

Vocation Nights

The following is information to help your parish or deanery host a vocation night or series. There are many different angles you might take in implementing a night or series on vocations, and we hope the following will help in your planning. If you need further assistance with the planning and implementation, please contact the Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Office or the Office of Vocations. We would love to be part of your program and help in any way possible!

If you have other good ideas, please share them so that we can amend this list for the future.

Finally, thank you for all you do for our youth!

- Foundational Principle: God has a plan for your life, and it is good. He made us, knows us, and loves us better than we love ourselves. Saint Ignatius principle and foundation → [Link](#)
 - Scripture references (incorporated into talk and/or used for Lectio later):
 - Isa 42:6-7 “I have called you... I have grasped you by the hand... To open the eyes of the blind.”
 - Isa 43:1-ff “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine”
 - Isa 49:1-7 “The Lord called me from birth, from my mother’s womb he gave me my name.”
 - Rom 8:28 “All things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”
 - Gal 1:15 “God, who from my mother’s womb, had set me apart and called me through his grace”
 - 1 Pt 2:9-10 “God has called you out of darkness into his own marvelous light.”
 - 1 Cor 2: 7-12 “This God has revealed to us...so that we may understand.”
 - Eph 1: 3-14 “In him we were also chosen.”
 - Our vocation is a gift from God
 - For God, to glorify God and to make God known – Matthew 5: 16; Matthew 4: 19
 - For us (He wants our happiness more than we do!) – John 15:11; Psalm 28: 7; Romans 8: 28; 1 Cor. 1: 9; 1 Cor. 1: 26; Galatians 5: 13
 - Ephesians 1: 18 – “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people...”
 - John Paul II wanted to be a monk. Ended up diocesan priest, then Pope
 - Sts. Louis and Zelig wanted to be priests and nuns respectively. Got married, had St. Therese
 - God’s call requires obedience...but if we say ‘no’, God keeps calling and echoing in our hearts.
 - Catholic Catechism references – begin at #1699.
 - Vocation is revealed and flows through our relationship with Him. (Like a layered bar, have to get through the top layer in order to get to the middle. Can’t skip straight there).
 - General call to holiness (everyone)
 - State-of-life (marriage, consecrated life, priesthood)
 - Day-to-day (in this moment, also career, etc.)
 - The Stool Skit -- [Link](#)

- Trust Fall skit -- [Link](#)
- The universal call to holiness, which is union with God Himself. To be ‘holy’ is to be set apart for God’s purpose and design. God alone is holy. He invites us to participate in His holiness. He invites us on an adventure to become more like Him, and to receive and give more and more of His love.
 - Art illustrations – Universal Call to Holiness at National Basilica -- [Link](#) //
 - Call of St. Matthew – Caravaggio -- [Link](#)
- God knows what will make us holy. The things we are passionate about and the gifts God has given us are clues to where He may be calling us. The Lord knows best what will make us holy and happy, but He speaks through our desires. They are important to consider, since they are not there by accident! As you grow in your relationship with God, keep looking at your desires, what you are good at, what brings you joy, etc. These things may change in time.
 - Possible idea: gifts assessment, etc. Exercises like this can help our young people see that whatever they are passionate about, God can use that passion, etc. for His glory and His kingdom. Write your answers to these questions. Write the first things that come to mind—don’t over think it or edit them! (<http://ineedmotivation.com/7-questions-to-finding-your-true-passion/>). Additional [Link](#):
 - What puts a smile on your face? What do you find easy? What sparks your creativity? Etc.
- Prayer – ideas and illustrations
 - God wants to speak to us – but this is an unfolding/process.
 - We highly recommend spending time in the church praying – possibly a guided meditation on the call of the disciples or some other passage about God calling (“Here I am, Lord...”, the call of St. Matthew, etc.).
 - Our Father skit -- [Link](#)
 - How do we pray and listen?
 - Takes practice. Ask the Lord to speak in ways you understand.
 - Testimony of someone hearing God for the first time, and then growing in knowledge of His Voice.
 - Importance of spiritual direction, discerning in community, etc.
 - Make room for silence in your life
 - Consider utilizing Lectio Divina (and as part of the evening).
- Small group discussion on topics addressed
 - Do you believe God has a good plan for your life? How much do you trust Him? What would it take for you to trust Him more?
 - How can this help you see where God is moving in your life? How can you use the gifts and passions He’s given you?
 - Do you pray? Why do you have difficulty praying? How do we hear the Voice of God? How do we make room to hear Him in our everyday lives? Where have you heard ‘call’ you at points in your life? Share your answers to the reflection questions.

