



### **Aim:**

1. To illustrate examples of people who discerned and followed God's will for their lives, becoming saints.
2. To recognize that God calls all of us to a vocation, but not all to the same vocation.
3. To also see that regardless of our specific vocation, we are all called to be saints.
4. To learn about gifts, talents and virtues and their importance for living out God's will.

### **Resources/Materials:**

Lives of the Saints books (e.g. Lives of the Saints, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York), Holy Cards with saints on them, websites with descriptions of saints lives (e.g. [www.catholic-forum.com/saints/](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/) and [www.catholic.org/saints/](http://www.catholic.org/saints/)). "Fishers of Men" video and supporting materials (to be sent to school principal in December, 2006).

### **Activity 1: Virtues and the Universal Call to Sainthood**

- Define "virtues" for the students (from section 1804 of the Catechism): *"Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. A virtuous person is one who freely practices the good. The moral virtues are acquired by human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with divine love."*
- Review some of the virtues lived by the saints: courage, temperance (poverty of spirit), prudence (right judgment), justice, chastity, obedience, faith, hope and charity.
- Guide discussion to the discernment of God's will for our lives and how that plan will bring us the most joyful life we can have, since God is the author of all joy. Emphasize how each of us will need the virtues of courage, charity and obedience to hear and follow God's plan.
- Have each student select a saint and write a short biography of that saint. Tell the students to make sure they highlight evidence of how the saint lived out some of the virtues you talked about.

### **Activity 2: Saints and Blessed Quiz**

Introduce students to the rigorous process by which a person is named a saint:

- First, there is a 5 year waiting period after death.
- Then, a careful review is given of the person's life and writings to see evidence of heroic virtue and fidelity to the Church and its teachings. This review is first carried out by the Bishop of the diocese where the saint lived. If the review is favorable, that person is then referred to as a "Servant of God." The results are sent to Rome for official Vatican review. If this second review is successful, the person is then called a "Venerable Servant of God."
- To then be "beatified" (and thus to be called "Blessed"), a miracle must be found where prayers to the deceased person led to something that cannot be explained scientifically and thus must be due to the intervention of God (i.e. a miraculous cure from an incurable disease is commonly brought forward). Once a miracle has been verified, the Pope can beatify the individual. Mother Teresa is currently "Blessed Mother Teresa."
- To become "canonized" as a saint, an additional miracle is needed. The same rigorous investigation is conducted for the second miracle. Once an additional miracle is verified, the Pope can then choose to canonize the individual as a saint.

Hand out Quiz to students. See how many they get in class. Then let them go home to get help to finish out the rest.

### **Activity 3: Gifts and Talents Exercise**

- Begin by having the students think about how God is the source of their gifts and talents.

- Have students generate a list of gifts/talents: drawing, writing, music, acting, intelligence, athletic ability, sense of humor, etc.
- Have them discuss how a person could use those talents in a positive, Christian way, or in a negative way. If they struggle, talk about how Pope John Paul II and Adolph Hitler both had leadership skills and charisma, but they chose to use them in very different ways: one for good and one for evil.
- Make the point that no matter what vocation God calls us to, our talents will be used for good if we follow His call. Going back to the list of talents, have them point out how a gift like intelligence or sense of humor can be used well in a variety of vocations: single, married, religious life, priest.
- Have them make a list of their talents. Have them select 2 talents they have and have them write out how those God-given talents could be used well as a single, married or religious. Essentially, they would be filling in a 6 cell grid:

TALENT	SINGLE	MARRIED	RELIGIOUS
Talent 1			
Talent 2			

For example, a sense of humor will help a single person in their career, help a spouse ease the tensions of marital arguments or help a priest write an attention-engaging homily.

#### **Activity 4: “Fishers of Men” Video about the Priesthood.**

Show the “Fishers of Men” video (18 minutes long) and discuss the video in-class using the discussion questions that come with the video. The video will be sent in December, 2006 to school principals.

#### **Activity 5: Website Activities**

The kids can be guided to the site, or you can download and print the necessary materials ahead of time.

##### **1. World Day of Vocations Messages**

at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/vocations/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/vocations/index.htm) and at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/vocations/index\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/vocations/index_en.htm) you will find the World Day of Vocations messages from the Pope. Have students pick out one of the messages and give/write a report on what the Pope said. What were his main points? How did he express those points in the prayer he offered at the end? What was the most powerful part of the address?

##### **2. Pope John Paul II’s Holy Thursday letters**

at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_index-letter-to-priests\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_index-letter-to-priests_en.html) you will find a listing of each letter the Holy Father wrote to his priests on Holy Thursday during this 26 year pontificate. Have students choose a letter and write a report on what the focus of the letter was. What was the Pope encouraging them to think about or do and why? What bible passages or documents did he quote?

##### **3. Different Paths to Priesthood**

at [www.cincinnati vocations.org/hearing\\_others.shtml](http://www.cincinnati vocations.org/hearing_others.shtml), there are stories of 10 different men who became priests (Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and 8 recently ordained priests in Archdiocese of Cincinnati). After reading the biographies, have them discuss or write out which “vocation” story was their favorite and why.

##### **4. Religious Orders**

under [www.cincinnati vocations.org/religious\\_orders.shtml](http://www.cincinnati vocations.org/religious_orders.shtml), there are links to nearly 50 male religious websites and over 60 female religious websites. Have the kids look at 2 sites for men and 2 sites for women and see how the orders differ in their ministry (i.e. in what actions they perform in the world). For example, the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville are teachers, and the Little Sisters of the Poor run homes for the elderly poor. Have them identify the differences in work and dress and such between 2 female and 2 male orders. Have them also discuss what elements they found attractive about the lifestyle of each order and what they found the most challenging aspect of each order.

##### **5. Diaconate**

Have the students investigate what a deacon is and how they serve the Church. Have them go to [www.deacons.net/Documents](http://www.deacons.net/Documents) and [www.deaconsplace.info](http://www.deaconsplace.info).