



For more information on vocation trends, statistics, and related resources, go to NRVC.net.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF VOCATION MINISTRY ETHICS

1. Gospel values, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the Great Commandment
2. Respect for human dignity, interculturality, human rights, and social justice
3. Collegiality, subsidiarity, mutuality, and collaboration
4. Personal and professional integrity

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ENTRANTS TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

- **ENDLESS CALL:** Men and women continue to respond to the call to religious life
- **APPEAL:** Drawn by prayer, spirituality, charisma, community life, and mission
- **ATTRIBUTES:** Culturally diverse; embrace intercultural and intergenerational living
- **LIFESTYLE:** Committed to living simply and in solidarity with the poor
- **OUTLOOK:** Filled with abundant hope for religious life amid changing demographics

Based on the 2020 Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life. Find the complete study and companion materials at NRVC.net.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS FOR VOCATION MINISTRY

In the 2020 *NRVC/CARA Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life*, newer entrants report personal contact with institute members as most helpful when discerning their vocation. In fact, newer entrants ranked meeting with members of the institute the highest among various discernment activities. In addition, newer entrants received the most encouragement from members of their institute during their initial discernment.

This handout is designed to provide clear direction for members who support vocation promotion efforts through prayer, invitation, and encouragement to those in discernment.

The NRVC supports the value that vocation ministry is a shared responsibility of religious leadership, vocation ministers, vowed members, and prospective candidates to religious life. The NRVC Code of Ethics for Vocation Ministry sets forth the principles, responsibilities, and expectations for vocation ministry—that is, for vocation promotion with inquirers, accompaniment of discerners, and assessment of applicants for admission to formation in religious life and societies of apostolic life. Visit the NRVC website to download a copy of the Code of Ethics.

Religious institutes that make vocation ministry a priority and believe in their role in creating a future for their congregations will attract and retain new members. Ways to do this include:

- Living religious life vibrantly and witnessing joy, authenticity, and fidelity in religious life.
- Promoting vocations and recommending names of potential candidates who meet the criteria for admission.
- Respectfully welcoming candidates, especially people from varied cultures, with a willingness to learn together aspects of interculturality.
- Being open to assuming a role in the congregation's vocation ministry team and vocation promotion events by sharing one's vocation story, community charisma, mission, and ministries.
- Meeting candidates in a public place in full view of others. If alone with a candidate, encouraging other members of the religious institute to randomly drop in or pass by the interaction occasionally.
- Avoiding physical affection and inappropriate behavior during interactions.
- Respecting the vocation discernment and assessment process, and the boundaries and confidentiality required.
- Respecting and supporting those serving in leadership and in vocation ministry by cooperating with them in their efforts to apply contemporary vocation trends and effective methods of engagement.

95% found meeting with a member of the institute most helpful

94% received encouragement from members of the institute

86% found communal prayer & meals with a member very helpful

INSIGHTS FROM NEWER ENTRANTS

➤ *I was surprised at the variety that exists within religious life because I literally knew nothing about it. And then when I started coming to visit it felt like home. It was a place that I wanted to come back to and visit.*

➤ *Vocations and vows are a real mystery to people and therefore many are scared to either accept their vocation or those of others dear to them, as if they're "throwing their life away" in answering a call.*

➤ *I was attracted to living in community with other people with the same charism, with the same spirit, with the same hopes for the world with our differences. I wanted to be in community. That was really important to me.*

➤ *They kept inviting and I kept saying yes. You start to feel comfortable and at home. They're still inviting, I'm still saying yes.*

MORE ABOUT NRVC

NRVC Mission

The National Religious Vocation Conference has a vision to set the world ablaze with the fire of God's love through the prophetic, joyful witness of religious sisters, brothers, and priests as radical disciples of Jesus. Its mission is to serve as a catalyst for vocation discernment and the full flourishing of religious life for the ongoing transformation of the world.

NRVC resources

NRVC publishes HORIZON, a quarterly professional journal—essential for those in vocation ministry, and VISION Vocation Guide and VocationNetwork.org for those discerning a religious vocation. Find more about these premier publications at [NRVC.net](https://www.nrvc.net).

Not a member? Become one!

Choose to become among the nearly 1,000 active NRVC members who receive professional development, support, and the many benefits of membership, including leading-edge resources, education, and research to assist religious leadership, vocation directors, and all those who support religious vocations.

Financial assistance for membership and workshop fees is available through the NRVC Misericordia Scholarship fund. Learn more at [NRVC.net](https://www.nrvc.net).

A MONTH OF IDEAS TO PROMOTE VOCATIONS TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

1. Visit the parishes and schools where your religious institute serves or has served.
2. Ask to leave brochures, prayer cards, and bookmarks in display areas.
3. Offer to present the topic on the "Call to holiness" during parish missions, sacramental preparation programs, or on designated vocation days.
4. Check the diocesan websites where your religious institute has a presence to make sure it displays correct information and the links are working.
5. Form vocation task forces or advisory boards at sponsored ministries.
6. Work directly with Directors of Faith Formation, Directors of Religious Education, and Youth Ministers to make vocation discernment a part of the curriculum.
7. Offer open houses throughout the year to pray and promote vocations.
8. Offer a place of prayer in your ministry sites for the public to pray for vocations.
9. Renew vows publicly in the parish on significant community feast days.
10. Invite members of your religious institute to pray with young people.
11. When presenting at a school or parish, have lunch with the staff to share more about religious life.
12. Ask college campus ministers to start a vocation-related book club or weekly prayer group for six weeks.
13. Talk about community members while giving vocation presentations.
14. Talk about the vows, community life, and charism.
15. Encourage each local house to offer one vocation promotion event annually.
16. Collaborate with other religious institutes to provide a day of reflection on vocations.
17. Ask members to leave VISION magazines in places they visit regularly, such as libraries, doctor's offices, dentists, car repair shops, etc.
18. Host a table with information at parish and campus festivals and events.
19. Talk with the diocesan youth director to seek invitations to events.
20. Create short volunteer experiences matching Catholics with members of your religious institute.
21. Look at Advent and Lent as possibilities to offer days of communal prayer.
22. Involve young Catholics in a task force to create marketing materials.
23. Aim to be inclusive by encouraging discerners to bring along their friends to events.
24. Invite people to your local houses for prayer and meals.
25. Be consistent in presence with and among young Catholics.
26. Create intentional communities and places of welcome.
27. Provide each local house with a subscription to HORIZON Journal.
28. Create a climate of discernment within your religious institute.
29. Post your events at <https://vocationnetwork.org/en/events>
30. Create a "critical mass" of professed members who are willing to promote vocations.
31. Identify key members among the laity willing to promote vocations.