

**VOCATION EDUCATION RESOURCES  
FOR TEACHERS, CATECHISTS & THOSE WORKING WITH YOUTH**

**CURRICULUM - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY</b>
What is My Vocation	2	Kevin Cody, DRE
Vocation Awareness – Archdiocese of Cincinnati	2	Wayne Topp, Associate Vocation Director
Religious Life Lesson Plans	2	Sr. Nichole Trahan, FMI
Vocation Makes a World of Difference Lesson Plan	3	Sr. Lorraine Aucoin, pm
Our Vocation is Life a Seed – Lesson Plan	4	Sr. Lorraine Aucoin, pm
Lesson Plan in Preparation for Focus 11 “Calling All Saints” – Grade 5 - Lesson One The Gifts God Gave Me (Activity Sheet) On You May Favor Rests! (Activity Sheet) Other Resources	5-9 7 8 9	Sr. Denise LaRock
Lesson Plan in Preparation for Focus 11 “Calling All Saints” – Grade 5 – Lesson Two Assignment Sheet Prior to Focus 11 Follow-Up Activities	10-14 13 14 14	Sr. Denise LaRock
Vocation Definition	15	James Connolly, Xaverian Brothers
Vocation Vocabulary List	16	Sr. Cindy Kaye, RSM

### **“What is My Vocation?”**

The Archdiocese of Chicago Vocations Office created this Vocations Awareness curriculum originally for 6th graders. It has been taught with great success at the 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels as well. The curriculum consists of 15 lessons that discuss such topics as Christian Discipleship, Prayer, Marriage, Single Life, Priesthood, Life in the Seminary, and Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests. There is also a teacher’s edition that includes valuable supplemental material and teaching resources. For more information, contact Suzanne Smith in the Vocations office at 312-534-5234 or [susmith@archchicago.org](mailto:susmith@archchicago.org). [www.whatismyvocation.com](http://www.whatismyvocation.com)

#### **Submitted By:**

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### **Vocation Awareness Materials- Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

Over the past 5 years, we in the Vocation Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have been producing our own Vocation Awareness Materials and posting them online. The same will be true for the coming school year. Here is the link to those materials and, when they become available, the new material for this year will also be found at the same link. Materials include Lesson Plans- Primary thru High School; Jr. High and High School Youth Ministry Lesson Plans; Young Adult Plan and Adult Faith Formation Plan.

<http://www.cincinnati vocations.org/additional-resources/vocation-awareness-week/>  
(you can find separate files for each of the materials from last year and the complete collection of materials from the previous 4 years at that page)

#### **Submitted By:**

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### **Religious Life Lesson Plans**

5-day lesson plans for use in our Marianist schools. Two of our brothers wrote the elementary and middle school plans. I wrote the lesson plans for our high schools.

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## **Lesson Plan – Vocations Make a World of Difference**

### **Supplies:**

7 Vocation Pamphlets

[Religious Priests, Diocesan Priests, Sisters, Brothers, Deacons,  
Lay Ministers (single or married), Missionaries]

Chalk Board/ White Board/ Extra Large Pad of Paper

### **Lesson Ideas:**

God made us... on purpose! No one is a mistake or an accident. God has a plan and hopes and dreams for us. His will is that we live life to the fullest and if we follow his lead we will indeed. All Baptized Christians are called to holiness. That means we are called to model our lives on the life of God. Jesus is our example. But every single person is called to do this in a unique way with their own gifts and talents in their own space and time.

Write each of the vocations down and make a list of the characteristics of each, having the students help as much as possible. They may even want to list the names of some of the people they know who are living each vocation.

Have people come to class to talk about their vocations. Invite people who represent the Church vocations, but don't neglect the married and single life so that the students realize these are truly calls from God as well. Ask them to speak of the time when they realized what their vocation was and how that happened for them. Ask them about their greatest joys and greatest struggles. Ask them about their relationship with God and how they live that out. Ask about their hopes for the future. Dare to share your own answers to these questions according to your vocation. (There is no better teacher than personal experience.) You could even have a panel of people on the same day representing all of the vocations.

