



Chosen and Called for a Purpose

Vocation Night

Time frame: 1 ½ -2 hours

Audience: Middle and/or high school

- Opening Prayer – (Optional: Begin in the Church for 10 or 15 minutes of quiet reflection, reading from Matthew 4:18-22 or similar reading – Jeremiah 1:7, 1 Tim. 4: 12, etc.).

“The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day” - John 1:35-39

Thank You, Lord for calling each of us by name. Help us as we seek you, and may we recognize Your Voice. Bless us and be with us this night. (Pray together an Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.)

- Games (recommended though optional)
 - Goal: for speakers to interact with the kids and to loosen everyone up a bit
 - I want to meet/Train Wreck
 - Human Bingo
 - Minute to Win It Games: <https://redtri.com/the-best-minute-to-win-it-games-for-kids/slide/5>
- Introduction of the basic idea of Vocation – from the Latin word vocare – call.
 - How the idea of a Christian call is different than the world’s idea
 - Calls within the call
 - A call requires a listener
 - The Christian idea of a call is:
 - that God has a unique plan for each of our lives
 - that God’s plan leads to happiness and that God wants the best for us (see Catechism section on “Our Vocation to Beatitude” #1716-1724)
 - We are free – but the mystery of true freedom is that when we align our will with the will of God, we find true happiness. (see Catechism #1730-1738)
 - that God works with our gifts and talents
 - that we should not be afraid to listen to God’s plan
 - that God will call us to do difficult things – but nothing impossible with God (c.f. Mt. 19: 26)

- Journal – this is an opportunity for the teens to examine themselves and to see how unique they are and to begin a process of listening to the Holy Spirit stirring in their hearts.
 - What are your gifts and talents?
 - What do you want out of life?
 - Where and when have you heard God’s voice in your heart, through your decisions, etc.?
 - At the end of your life, what do you hope has happened?
 - Choose a short Scripture passage (one of the above or another) and prayerfully see and listen to what word or short phrase stands out. Other passage ideas: Romans 8:28-ff; 1 Cor. 1: 26-ff; Galatians 5: 13-ff; 1 Tim. 6: 12-ff; 2 Tim. 1:9; etc.
 - Another simple option is to do a Lectio Divina with the teens and have them journal about what word/phrase stands out to them and how the Holy Spirit is stirring in their hearts.

- Discussion (optional)
 - Share with small group
 - Discuss as a group - do you think God cares what you do with your life? What you do, who you become?
 - Discuss answers given- not simple “yes” or “no,” dig deeper into why they answered that way.
 - What word or phrase stood out to you from the passage? Why do you think?
 - For those who would like, share with the whole group

- Teaching
 - Principal #1 – God is love
 - We have a plan for our lives- yet so does God.
 - We fell, but the story of salvation is that God keeps drawing us back to Himself (see Catechism #27).
 - Jesus did not have to take on flesh, die for us, or rise from the dead, but He did because He loves us. He wants us to have eternal life with Him.
 - Excellent Video Illustration:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z_SMrnEial&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1muabKBIt48Ls3kRAjPd8Vp9Pg5DHJMUOgsSsjBC2g4e8PwqjvUhfSPVQ
 - God has a plan for our lives. We know this plan is good because He loves us so much.
 - God’s Call
 - Read John 1:35-39 again. Could use clip from Zefferelli’s Jesus of Nazareth --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuhvGsPFE34>
 - From the TV series The Chosen:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGCKovAUWM&t=252s>

- The disciples are called by Jesus, a Person. This Person will make everything else in their lives make sense.
- Jesus does not reveal His plan right away. He asks them what they are looking for. They respond that they are looking for Him. He leads them, and He talks with them, and the more time they spend with Him, the more they come to know His plan...
- God's shared call – the Universal call to Holiness
 - At the basic level, we are called to be holy
 - The universal call to love – all vocations are a call to love. “Charity (love) is the soul of the holiness to which all are called: it governs, shapes, and perfects all the means of sanctification.” CCC #826
 - What do you think of when you hear the word “holy?”
 - “There is only tragedy in the end; not to have become a saint.” Leon Bloy (French Novelist)
 - To be holy is to do the will of God. To be like Jesus, loving God and neighbor (CCC 2013, 2014).
 - Now does holiness sound like something you want?

(Answers may be yes, or no, or that seems hard, or boring, or I don't really care, I just want to live my life)

- “The thief comes only to kill and steal and destroy, but I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly” -John 10:10
- When we listen only to ourselves, the world and/or the devil, we end up spiritually dead, with our peace robbed and our life more or less in shambles.
- When we follow Jesus, He brings us life.
- The more we become like Him, the more ourselves we become.
- “The glory of God is man fully alive” -St. Irenaeus
- God made us and knows us best, “before I formed you in the womb, I knew you” (Jer. 1:5)
- We can trust His plan for our lives because He loves us. Proverbs 3: 5-6
- When we follow His plan for our lives, not only are we preparing ourselves for Heaven, and living our happiest life on earth, but we're also giving Him the most glory.
- He has an adventure for everyone. Jesus doesn't promise boring. He promises a life of love and peace, as well as danger and hardship- but He also promises that in Him we will overcome it (John 1:5, 15:11, and 16:33).