State of life vocations

Write what you know about priesthood, marriage, consecrated life. First few words you associate with it.

- Vital point for young people: you're likely a long way away from your state of life vocation. It is good to keep in mind what is out there. Recognize God stirring in your heart.
- Marriage
 - Basic overview of Holy Matrimony – the sacrament where the 'administrators' of the sacrament are the husband and wife.
 - Catechism of the Catholic Church references beginning at #1601
 - Possible videos:
 - Jackie and Bobby Angel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbhDCmzX4mw&list=PLgpqvhIS1Ldzc53o4J6hjGFvefb5PBZsD&index=15&t=0s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0R-QVU01AQ&list=PLgpqvhIS1Ldzc53o4J6hjGFvefb5PBZsD&index=15>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyWTcb9KCtc>
 - Mothers in particular: <https://vimeo.com/272844762>
 - What makes a marriage holy?
 - [The Gift of Children – Link to First Things article](#) (excellent statement from Catholics and Evangelicals together)
 - Personal testimony from married couple
- Priesthood
 - Basic overview
 - Possible videos:
 - What it means: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKTu9ljjqjI>
 - A Day in the Life, Fr. Scott: <https://vimeo.com/314000071>
 - Off the Record: <https://vimeo.com/313799106>
 - What do you love most about being a priest? <https://vimeo.com/232726328>
 - Fishers of Men: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVEzWuY1AxM>
 - Fishers of Men shorter version:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_SXSpzx4hY
 - First hearing the call: <https://vimeo.com/303818804>
<https://vimeo.com/303818994>
 - CFR Friars: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63ZKn4QtqSU> (older audiences)
 - Dominican Friars: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8o-ds9VNbY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iubcVp-hmE>
 - March of the Unqualified: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnoPIuENS-I>
 - Soccer star turned Catholic priest:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR9AvbO6a6g&t=14s>
 - Father Mike Schmitz vocation story:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTw5xg37QF0>
 - Father Kyle Manno -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HEBze_nNWQ
- Recap, testimony from priest

- Religious and Consecrated life
 - Basic overview
 - Vows, making a gift through poverty, chastity and obedience
 - Consider introducing them to the various religious communities that are out there, the idea of different apostolates and charisms, etc.
 - Possible videos:
 - Light of Love Promo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6CLeApNY8Y&list=PLgpqvhIS1Ldzc53o4J6hjGFvefb5PBZsD&index=8>
 - Entering at 23: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U90ATbs49jc>
 - School Sisters of Christ the King:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57ceocKiQ4Q>
 - Franciscan Sisters TOR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zxhg12hN6QM>
 - Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFFiNRvXBQw>
 - Monastery of Christ in the Desert New Mexico --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5YY684ZXDE>
 - Saint Meinrad Abbey -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AadiSdoq7iw>
 - French Abbey (shorter beautiful video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnKbPj7EhCg>
 - Recap, testimony
- Vocations complement each other and blend together. Priests need holy couples and families, and holy families need holy priests. One inspires the other. All are a path to holiness; it's a matter of what God is calling you to.

Basic Suggested Schedule – 2 Hours

6:00 – 6:10 – Welcome and introduction

6:10 – 6:40 – Time in Church

- Lectio divina
- Adoration
- Music
- Silence
- Transition

6:45 – 7:00 – Light refreshments

7:00 – 8:00 – Program incorporating the aforementioned

- Basic principles of vocation – universal call to holiness
- Panel
- Videos
- Witness talks
- Gifts assessment
- Small groups with maybe looking up scripture passages as well
- Closing prayer and blessing

Resources available for all stages of discernment and prayer

Other ways to foster vocations:

- Make vocation nights part of your curriculum (most will not come to an advertised vocation night). Moreover, in all likelihood, one vocation night will not suffice.
- The Diocesan focus on creating missionary disciples goes hand in hand with a focus upon vocations.
- Continue to foster vocations by speaking about prayer, holiness, state of life vocations within religious education curriculum, etc. Normalize not only discernment, but response.
- Have posters of different religious orders, make a collage. Show they're out there.
- Consider a parish mission (like St. Mark's with the CFRs) that focuses solely on vocations
- Offer different resources, books, etc.
- If you have sisters, visiting priests, etc., just give the youth simply time to hang out with them.
- Include Q & A's if you can
- Create a free environment – allow the Holy Spirit to move. Never pressure anyone toward a particular vocation or calling.
- Encourage parishes to host holy hours for anyone discerning a vocation, at any stage (even just beginning or minorly interested). Have social time afterward. Open it up to larger community.
- Vital need for parental support – unfortunately, many young adults have reported one of the biggest hurdles for a call to the priesthood or religious life was family disapproval.
- If you have the right numbers, single gender groups that focus on discernment.