Try dress-up or role playing each of the vocations or find some simple pictures the students can color. Bring in some photos or magazine pictures for them to look at. Order free Visions Magazines for everyone in your class of the appropriate age (13 and up?).

### **Closing:**

Pray a vocation prayer together.

### **Submitted By:**

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## **Lesson Plan – Our Vocation is Like a Seed**

### **Supplies:**

Tiny zip-lock bags (craft supply stores carry these, a jeweler may donate them)

Several kinds of seeds

Prayer Cards

### **Lesson Ideas:**

I separated 18 kinds of seeds into 2 bags each and then grouped the 36 bags into groups of 6. I gathered my students into 6 groups and gave each a package of 6 bags to identify. Each kind of seed had a letter assigned to it and the letter was written on the little bags. I handed out a list to every group of students which named the 18 kinds of seeds in no particular order. The students had to write the letter of the bag of seeds next to the name they believed matched the seeds.

Our vocation is like a seed God plants in our hearts at Baptism. Sometimes when we look at a seed we can tell what it is right away (ex. corn, sunflower, sesame), but sometimes we would need to let the plant grow a while and see what its leaves or flowers look like to tell what it is. Sometimes when we are young we can already recognize our vocation. We feel God is calling us to be married and raise a family or He's calling us toward a Church vocation. But most of the time we have to allow our vocation to grow a while before we recognize what it is.

What do seeds need to grow? Soil, sunlight, water, fertilizer, oxygen, etc.... How can we compare these things to what we need to give to the seed of our vocation that is planted in our hearts?

Soil = A heart that is open and welcoming to God's will

Sunlight = Jesus' light (Son), prayer

Water = Good deeds, kind words, loving actions

etc....

If we want to be really good at recognizing seeds we might study about them in special books or do experiments. If we want to recognize our vocation and God's will in our lives we could read special books like The Lives of the Saints, or The Bible, or other Spiritual Books. We can practice listening for God's voice in our hearts and trying to act on the things God has told us to do, like being forgiving and loving and generous and patient. We'll notice that these things help every vocation grow so that we can recognize it.

Carry on this theme as the Spirit leads you.

### **Closing:**

Pray a vocation prayer together.

### **Submitted By:**

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Suggested Lesson Plan  
Preparation for Focus 11 – Calling All Saints

Grade 5

*Everyone has a vocation!*

*Everyone is called to holiness! To be saints!*

*How is God calling you to use your gifts?*

**LESSON ONE**

**Lesson Plan Objectives:**

Students will understand how the saints were ready to be what God called them to be.

Students will recognize the various vocations in the different states of life.

Students will realize that everyone is called to live a certain lifestyle.

**Materials needed:**

1. Stories of saints who were married, who were priests, who were consecrated religious, who were lay persons. You can gather these or the students could be assigned a saint and prepare short biographies as homework a few days before. Saints could include: Mother Mary Lange, St. Elizabeth Seton, St. John Vianney, St. Martin de Porres, St. Jane de Chantal, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Pius X, St. Ursula, St. Agnes, St. Casimir, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Joan of Arc, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Paul Miki, St. Augustine of Hippo, any of the Apostles, Blessed John Paul II, St. Lorenzo Ruiz, St. Peter Claver, St. Juan Diego ---
2. Gift box worksheet (Next Page)
3. Scrambled words worksheet (Follows Gift Book)
4. Pens, crayons

**Procedure:**

1. Read aloud a sampling of the different saints.
2. Consider with the students how God called them each to become holy in their particular vocation. What special virtues did God help each of them grow in through their vocations? (Answers might include: purity, faith, hope, charity, joy, obedience, prayerfulness, service, etc.)

