

Diocese of Spokane Vocations Prayer

Lord Jesus, through the intercession of your Most Holy Mother Mary, we implore you to inspire many young men and women to consecrate themselves to you as priests and religious, especially in the Diocese of Spokane. Break through the noise and distractions which make it hard to hear your voice.

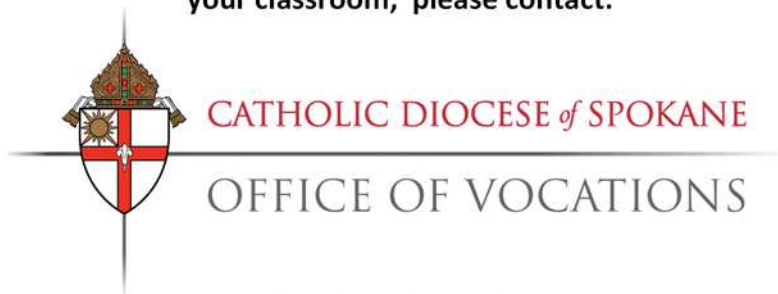
Place in their hearts joyful courage to respond generously to your call, and a profound desire to spend their lives in service to you and your people.

When you called, even Lazarus awoke.

Call us, Lord, and help us to take our place in the mission of your Church, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us

For more information and resources to help you foster vocations in your classroom, please contact:



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The Role of Teachers in Awakening Vocations

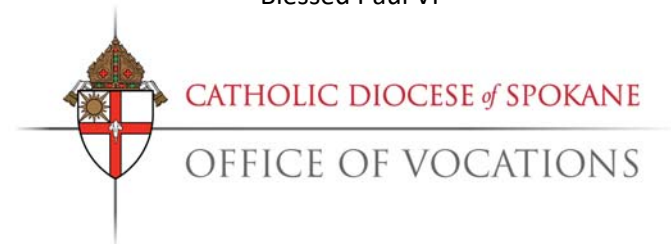


“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

What teachers do and how they act are more significant than what they say — inside and outside the classroom. That's how the Church evangelizes.

The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal Person [Christ] that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated.”

- Blessed Paul VI



Children's Prayer for Vocations

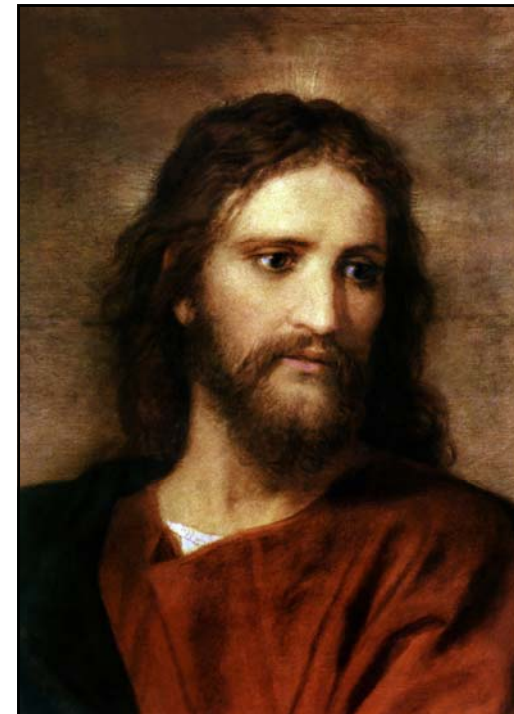
Recommended for Grades K-5

Jesus, I know that you love me. I love you very much.
In Baptism, you made me a child of God and called me to be close to you always. Teach me how to talk to you, how to listen to you, and how to follow you. May everything I do lead me to you. Bless all priests and religious sisters and brothers who follow you with their whole lives. Bless my family and all families. Keep them close to your heart. Amen.



What is this booklet?

Teachers are called amidst already busy schedules to be more than knowledge transmitters. Students send out signals as they tackle academic and life issues. As a teacher, you have been gifted with the opportunity to respond to your students and to touch their lives by example, by listening, and by providing meaningful feedback. The purpose of this Quick Reference Guide is to suggest ways that you can encourage vocations, especially to the priesthood, religious life, and other Church leadership without sacrificing time needed to complete your curriculum.



Prayers for the Classroom

Daily Prayer to Discover My Vocation

*Recommended for
Middle School - Young Adult*

Heavenly Father, if it be your holy will that I am called to the vocation of marriage, please protect my future spouse. Keep him/her holy and pure so that when in your Divine Providence you bring us together, we may discover and foster the love you have always intended for us to share, even from the beginning of time. Then, through our marriage, may we faithfully witness that love to the world each and every day of our lives.

But Lord, if it be your will that I am called to another vocation in the Church, then place holy people in my life to assist me along this path, not telling me what I should do, but guiding and encouraging me every step of the way, so that I may become the faithful instrument of your grace for the souls you have entrusted to my care.

