

Invitation

Our Catholic faith is a wonderful gift from God. The vitality of the Church depends upon us to create a **Catholic Community** that supports and encourages vocation awareness, promoting with enthusiasm all vocations: to the priesthood, consecrated life, diaconate, lay ministry, single and married life. We should **Pray** daily for our own vocation, **Pray** as a community, and **Pray** for others to “hear the call.” Some members of the Church are called to serve through ordination, religious life and full time lay ministry. Every one of us can give testimony to the ways these people have touched our lives and strengthened our faith. In our time, hearing the call may be a little more difficult, as materialism, individualism, and secularism are strong forces to overcome. Thus, we have chosen intentionally to use the crucifix as the symbol for this prayer program. The Crucifix is a powerful symbol that reminds us all that in order to follow God’s will we must be willing to sacrifice our lives and die to our own desires so that we might truly live the life of Christ. With this in mind, we pray that the Holy Spirit will speak loudly and clearly so that those being called will respond generously and courageously.

You are invited to be a part of a “Traveling Crucifix” program as a special effort to pray for religious vocations. The Crucifix is presented to you during Mass, to be returned the next week, where it is to be transferred to another family, sharing in turn as a community in this effort. During the week, the household displays the Crucifix in a prominent place, so the family can gather around daily for the time of prayer. This packet of suggested prayers and scripture readings has been prepared to help you. You may want a Bible for the referenced passages, but one is not required as the biblical text is included with each daily devotion. You are welcome to add other prayers and scripture readings as you feel necessary to adjust to the age-composition of your family. At the end of your week, you may keep this packet and use it to continue your prayer support for vocations.

Vocation Office's Endorsement

An invitation by God to serve Him as a priest or religious can only be heard in the silence of the heart. In this silence, God begins to work on the heart, opening the possibility that one might respond in generosity to the free gift of salvation won for us by Christ and become a minister of that salvation for the Church. Often, as a person feels the call to priesthood or religious life, he or she feels alone: I am the only one who feels this call. That is definitely not the case. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are on the rise, as the awareness grows of the need for holy men and women to serve Christ in the unique callings of priesthood and the religious life.

However, as these two unique vocations grow in awareness, something else interesting happens. Young people who have explored the option of priesthood or religious life become concerned about where God is leading them. Some who have explored these options do end up feeling called to the married or single life instead, realizing that these are also important and necessary vocations within the Church as well.

I am happy to present this Traveling Crucifix Program to the parishes of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with the sincere hope that it will help us all to realize that we have been called by God to serve Him and His Church. We all have a responsibility to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In doing so, we also necessarily promote the vocations of marriage and single life as ways that God leads His faithful to live out the call of their Baptism. As we promote vocations, may those who are called become more comfortable in accepting that call with the support of the loving community created by these prayers.

May we see a new flowering of vocations to the priesthood and religious life as we all strive to find where God is leading us in this life so that we can be with Him in the next.

In Christ,

Fr. Kyle Schnippel
Vocation Director
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

A PROPOSED PRAYER PLAN WITH THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED ELEMENTS

Focus: This packet presents the hosting family with prayers on vocations that include married life, single life, priesthood, diaconate, sisters, brothers, and lay ministry. How you choose one or multiple areas is left to family discretion.

Environment Setting for the Prayers: Consider placing a family photo, flowers, a candle, or some item(s) of significance to your family on the table with the Vocations crucifix. Before prayer you may want to light a candle, reminding us that Christ is the Light of the World, which shines through our lives!

Gathering: Welcome your family, extended family, and friends. Invite everyone to a moment of quiet, remembering that we are always in God's loving presence.

Opening Prayer: An opening prayer is included with each daily devotion.

Scripture Reading: See each daily devotion.

Questions: See each daily devotion.

Prayer of Thanksgiving or Need: Invited family members to offer prayers either in thanksgiving for blessings received or for the needs of family, friends, and the world. This is an opportunity to name those priests, religious sisters, brothers, and other ministers through whom you have experienced God's love.

Vocation Prayer: Several prayers are included later in this packet. You can select one or more of these or provide your own.

Closing prayer: A closing prayer is included with each day's suggested activities.

DEVOTIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Focus: In family life, children learn from their parents how to love and follow Christ. Marriage is a vocation which encourages generosity and openness to the will of God in all Vocations.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:28-6:4 – So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise, “that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. Do I attempt to understand and appreciate the close companionship and generosity that the sacrament of marriage requires?
2. What are the challenges to married couples today and how do I offer these couples warm support and encouragement?
3. In what ways am I helping to encourage the openness of my children’s hearts to God’s will?
4. What resources does our parish offer to help support married couples?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocation Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: O God, we thank You for one another and for giving us the holy family of Nazareth as our model. Daily each member sought to serve the other in unselfish love. Your will was their guide. May their inspiration lead us to draw closer to You and to value the human person, especially those related to us by family ties. Amen.