3. Ask the students to complete the first three boxes of the "Gift Box" worksheet. ("Some of my gifts are...", "The gift I like best is ...", "One gift I want to develop is ...")
4. After the worksheet has been completed, discuss the following concepts:
  - a. We are all uniquely different from each other. God has given us different gifts and talents. Many of us may have the same talents, but because of other talents and the combination of these, we are different.
  - b. Through our baptism, we are given the gift of being a child of God and called to be a disciple of Jesus. Each of us is called to follow Him in a special way through our personal vocation. Our gifts and talents will be used by God as we live out that vocation. By using our gifts we come to know and love Jesus more and more and we also make the world we live in a better place.
5. Ask the students to reflect on their gift worksheet and what has been presented. Invite them to consider how God might use each gift they listed in the possible vocation God may call them to. Add these to Box 4 of the gift worksheet.
6. End by completing the "On you my favor rests!" worksheet and praying the prayer together.

## The Gifts God Gave Me...

The worksheet is designed to look like a gift box with a ribbon bow. The bow is at the top, and the box is divided into four sections for writing. The background is black, and the gift box and text are white.

Some of my gifts are...	The gift I like best is...
A gift I want to develop	I can use my gifts by ...

# On You My Favor Rests!

Unscramble these words:

Desaelp \_\_\_\_\_ vafdero \_\_\_\_\_ bmaspit \_\_\_\_\_

Sreev \_\_\_\_\_ ppyah \_\_\_\_\_ ssJue \_\_\_\_\_

Hares \_\_\_\_\_ lloofw \_\_\_\_\_ oeshtr \_\_\_\_\_

dGo \_\_\_\_\_ veol \_\_\_\_\_ em \_\_\_\_\_

Use the words above (and others) to write about how God blesses you with gifts and calls you to help people.

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*Dear God,*

*Thank you for blessing me with special gifts.*

*Help me to trust your love for me.*

*Show me how to use my gifts*

*to make this world a better place.*

*Amen.*



## Other resources:

### **Answers to scrambled words:**

pleased, serve, share, God, favored, happy, follow, love, baptism, Jesus, others, me

### **Family Vocation Prayer**

Loving God,

Each member of our family is a special gift from You.

You have given each of us gifts and talents so that we may enjoy life, but also so that we can share it with others. Generous men and women are needed for service and leadership in the Church.

Help us, as a family, to encourage and support each other so all of us can respond generously to this need by becoming the kind of people You want us to be.

We pray that those whom You call may never lose awareness of the dignity and need of their vocation. Bless and strengthen those who respond to Your call.

Amen.

### **Child's Vocation Prayer**

God, thank you for loving me.

In Baptism you called me by name to live as your child.

Help all your people to know their call in life.

For your greater glory, raise up generous leaders to serve as priests, deacons, sisters, and brothers.

Amen.

### **Related Scripture:**

1. Jesus sharing His gifts with others:  
Feeding the hungry: Mark 8:1-10, Matthew 15:32-39, Luke 9: 10-17  
Curing the sick: Mark 8:22-26, Luke 5:12-16  
Teaching: Matthew 11:1
2. Jesus' call: Isaiah 42:1-7, Luke 4:18

### **Music Possibilities:**

1. We are Called (David Haas)
2. Here I Am, Lord (Dan Schutte)
3. Go, Be Justice (World Library Publications)

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## **LESSON TWO**

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to explain how Jesus command to his apostles applies to all of us
2. Students will be able to explain how Jesus command is carried out in Married, Single, Consecrated and Ordained Vocations

Activity One

(before class) WRITE ON THE BOARD: “The Lord made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. May He soon touch your ears to receive his word and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.”

READ Matthew 28:16-20

DISCUSS:

- “What did Jesus tell the apostles to do?”
- “Who is supposed to carry out Jesus instructions today” (Put answers on the board)

EXPLAIN: When a baby is baptized, there is a point where the priest or deacon touches the baby’s ears and mouth and says, “The Lord made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. May He soon touch your ears to receive his word and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.”

DISCUSS:

- “What do you think it means to ‘proclaim our faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father?’”
- “How does Jesus call you to do it in your lives?” – Connect this with what they learned in LESSON ONE

Activity Two

EXPLAIN: All of us are called to obey Christ’s command to the apostles, “to proclaim our faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.” We do it in one of four ways.

WRITE: on the board: “SINGLE”

EXPLAIN: Some people never get married. They are not priests, deacons, sisters or brothers, but they proclaim their faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father in the work they do, by volunteering in society, and by caring for those they love.