I ask this through the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, and in the name of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

What Is Discernment?

The word "discern" means "to sift" or "to filter." When we discern, we filter out what is less important so that we can clearly hear what is most important. In this case, we must filter out what is not of God so that we can hear Him clearly. The task of discernment is to identify what we hear or experience, make a judgment about its origin, and then choose the best path. Discernment is meant to prepare us for *decision*.

Each of the baptized is called to be a saint. This is the fundamental vocation, known as the *universal call to holiness*. Yet holiness is lived in one of four states of life: priesthood, consecrated life, married life, and single life.

How Can You Help?

Research reported by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops had identified three stages of occupational decision making. Young children choose what they might like to be when they grow up based on adult role models or idols. Around age 11, children begin to associate occupational choices with their developing interests, talents, and values. By the time they become juniors or seniors in high school, young people engage in more realistic explorations of career and life choices.

Teachers, school administrators and staff are often role models to their students. It would be helpful to take some time to reflect upon your own call to holiness and your important mission as a Catholic educator and mentor.

As an educator, be on the lookout for emerging qualities that apply to vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Point out these qualities to students, and encourage your students to consider themselves as potential future leaders in the Church.

Key Qualities to Look for in:

Middle School Students

- Interacting or relating well with others
- Openness and interest in serving others
- Compassion
- Ability to forgive
- Generosity
- Prayerfulness
- Willingness to take a stand for the truth
- Honesty

High School Students

- Leadership
- Critical thinking
- Energy and stamina
- Comfort in relationship with Christ and His Church
- Care for others as well as self
- Cooperativeness in teamwork
- Humility, and a healthy sense of humor
- Trustworthiness

Promoting Vocations

How you promote vocations is as varying as each individual teacher and student, but the **SPARKS** acronym and a list of some important personal characteristics may help you to develop a good plan.

Spot the signals, using the characteristics listed in this guide.

Pray for the ability to see your students as God sees them. Pray specifically for those students who have qualities of potential Church leaders.

Accent discovery. Encourage students to explore opportunities to help others at school, at home, in the Church, or in the community, either individually or through involvement in service projects such as working in a meal program, a pro-life activity, or holding a clothing drive.

Reach out. Even amidst the time constraints of curriculum requirements and your schedule outside the classroom, be open to conversation about vocations. If you notice a student with gifts applicable to ministry, ask if the student has ever thought about ordination or religious life. With a student's permission, talk to his or her parents about your observations.

Keep communicating. Develop a list of people who are willing to answer your students questions about the priesthood or religious life. Make vocations a part of a career day in your school or classroom by inviting one or more speakers (ordained, religious, seminarians, novices, etc.) To talk about vocations. Have up-to-date vocations resources visible in your classroom and handouts or handouts or brochures readily available.

Support the process. Foster a classroom environment in which the call to ministry is respected-where it is okay to consider a religious vocation. Integrate vocations into your other lesson plans. For example, use priests or sisters in math story problems. In language arts, use vocation questions as journal topics.

Nun: Nuns are sisters and brides of Christ who are called by Him to pray and serve the needs of the Church in a more hidden way. They live in cloistered communities and do not leave their convents for any outside apostolates.

Priest: A man is ordained to priesthood through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Together each man and the Church discern whether or not he is called to become a priest. Diocesan priests a called to serve the people of a particular diocese. Men called to be priests in religious orders belong to communities and in addition to receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders they also take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience (*the three evangelical counsels*)

Religious Community: The founder of a religious community brings together a group of men or women who share the same charism and are dedicated to the same mission in the Church. These are religious communities of priests and brothers and communities of sisters. The apostolates of the communities vary according to their mission. Those dedicated primarily to prayer are *contemplative* communities; those who combine prayer with apostolic ministries are called *active* communities.

Religious Life: Priests, brothers or sisters in communities that embrace the spirituality, charism and teachings of the community's founder call their way of life *religious life*. Members of these communities follow Jesus through taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Secular Institute: Single lay men and women, and also some priests, belong to secular institutes. They make a commitment to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Members do not necessarily live together as a community. Their goal is to be a transforming presence in society.

Sister: Sisters belong to religious communities and are brides of Christ who are chosen by Him to love Him and serve His Church like His Mother Mary as virgins and spiritual mothers. They serve the Church in whatever ways their superiors decide is best given their talents and inclinations.

Vocation: Vocation means a call. It is God's invitation –His call- to each person to love and serve Him and His Church in a particular state or way of life.

Vows: Formal commitments made to God to follow Jesus in His poverty, chastity and obedience as members of religious communities. The vow of poverty means that members hold all things in common. The community takes care of each other's needs through the providence of God and their our charity. The vow of chastity means that the member gives up the goods of marriage and marital relations for the sake of God's kingdom. The vow of obedience allows the member of the community to imitate and share in Jesus' obedience to His Father in order to accomplish His will. (Diocesan priests promise to live in celibate chastity, obedience to their bishop and a simple life.)

