 sisters (nuns) in America.
 - There are 4,119 brothers (monks) in America. But the total is 15,551 when adding in priests who also live in religious communities.
- **Do you think vocations are increasing or decreasing in recent years?**
- **What can we do to ensure that more people will follow their calling to religious life?**

[5 min] **Prayer to Know One's Vocation**

Gracious God, You have called me to life and gifted me in many ways. Through Baptism You have sent me to continue the mission of Jesus by sharing my love with others. Strengthen me to respond to Your call each day. Help me to become all You desire of me. Inspire me to make a difference in others' lives. Lead me to choose the way of life You have planned for me. Open the hearts of all to listen to Your call. Fill all with Your Holy Spirit that we may have listening hearts and the courage to respond to You. Enkindle in my heart and the hearts of others the desire to make the world a better place by serving as Lay Minister, Sister, Priest, Brother or Deacon. Amen.

[10 min] **Silent Prayer**

- Bring the class into church for a few minutes of silent prayer.
- Before praying, give the students some ideas of what to pray for:
 - Is there something troubling you this week?
 - Is there someone you know who needs God's help?
 - What are you grateful to God for?

Prayer for Vocations

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