ASK students if they can think of anyone who would fit in this category (Maya Angelou is one example.)

**WRITE:** on the board: “MARRIED”

**EXPLAIN:** Many people obey Jesus instructions as husbands and wives, as parents

**ASK:** How do married people and parents “proclaim their faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father”

**WRITE:** on the board: “ORDAINED”, then underneath, “BISHOPS, PRIESTS, DEACONS”

**EXPLAIN:** Bishops, priests and deacons are men who are chosen by the church to serve in a special way. They obey Jesus instruction by leading the church and caring for people.

- Bishops serve the church by acting as the leader in a diocese
- Priests work with the bishops, usually in parishes. They lead the church at Mass, and celebrate other sacraments
- Deacons work with the bishop and the priests to serve the church wherever they are needed. They can baptize, do marriages, and preach.

**ASK:** Can they name any bishops, priests or deacons. Put answers on the board

**EXPLAIN:** Bishops and priests are not married but a married man can be ordained a deacon.

**WRITE** on the board: “RELIGIOUS (CONSECRATED)” then underneath “SISTERS, BROTHERS, SOME PRIESTS”

**EXPLAIN:**

- Consecrated means a person has dedicated his/her life to God in a special way
- In the Catholic Church, consecrated men and women are members of religious congregations or religious orders, and so they are usually called “Religious”
  - We are all called to be religious, but here the word is used in a special way
- A woman who is a member of a religious congregation is called a “nun” or “sister”

**ASK** if any students can name a nun or sister (either someone they know or one of the other saints from LESSON ONE)

**EXPLAIN**

- A man who is a member of a religious congregation can be either a “brother” or a “priest”
- A priest in a religious order can serve in a parish or a school or wherever his congregation sends him

**ASK:** if they know of any brothers or priests who are members of a religious congregation (either someone they know or one of the other saints from LESSON ONE)

**EMPHASIZE**

- All of us are called to serve God, to ‘proclaim our faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father?’”
- Some of us are called to do it in the single life, some in the married life, some as members of a religious congregation and some as priests or deacons.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Hand out the assignment sheet and tell the students they will report what they have learned the day after FOCUS 11

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## **ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

### **FOCUS 11**

There will be a number of sisters, brothers, priests and deacons for you to meet during your lunch period. Choose one and find out:

**IF THEY ARE A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION:**

What is the name of the congregation?

What are its initials?

What is special about it?

What sort of work do the members do?

**IF A MAN IS A DEACON**

In what parish does he serve?

What does he do there

Is he married? Does he have children?

Does he have a job other than being a deacon?

**IF THE MAN IS A PRIEST, BUT NOT A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER**

In what parish does he serve?

Where did he go to seminary?

How old was he when he went to the seminary?

What does he like best about being a priest?

## Prior to Focus 11

Please have the students formulate at least one question for the panel discussion. The panel will be made up of a priest, a deacon, a religious sister, and a religious brother.

## FOLLOW-UP

The day after Focus 11, ask the students to report on the people they interviewed. Put the name, the state of life (priest, deacon, religious brother, sister, or priest) and, if religious, the name of the congregation and the initials on the board.

Remind the students that God wants them to think about how He is inviting them to “proclaim their faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father” as they grow up.

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### **Vocation - Definition**

“Vocation does not come from willfulness. It comes from listening. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about---quite apart from what I would like it to be---or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions.

That insight is hidden in the word *vocation* itself, which is rooted in the Latin for “voice”. Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue; it means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I *must* live---but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.

Behind this understanding of vocation is a truth that the ego does not want to hear because it threatens the ego’s turf: everyone has a life that is different for the “I” of daily consciousness, a life that is trying to live through the “I” who is the vessel. This is what the poet knows and what every wisdom tradition teaches: there is a great gulf between the way my ego wants to identify me, with its protective masks and self-serving fictions, and my true self.