MONDAY- SINGLE LIFE

Focus: For many people, as it was with Jesus, the single life is their true calling. It enables them to use their gifts and talents freely for the service of Gods' Kingdom.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3:1-15 – My son, forget not my teaching, keep in mind my commands; For many days, and years of life, and peace, will they bring you. Let not kindness and fidelity leave you; bind them around your neck; Then will you win favor and good esteem before God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your eyes, fear the LORD and turn away from evil; This will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; Then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.

The discipline of the LORD, my son, disdain not; spurn not his reproof; For whom the LORD loves he reproves, and he chastises the son he favors. Happy the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding! For her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold is her revenue; She is more precious than corals, and none of your choice possessions can compare with her.

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. How have single persons enriched our family, our parish, our church, and our world?
2. How can I better encourage single persons in their vocation?
3. Do the single people in my life feel fulfilled in their life and how can I help them to reach fulfillment?
4. What does our parish do in terms of young adult ministry?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocation Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, we praise and bless You for all the many great and wonderful gifts You give to our world. Bless all single people. Give them Your peace and joy. Give us a sprit of discernment to find new and creative ways to support their much needed ministry in today's world. We make this prayer through Your Son, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

TUESDAY – PRIESTHOOD

Focus: As a representative of Christ, the Head, priests gather the community and keep it united. He leads the community in prayer, especially the sacraments, and helps to form the community he serves as a body of true disciples, dedicated to the teaching and work of Christ.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20 – The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. How have priests made a difference in our lives?
2. What qualities make for a good priest, especially the pastor of a parish?
3. What makes the priesthood a difficult vocation to answer?
4. How do we offer encouragement to the priest(s) who serve(s) our parish?
5. Would I support the call of my son, grandson, my brother, or my friend to the priesthood?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocations Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, in your mystery, you choose men from among your people to serve as priests. Raise up for us holy men to serve your Church in this way. Help those who are being called to have the courage to respond to your will. Help those who are in formation for the priesthood to grow in holiness and zeal for souls, and give your strength and love to priests already faithfully serving in your fields. Give us priests who are faithful in the celebration of the Sacraments and generous in their time for others. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest. Amen

WEDNESDAY – DIACONATE

Focus: Deacons remind all of us that humble service is a true hallmark of someone who professes to follow Jesus. They are ordained members of the Church and have a proper liturgical role. But more importantly, they are asked to give witness through married life, through their presence in the work place and through involvement in the civic community.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 13:4-17 – He rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “what I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well.” Jesus said to him, “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all.” For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, “Not all of you are clean.” So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it.

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. Do we know anybody who has the generous and obedient heart of the deacon?
2. How do deacons give witness to Jesus’ call to serve one another?
3. How do deacons help to make us a better parish?
4. How is the community helping to nurture this vocation in its members?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocations Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, You sent Your Son as a powerful and real sign of Your love for us. He was especially compassionate toward sinners, the poor and sick, and those longing to find You in their lives. Give a generous heart like this to the men You have called to be deacons. Help them to balance the demands of their ordained ministry, family life and work. Keep them from growing tired or discouraged, we ask this through the loving, sacred Heart of Jesus. Amen.

THURSDAY – SISTERS

Focus: God calls some women in the Church to consecrate themselves to the Kingdom of God in a vowed way. They carry out this calling by embracing community life and renouncing material possessions, and by engaging in apostolic works or contemplative prayer.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42 – As they continued their journey Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.” The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. In my day to day activities, do I take time to feel the presence of God and to hear the call of God?
2. How are sisters important to the prospering of our parish?
3. What am I doing in my parish to promote this vocation?
4. Would I support the call of my daughter, granddaughter, my sister, or my friend to religious life?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocations Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, O God, for calling some women to be totally dedicated to Your glory and to serving You through the Church. Give them Your desires so that they may work to bring the world to You. Bless those women who already serve You in a vowed life. Help each of us to be faithful to our own commitments so that in fidelity we may support all seeking to be faithful to You as was Your beloved Son. We ask this in His name through the Spirit who binds us all as one. Amen.

FRIDAY – BROTHERS

Focus: Brothers are men who accept a way of life similar to women called to religious life. They belong to communities like the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, or Marianists.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6: 1-12 – In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft.

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!” they cried one to the other. “All the earth is filled with his glory!” At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke.

Then I said, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

He touched my mouth with it. “See,” he said, “now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” “Here I am,” I said; “send me!”

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. Do I know of the communities of brothers in our diocese? Of their life and works? Am I supportive of them?
2. How are brothers helping to create a better Church and parish?
3. What qualities does a person possess who is called to the brotherhood?
4. Have I done my part to create the kind of atmosphere in which people might freely and generously respond to God’s call?
5. Would I support the call of my son, grandson, my brother, or my friend to the brotherhood?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocations Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, You call all Your children to universal love and sharing, and You have given us Jesus, Your Son, as model. We praise and thank You for Your goodness and for that of our religious brothers, ministering to the needs of people in our diocese and throughout our world. We ask You to choose from our families many more young men who will serve You as brothers in love and faithfulness. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Brother. Amen.

SATURDAY – LAY MINISTRY

Focus: God calls all Christians to find appropriate ways to live out their baptism. Some lay persons feel the desire, and the gifts, to devote themselves to significant roles of leadership and ministry in the life of the Church. Many parishes today depend on the service of catechetical leaders, pastoral associates, etc.

Complete the elements of **Environment** and **Gathering**.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to a new and more abundant life. Each day He draws us ever closer to You and each other. May our time in prayer now be a special moment of this closeness. May we feel the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our words and thoughts. May our prayers be a sign that we are confident of Your care for the Church. May our prayers help others to know how best to serve You and Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:7; 11-16 - But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. And He gives some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.

Consider the following **Questions:**

1. Who are some of the people I know in the parish or diocese who are really serving others in the spirit of the gospel? How are they doing this?
2. How have I been gifted by the Lord for service?
3. Am I using these gifts to better my parish community?
4. How might I better support my parish with the use of my talents? How am I supporting the development of the gifts of others?

Conclude with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, a **Vocations Prayer** and the following **Closing Prayer**.

Closing Prayer: O God Almighty, we thank You for calling each of us into deeper life through Jesus. We thank You for the love we are called to bear one another. Teach us to respect the many ways in which Your spirit is manifested and the many gifts needed to bring Christ's life in us to its fullness. Never let us forget that the greatest among us is the one who serves with joy and humility, using Your gifts for the common good. We ask this in the name of Your Son through the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

VOCATION PRAYERS

Prayer for Vocations

Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd. You know each of us and You call us by name to serve You in faith. Help us respond generously to Your voice. Give courage and guidance to those You call to the priesthood and the diaconate, to religious life and lay ministry, so they may respond wholeheartedly and serve devotedly. Amen

Prayer for the Perseverance in Vocations

O God, You have constituted Your only-begotten Son supreme and eternal priest for the glory of Your majesty and the salvation of humankind; grant that those whom he has chosen ministers and dispensers of His mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Harvest Prayer

Lord Jesus, during your time here on earth You often spoke about the coming of God's kingdom. God's Kingdom is like a mustard seed that grows, like a women's search for a lost coin, like yeast spreading through dough, like a king's banquet for many guests. You said that the harvest for God's Kingdom would be huge, only that the harvest master would need more workers. We know that it is Your Kingdom. You are the master. Yet You have asked us, great and small alike, to be Your partners in the work of salvation. Help us recognize what tools and skills You have given us. Help us see what needs to be done. Help us be courageous and generous in doing our part. With You, a huge harvest! Amen.

Prayer to Mary

Mary, you were so happy to have a child, so proud of Him. You fed and clothed Him. You taught and consoled Him. You watched Him grow. Then He went to His Father's work. You didn't always understand what that meant, and your heart was torn when He made the ultimate sacrifice. Perhaps someone in our family will be called by the Father to do some special service, a service that will require great sacrifice, a service that may not be what we have in mind or think is wise. If that time comes for us, Mary, reach out to help us with understanding and generosity. Allow us to see God's hand at work, to be at peace with it, to encourage it. Amen.

Serran Prayer for Vocations

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra , and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, Your son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever, and ever. Amen.

Prayer for Vocations – Pope John Paul II

Spirit of Truth who came to us at Pentecost, in order to form us in the school of the Divine Word, fulfill in us the mission for which the Son has sent you. Fill every heart; give many young people a yearning for the authentically good in life, a desire for evangelical perfection, a passion for the salvation of souls. Sustain the “laborers of the harvest” and grant that their efforts may bear much spiritual fruit. Make our hearts completely open and pure, and help us to follow Christ more fully so that we may receive your last and greatest gift: the joy which will never end. Amen

A Daily Prayer for Priests.

That all strive to become perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect:

Holy Spirit, make our priests holy.

That Holy Mass is continually offered for the life and needs of the world.

Holy Spirit, make our priests holy.

That our Eucharistic Lord be accessible and lovingly adored:

Holy Spirit, make our priests holy.

That the Gospel be proclaimed tirelessly, free from error: *Holy Spirit...*

That in Sacramental Absolution we seek and find our peace and love: *Holy Spirit...*

That unity in prayer brings about unity among all Christians: *Holy Spirit...*

That local Churches and their leaders be loyal to the Holy Father: *Holy Spirit...*

That all human life be protected and defended as sacred: *Holy Spirit...*

That God’s mercy extend daily to sinners, the dying and Souls in Purgatory: *Holy Spirit...*

That our youth are helped to grow free of drugs and all sinful addictions: *Holy Spirit...*

That prisoners, the elderly, the homeless find faith and hope in Christ: *Holy Spirit...*

That Christ’s love heals the lonely, the shut-ins and the sick: *Holy Spirit...*

That Christ is the goal and fulfillment of the young and the strong: *Holy Spirit...*

That new vocations heed God’s call to lead the Church of the future: *Holy Spirit...*

That we promote true devotion to Mary, Mother of the Church: *Holy Spirit...*

A Prayer for Priests – Richard Cardinal Cushing

O Almighty Eternal God, look upon the face of Your Son, and for the love of Him who is the Eternal High Priest have pity on Your Priests. Remember, O most compassionate God, that they are but weak and frail human beings. Stir up in them the grace of their vocation which is in them by the imposition of the Bishop’s hands. Keep them close to You, lest the enemy prevail against them, so that they may never do anything in the slightest degree unworthy of the sublime vocation, O Jesus, I pray for Your faithful and fervent priests; for Your unfaithful and tepid priests; for Your priests laboring at home and abroad in distant mission fields; for Your tempted priests; for the lonely and desolate priests; for Your young priests; for Your dying priests; for the souls of Your priests in Purgatory. But above all, I commend to You the priests dearest to me; the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins; the priests at whose Masses I assisted and who gave me Your Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who taught and instructed me or helped and encouraged me; all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way. O Jesus, keep them all close to Your Heart, and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

From the Beginning:

- Let the child experience in parents an attitude of openness to God's will.
- Place priority on family prayer as a time of speaking and listening to a loving God.
- Encourage the child to listen and to talk to God when alone.
- Point out evidence of God's love for the child – loving people, created beauty, daily surprises, and unexpected events.
- Help the child take time to thank God each day.

At the Primary Level:

- Read and tell about Mary's "Yes" to God (Luke 1:26-38)
- Read and talk about Jesus calling His apostles and friends to follow Him (Mt. 9:9-13; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 5:1-11; John 21:15-19)
- Answer the child's questions about who is a priest? Who is a sister? Who is a brother? Who is a deacon?
- At family prayer ask God to bless priests, deacons, sisters, or brothers who are members of the family or who are known well to the family.
- Speak in a positive attitude about religious vocation and your parish priest. They are human beings; so if they make mistakes, as we do, be kind to them as you would be kind to us. Notice their happiness in their work, and also notice when they are overworked as we can be.
- Invite a priest, deacon, sister or brother to visit your home for a meal, house blessing or some special occasion.

At the Intermediate Level:

- Encourage children to read in their own Bible about Mary's response to God's call, about Jesus calling the apostles (see Scripture passages above).
- Provide opportunities for the children to read about people who responded to God's call to serve in priesthood or in religious life—Benedict, Bernard, Francis, Damien, Therese, Catherine, Vincent de Paul, John Bosco, Ignatius, John Vianney, Mother Cabrini, Mother Theresa, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI.
- Point out the ministry of the parish priest(s) in celebrating the sacraments, calling people to prayer, explaining Scripture, reaching out to bring Christ to the lonely, the elderly, and the neglected.
- Help children realize that the religious life is an option, the same as becoming a nurse, teacher, electrician and being married.
- Continue to pray as a family group for priestly and religious vocations.

At the Junior and Senior High Level:

- Encourage the young person to pray to discover and use the gifts God has given.
- Provide opportunities for young people to work on service projects with religious.
- Encourage young people to give freely of their time, efforts and talents for neighboring families in need or elderly persons in the parish.
- If possible, attend an ordination of a priest or deacon or a profession ceremony of a sister or brother. Speak honestly and positively about the challenges of living a life of Christ.
- Keep alive a regular time for family prayer. Include a prayer for vocations.

Modified Prayer Plan for Families with Young Children

Suggested Opening Prayer: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespasses against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Sunday

Family prayer that offers up the activities for the week to the Lord in hopes that He will answer our prayers.

Monday

Recite the Serran Prayer for Vocations: O God, who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, her spouse, Blessed Juniper Serra , and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, Your son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever, and ever. Amen.

Tuesday

A family discussion on why our efforts during this week are important and make a difference.

Wednesday

Recite a Rosary for Vocations asking Mary to intercede for us that God may send us holy and devoted priests and that there be an increase in those answering the call to the priesthood and religious life.

Thursday

Ask each family member to offer a suggestion on how we can promote an increase in vocation awareness.

Friday

Have each child or member of the family say their own prayer on asking Jesus to guide people to religious life.

Saturday

Family prayer which thanks God for the opportunity to offer up an entire week to vocation awareness.

Suggested Closing Prayer: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.