Definitions & Terms

Apostolate: The type of work or mission of the order through which their particular charism is lived out.

Brother: Brothers live in religious communities. They take vows and promise to use their talents to serve God wherever the community decides they are needed. Brothers are not ordained.

Charism: A unique gift by God to each religious community which way of loving God and His people .

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 making of public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Deacon (Permanent): A third degree of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, after bishop and priest. The permanent deacon is ordained for ministry and service, but not to the priesthood. He assists and preaches at Mass, baptizes and presides at weddings and funerals. They have jobs outside the Church to make a living. Men at least 35 years of age, married or single, may be ordained permanent deacons.

Deacon (Transitional): Men who are called to the priesthood who are in the final stage of formation before being ordained as priests. They receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders and usually serve as deacons for one year before ordination to the priesthood. During their year as a deacon they continue their studies and serve in parish assignments.

Discernment: Discernment means the process of that discovering one's vocation through prayer, reflection, and discussion as to how God calls each person to love Him, whether as a priest, a consecrated religious man or woman, a married person or a consecrated single person.

Holy Orders: The Sacrament by which the mission entrusted by Christ to His Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church through the laying on of hands. By receiving Holy Orders men become members of the ordained clergy - deacons, priests and bishops. All three confer a permanent, sacramental character to the man ordained.

Laity: People within the Church including religious brothers and sisters as well as all other single and married person who are not ordained as bishop, priests or deacons are known as the *laity* or the *lay faithful*.

Novice: A man or woman in the second formal stage of becoming a consecrated religious is called a *novice*. This stage of the *novitiate* usually takes one to two years.

Teaching Discernment

The Importance of Faith

God has directly willed each person into being, endowing each of your students with a unique dignity and destiny. This fact is foundational to our Christian life, yet it is also fiercely attacked. For circumstances most often out of their control, it is very often difficult for people—especially children—to be convinced that God is a Father who loves them.

Mother Luisita often told her sisters, “Before you talk to the children about God, talk to God about the children.” Teachers should begin by making an Act of Faith in God and in the essential goodness of *each* of His children (including the teacher herself). Help your students develop this trust by praying, “Jesus, I trust in You.”

How to Discern: GOD

“Discern” means “to sift.” A person discerns by sifting through experiences in order to make a judgment about what is true. This is difficult because the voice of the world, the voice of the self, and the voice of the Evil One all work to drown out the voice of God.

Teachers can help students to identify God's voice by helping them see:

Gifts: What gifts has God entrusted to them to give to others?

Others: What do other people say about the student?

Desires: What are his or her deepest desires ?

The Necessity of Prayer

God has created each of your students with a particular role to play in the history of salvation. Your role, as teacher, is to help each student discover, embrace, and fulfill that destiny. Discerning God's will cannot be accomplished without listening to God. *Discernment requires prayer!*

Therefore, an essential part of your vocation is to teach your students to pray, and to help them listen. Just as God gives parents special graces to help them in their role, so too He gives teachers special gifts to help you help your students. Trust in God's call for you, and help your students listen and interpret God's call for them.

Build a Culture of Vocations in Your Classroom!

“Pastoral work for vocations needs, especially today, to be taken up with new vigor and more decisive commitment by all members of the Church, in the awareness that it is not a secondary or marginal matter, or the business of one group only, as if it were a ‘part’, no matter how important, of the entire pastoral work of the Church...Indeed, concern for vocations is a connatural and essential dimension of the Church’s pastoral work.” - Pope St. John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 34.



PRAY: “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to His harvest.”



INFORM: Spread the word! Get vocational brochures, posters, fliers, and calendars of events out there!



INVITE: Personally encourage youth and young adults to consider the priesthood and religious life as an option.

10 Simple and Quick Ways to Promote Vocations Within the Classroom

1. Speak often and speak well of priests and religious, especially the ones in the parish.
2. Have a Vocations Bulletin Board near the door or where the students line up/gather.
3. Pray for vocations everyday... and pray for a specific person by name.
4. Define terms like “vocation,” “discernment,” “religious life,” etc.... help them to remember the terms by using them often.
5. **3Ps: Photos, Pictures, Posters...** faces and photos make it more real. (This is true for the saints as well!)
6. Use technology: Share movie clips, stories and links from the internet and Facebook (e.g. SpokaneVocations.org, [Imagine Sisters](http://ImagineSisters.com), VianneyVocations.com, and many more.)
7. Share a vocation story... and tell it like you would a love story (see *Columbia* magazine).
8. Invite priests, sisters, and religious to come and visit, and be sure to **BUILD UP** the visit to make it the most successful possible!
9. Adopt a seminarian, priest, religious brother and or sister... have the students send them cards and messages.
10. Invite each student to personally consider why God created them and invite them to be open to His will.

