


VOCA TIONS
ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
YOUTH GROUP



Introduction: This is a session intended for a gathering of youth in grades 7-12. It could be used in a youth group setting or in a classroom.

Purpose/Overview: This gathering is intended to introduce youth to the truth that everyone has a vocation and that his or her first vocation, or call, is to holiness. Secondly, in union with this first calling by God, is that everyone has been created for a special purpose or work He has for them. This special purpose or vocation God prepares for each individual can take one of the following forms and, in some cases, a combination of two: Priesthood, Religious Life, Diaconate, Married, or Single. This night will help youth to better understand what holiness is and how we go about listening for the special vocation He is calling us to embrace.

Environment/Room Set-up: If possible it would be great to have the room decorated a little differently in order to key the youth to the fact that this is something different than the norm. If possible, print out pictures of the saints that are mentioned in the vocation awareness packet making sure to include saints that reflect all the different vocations. Also, print out or make different traffic signs such as STOP, YIELD, MERGE, CONSTRUCTION UP AHEAD, and SPEED BUMP, etc. Hang these signs and pictures up throughout the room. Make sure there are enough to really catch the attention of the youth.

Icebreaker/Gather: Use an Icebreaker that relates somehow to either God as the source of our talents/gifts or to hearing God's call in our lives.

For example, here's one way that can work well with younger teens. As each youth enters the room, welcome them and repeat the scripture verse, "To one he gave five **talents**, and to another two **talents**, and to another one talent, each according to his ability." (Mt. 25:15) After the verse, give them 3 to 5 pennies and invite them to sit down or hang out until you are ready to get started. You could also have some youths volunteer to help distribute the pennies and as they distribute, have them prepared with the verse ahead of time. When you are ready to get started instruct everyone to move about the room playing Paper, Rock, Scissors (or if they've heard of it Bear, Ninja, Cowboy) for one another's pennies. Tell them to introduce themselves to one another before playing each person. Let this go on for awhile. Everyone should have a pretty good time. When most people have sat down because of losing their pennies, invite everyone to sit back down.

Teaching/Proclamation:

It is important that you have assimilated and understand the teaching well. One source of confusion for youth today is when those who are teaching them do not know the topic very well. It is important that you come across with confidence in order to ensure them that there is in fact an answer to the question in their hearts. Start by reading these quotes from John Paul II and the Vatican II Document *Lumen Gentium*:

“Dear young people, the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelization: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity. Many have gone before us along this path of Gospel heroism, and I urge you to turn often to them to pray for their intercession.”

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20th WORLD YOUTH DAY**

“Fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation [the sacraments], all the faithful, whatever their condition or state [vocation], are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect.” *Lumen Gentium*

Ask the youth to raise their hands and share what they think holiness is.

(You will get a lot of different responses, but most generally will focus on Piety, Service, and someone who was a religious sister or priest. It is important that you emphasize that holiness is for everyone, not just priests and religious sisters. Point out to them that the above quote from John Paul II focused on holiness as being our first vocation or invitation from God.)

Have someone read out loud Matthew 5:48. “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Share with them that Jesus, in this passage, is not calling us to “not make mistakes.” He is calling us to be holy and in this context in particular, it has to do with our relationships with others. So our vocation of how we are going to grow in holiness has everything to do with how we are in relation to God and to others.

Marriage

The first relationship to talk about is Marriage. Marriage is an AWESOME vocation, but too many people look at it just as what you do when you grow up instead of the amazing adventure and vocation it is. Stress to them that you don’t simply marry so that you have someone to be intimate with or someone to share the work around the house. Marriage is to be concerned entirely with your spouse’s good. It is an awesome opportunity to completely give of yourself.

Analogy that can be used: Use the example in your own words about when you go to pick up a slice of pizza or pick out a shirt, you always want the best one, the coolest one. The goal of marriage is to always give your spouse the best piece of pizza, the coolest thing, not in terms of material things, but selflessness.

Marriage is about helping one another to Heaven!

Read to the youth or have a youth read out loud about **St. Gianna Molla** (Information is included in the packet. There is also a wealth of knowledge and stories about her on the internet).

Ask the youth what they think about her, share some of your own thoughts.

Single Life

Another relationship or vocation is single life. This is not a life where you just can’t get a date. This is a person, man or woman, who knows that the religious life is not where God is calling them. Instead, God has called them to live in the world as a single person in order to devote more time to the specific works God is calling them to do, whether those works be of prayer or service.

Read or have read out loud 1 Corinthians 7:32-34. (This passage is not to say that married people don't care about God, but rather it emphasizes that someone who is not married is able to focus more of his or her attention on God.)

This would be a great time to talk about **Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and/or Blessed Kateri Tekawitha**. (Pier Giorgio is in the packet and information on Kateri Tekawitha is on the internet))

Religious Life

Religious sisters or brothers are men and women who generally live together in community and have vowed to live a certain way or rule of life. They support and encourage one another and because they are celibate they have, just like the single person, more time to focus on the Lord. These sisters are also known as "Brides of Christ" because they are waiting for the Bridegroom, Jesus.

Read about Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa). Maybe even find a clip of her speaking. She is awesome!!

Another group of religious that never leave the convent are known as "cloister." Women and men (monks) who are cloistered live out a very special vocation of prayer. Theirs is a great mission to pray for the needs of the world while growing in holiness and intimacy with the Lord themselves.

This is not in the packet, but you could read a little about St. Teresa of Avila or St. John of the Cross. (Both were cloistered mystics.)

Priesthood

Most of the youth are familiar with the priesthood to some extent. The best way to re-introduce this to them is to play the Vocation Video "Fishers of Men." (This video will be sent to school principals or can be obtained by calling the Vocation Office at 513/421-3131.)

Play "Fishers of Men."

After the video invite the guys to encourage one another to think and pray about this vocation. Also, encourage the ladies to support guys if they are thinking about it.

Closing

Close with a time of prayer, asking the saints (especially those mentioned above) to pray for us that we may clearly discern what vocation God is calling us to. Pray for the future spouse of everyone in the room, the religious orders they might join, for the strength to be holy priests and religious, and most of all for the courage and the strength to live differently, to be holy, as God is holy. Invoke the Holy Spirit to empower them. You might end with a Hail Mary, asking Our Lady to guide them into what Her Son would have them do.

Challenge them everyday to ask God what He wants from them and to say a Hail Mary and Our Father everyday for this intention.