Possible demonstrations:

- Egg Falling in water demonstration:
Idea: God's irrevocable call for us
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=36&v=q2KEYWPML5o&feature=emb_logo
- The Glove:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5k1741uj2c>

- Our Father Skit – dialogue skit
- Touch of the Master’s Hand story
- State-of-life vocations
 - Brings you to holiness and brings others to holiness
 - Different from a career.
 - A state-of-life vocation WILL be fulfilling. Doesn’t mean it’s always easy, but it WILL be fulfilling. Your heart, mind, gifts, etc., align with God’s call.
 - Be attentive to those gifts, desires on your heart now. They may change over time. Can indicate what your calling is.
 - Ask God to conform your will to His.

Marriage

- Videos, if speakers not present:
 - Jackie and Bobby Angel Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbhDCmzX4mw&list=PLgpqvhIS1Ldzc53o4J6hjGFvefb5PBZsD&index=15&t=0s>
 - Jackie and Bobby Angel Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0R-QVU0IAQ&list=PLgpqvhIS1Ldzc53o4J6hjGFvefb5PBZsD&index=15>
 - Marriage Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=843WhirDu8g>
 - Aching to Find a Spouse?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F8uIOmt9CA>
 - Don’t Fear Marriage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPzPZzf3TFI>
- Couple talk/Q&A (if couple is present)

Some possible points to get the conversation going:

 - How did you meet?
 - How did you know you were called to marriage/to marry each other?
 - How did God play a part in your life leading up to marriage?
 - How does God play a part in your marriage now?
 - How does marriage make you holy?
 - What does it mean to be married and Catholic?
 - What is difficult/rewarding about marriage?
 - What does a dating relationship centered on God look like?

Priesthood

- Videos, if speakers not present (or may be good to show regardless):
 - A Day in the Life, Fr. Scott: <https://vimeo.com/314000071>
 - Off the Record, Fr. Scott: <https://vimeo.com/313799106>
 - Father Mike Schmitz vocation story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTw5xg37QF0>
 - Soccer star turned Catholic priest: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR9AvbO6a6g&t=14s>
 - Several videos from Vermont priests and seminarians can be found here: <https://vermontcatholic.org/ministries-programs/vocations/priesthood/>

- Priest talk/Q&A
 - How did you know you were called to be a priest?
 - What does it take to be a priest?
 - How did God play a role in your discernment?
 - How does being a priest lead you and others to holiness?
 - What does your day-to-day life look like?
 - What is difficult/rewarding about being a priest?

Religious Life

- Videos (if speakers not present):
 - St. Meinrad Abbey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AadiSdoq7iw>
 - Monastery of Christ in the Desert New Mexico --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5YY684ZXDE>
 - Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFFiNRvXBQw>
 - Daughters of St. Paul: One Sister's Vocation Story:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQMHexekBrs>
 - Vocation Story: Sisters of Life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn1yFZ11nZs>
- Consecrated talk/Q&A
 - How did you know you were called to religious life?
 - What does it take to be a consecrated religious?
 - How did God play a role in your discernment?
 - How did you discern your community?
 - How does being a religious lead you and others to holiness?
 - What does your day-to-day life look like?
 - What is difficult/rewarding about religious life?

How do I know what God is calling me to?

- Your gifts, desires and aspirations are there for a reason. God put them there! Be attentive to them now. They may change in time.
- Persistence in prayer- seek Jesus first, and He will reveal in time
- Take steps forward. Talk to people. Read books. Ask questions. Do research

Small Group (optional)

Small group questions:

- What was something that surprised you tonight, or was different than you expected?
 - Do you believe that God has a good plan for your life? Why or why not?
 - How can you trust in God more?
 - Do you have a prayer life? Are you seeking Jesus?
 - Do you trust that being holy will make you happy? Why or why not?
 - What are your gifts, talents, what do you want out of life?
 - What do you think about God using your desires, talents, etc.?
 - Do you have a hunch about what your state-of-life vocation may be?
 - Do you have questions for the speakers you didn't get a chance to ask?
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- Re-group
 - Re-group and summarize discussions.
 - Ask speakers lingering questions.
 - Speakers give closing words, advice, etc.
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- Closing
 - Closing prayer
 - Refreshments, speakers available for teens to talk with
 - Perhaps have books, pamphlets, prayers available
 - “Pray, Decide and Don't Worry” by Jackie and Bobby Angel with Fr. Mike Schmitz
 - “What Does God Want?” by Fr. Mike Scanlan
 - “To Save a Thousand Souls: A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood” by Fr. Brett A. Brannen
 - “Discerning Religious Life” by Sr. Clare Matthias, CFR
 - “And Mary's 'Yes' Continues” by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist