

# What Is My Vocation?

High School

## Goals:

- To explore the meaning of the word “vocation” in a broader and deeper context.
- To introduce the process of discernment.

## Exploring Vocation

Using the online resource, *What Vocation Shortage?* by Russell Shaw, introduce the topic of vocation. Vocation is a divine call. It is God speaking to our heart. God calls everyone and God calls us each by name. Our call is personal. We are not called just once in life, but many times throughout our life. Each of us is unique. We are uniquely important and we each have a unique work of love to which we are called.

Vocation has a much broader meaning than most Catholics realize. Catholics tend to think that vocation is only about the call to priesthood and religious life. Being a priest or a sister is a vocation, a special calling. However, vocation is more than priesthood and consecrated life. We need to get rid of this old way of thinking because if we are not called to be a priest or a sister, we begin to think that we do not have a vocation. But that is not true! Everybody has a vocation. God calls everyone! And that includes you!

There are 3 levels or layers of vocation. There are 3 distinguishable callings we receive in our life.

By **baptism**, each person has a vocation, a way in which to live out God’s will and dream. In baptism, we are united to Christ and are called to live in oneness with Christ. This baptismal call is often referred to as the universal call of holiness. It is Christ who makes us holy as we live in union with him. All the baptized are called to holiness. We are to love God, love our neighbor and ourselves. God calls us each to participate in the life and mission of the Church, which is Christ’s work of redeeming the world. God desires that all people be saved. All the baptized are called to the fullness of Christian life and living the Christian life involves commitment.

**State in life** is also a vocation. This is the call to live the Christian life as a single person, married person, religious sister or brother, deacon or priest. Most people receive a state in life call during their young adult years (20’s & 30’s). We are called to live our faith in a particular Christian lifestyle. God calls some to the priesthood, some to consecrated life, some to single life and many are called to married life. A state in life call is God’s plan of love for your life. The commitment to live out a particular Christian lifestyle will shape a person’s life. For instance, married life looks different than single life. The Christian lifestyles complement and support one another. The vocation to state in life radiates out from the common Christian vocation we receive at baptism.

The third level of vocation is called **personal vocation**. We are unique individuals, we are uniquely important and we each have a unique personal vocation. The Lord calls each of us by name for a work no one else can do. Your personal vocation is the particular way in which God is calling you to personally participate in the work of Christ. We find our personal vocation in the circumstances of daily life, within the needs and issues of the time and place in which we live. God has gifted us and God calls us to serve the needs in our particular part of the world.

We can speak of not only having a vocation but of having a vocation within a vocation within a vocation. These calls come to us at different ages and phases of our life. A vocation unfolds and develops over our lifetime.

The challenge is to discern the vocation you unquestionably have. Discernment means to distinguish, to separate, to sort out. It is the process of listening to the inner movements and learning to sort out what is from God and what is not from God. Discernment is about the choice between two goods. God's invitation is gentle and God gives us the freedom to respond. God desires our well-being and wants us to know his will. If we make an honest effort to seek God's will, God will reveal his will to us. It is important to invite God into the dialogue of our life. It is when we allow Christ to be at the center of our life that we discover true joy and find purpose in life.

### **Questions for small group and/or large group discussion.**

1. Through baptism, we have "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). What does that mean?
2. Discuss the following statement made by Russell Shaw in the article, *What Vocation Shortage*. "Despite all the talk about vocation shortage, there is in fact no such thing in the Catholic Church. The real shortage is that of vocational discernment, and that is a very different problem". Do you agree or disagree and why?
3. Discuss the difference between planning your life and discerning God's call in your life.
4. How do you begin to discern God's call in your life?

**Optional Activity** Divide into small groups and have each group make a collage of people living their vocation. Let each group present and share about their vocation collage. (Materials needed: large sheets of paper for collage, magazines, scissors, glue sticks)

"If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life."

-Pope Benedict XVI