It takes time and hard experience to sense the difference between the two--- to sense that running beneath the surface of the experience I call my life, there is a deeper and truer life waiting to be acknowledged. That fact alone makes “listen compounded by the fact from our first days in school, we are taught to listen to everything and everyone but ourselves, to take all of our clues about living from the people and powers around us.”

Source:

Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice and Powers of Vocation*, p. 4-5.

### **Submitted By:**

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### Vocation Vocabulary List

*Available in English and in Spanish. I've used this for grammar school through adult and have passed them out at vocation fairs and religious education congresses.*

# VOCATION VOCABULARY LIST

**Vocation/call** - Through the sacrament of baptism, all people receive a vocation or call. Through baptism, all are given the equal dignity to be called God's daughters and sons. All receive the call to holiness and to service- to preach the word of God. This one call or vocation can be lived out in various lifestyles.

**Lifestyle** - refers to the fundamental way that a person chooses to live out his or her baptismal call. It is the fundamental way one chooses to relate to God and other people. The various lifestyles are: single person, married person, deacon, sister/nun, brother/monk, religious priest, and diocesan priest.

**Ministry** - Ministry means service. It refers to the specific role, task or work that a person does in living out their baptismal call to service. Ministry is also the attitude in which one approaches their "work" or service, where the work is prayerfully fulfilled in balance WITH others.

**Collaboration** - Collaboration means working together: people within different lifestyles and different ministries are called to work together so that they may complement one another and so that their partnership will witness to God's desire for unity and peace.

**Diocesan Priest** - This is a man who desires to bring God to people and people to God through the sharing of word and sacrament. As a servant-leader, a priest is called to proclaim and celebrate the Good News among God's people. He usually serves within a parish in a particular diocese. He promises celibacy and obedience to his bishop.

**Religious Priest** - A religious priest belongs to a particular religious community. He is a cleric, that is, he has been ordained and has been given a sacramental ministry through which he serves. His vows would include poverty, chastity, and obedience to his communal superior.

**Laity and Clergy** - Within the Church, there are two groups of people, those who are ordained and are called clergy, and all others, who are called laity. Sometimes people from both of these groups join a religious community. They retain their status as either clergy or laity, except in the case of lay persons, who are ordained after their entrance and who then become clerics.



**Permanent Deacon** - A man, married or single, 35 years or older who is ordained in the sacrament of Holy Orders to serve for life in the ministries of the Sacraments. Justice and advocacy for the poor are primary in this ministry.

**Vow** - A vow is a sacred promise of commitment.

**Poverty** - Those in religious life take a special vow by which they voluntarily renounce their right to the private ownership and use of possessions. This is an attempt to live out the spirit of Acts 4:32, that is, "No one said that any of the things which they possessed was their own, but they had everything in common."

**Chastity/Celibacy** - All the baptized are called to be chaste, but religious take a vow by which they voluntarily renounce their right to the sexual intimacy of marriage. This is an attempt to expand and broaden one's circle of loved ones and also to center that circle more and more on God.

**Obedience** - All the baptized are called to some form of obedience. For those in religious life this entails a vow through which one accepts the common life of a community with its own particular structure of authority.

**Religious** - Since all who are baptized share a common relationship with God, all are religious. Some men and women choose to live a particular lifestyle called "religious life." These "religious" join a community of people that follows a specific tradition of spirituality patterned after the life and teaching of the founder of that community. In committing themselves to that community, religious take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Religious include sisters, brothers and some priests.

**Sister/Brother** - a single Catholic lay woman or man. They live their Christian commitment by joining a praying community of women or men dedicated to serving those around them. Sisters and brothers usually profess three vows – poverty, celibacy, and obedience. Flexibility in service is the hallmark of their ministry. They may serve as teachers, nurses, lawyers, campus ministers, musicians, counselors, administrators, etc.

**Cloistered Nuns/Monks** - By withdrawal from the world, in fact and in spirit, the nun/monks are freed from worldly affairs so that they may devote themselves wholeheartedly to the kingdom of God. Life within the enclosure is governed by a superior, who regulates the daily life rhythm of the monks or nuns. Prayer, work, and leisure all take place within the enclosure. Granting permission to enter or leave the enclosure always requires a grave cause.

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