Possible Scriptures to incorporate into talks:

- Taken from: <https://www.bmorevocations.org/discern/the-priesthood/scriptures-for-discernment/>
 - Old Testament
 - Gen 12:1-9 The Call of Abram: Leave your country and family to come
 - Gen 22:1-19 Faith to obey God: Abraham is commanded to offer Isaac
 - Exo 3:1-12 The Call of Moses: "I will be with you"
 - 1 Sam 3:1-10 The Call of Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening"
 - 1 Kgs 19:16, 19-21 The Call of Elisha: "'Please let me kiss my father and mother goodbye and I will follow you'...then he left and followed Elijah."
 - Isa 6:1-13 The Call of Isaiah: "'Whom shall I send?'... 'Here I am...send me!'"
 - Jer 1:1-10 The call of Jeremiah: "'Lord God, I know not how to speak. I am too young...' 'Say not I am too young... to whomever I send you, you shall go.'"
 - Jer 20: 7-9 Jeremiah's crisis: "You duped me O Lord and I let myself be duped. You were too strong for me and you triumphed... It seemed like a fire burning in my heart."
 - Jon 1-3 The Call of Jonah: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah; set out for the great city of Ninevah and preach against it..."
 - New Testament
 - Mt 4:18-22 or Mk 1:16-20 Jesus Calls his first disciples: "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men."
 - Mt 9: 35-38 Pray for priestly vocations: "The harvest is rich, but the laborers are few; beg the harvest master to send out laborers for his harvest."
 - Mt 16:24-28 "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."
 - Mt 19: 16-30 or Mk 10: 17-27 The Rich Young Man: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me."

- Mt 20:20-28 or Mk 10:35-45 The request of James and John: “Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for the many.”
- Mt 26:17-35 or Mk 14:12-26 or Lk 22:1-38 The Last Supper: “Take and eat; this is my body. This is the cup of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me.”
- Mt 26:36-46 The Agony in the Garden: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but as you will.”
- Mt 28 The Great Commission: “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”
- Lk 9:57-62 “‘I will follow you but first let me say farewell to my family’... ‘No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.’”
- Jn 2: 1-11 The wedding feast at Cana: “Do whatever He tells you.”
- Jn 15:9-17 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”
- Jn 10 The Good Shepherd: “When the Good Shepherd has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of him and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.”
- Mk 10:28-30 The Reward of Discipleship: “We have given up everything and followed you...you will be repaid a hundred times more now in this present age...and eternal life in the age to come.”
- Lk 1:26-56 The Call of Mary: The Annunciation: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.”
- Lk 14:25-33 Jesus on Discipleship: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”
- Jn 1:35-51 The call of the first disciples: “What are you looking for? Come and see.”
- Phil. 3:10-14 “Forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead...the prize of God’s upward calling in Christ Jesus.”
- Mt. 16:13-23 “Who do people say that I am?”
- Acts 13: 2-4 Paul and Barnabas selected by the Holy Spirit to go and preach
- Acts 15:28 “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us.”
- Rom. 8:14-17 “You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear.”
- Rom. 12:1-2 “Do not conform yourself to this age...that you may discern what is the will of God.”
- 1 Cor. 12:4-11 “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit.”
- Eph. 1:17 “A spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him.”
- 1 Jn. 4:1-3 “Do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God”

○ Priesthood

- Jn. 13:1-14 The washing of the Disciples’ feet
- 1 Pet. 2:2-10 “Come to him...let yourselves be built...to be a holy priesthood.”
- Heb. 4:12-16 Jesus, the compassionate high priest
- Heb. 5:1-10 “Every high priest is taken from among men”
- Heb. 10:10-17 “Every priest stands daily at his ministry”
- Heb. 7:17 “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
- Heb. 8:3 “Now every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices.”

○ Celibacy

- 1Cor.7: 34 “I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided.”

- Mt. 19:10-12 “Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.”
- Lk. 18:29-30 “Anyone who has given up house or wife or brothers... for the sake of the Kingdom of God will receive back an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.”
- Scriptures for Particular Circumstances
 - I’m not holy enough: Isa. 6:1-9; Lk. 5:1-11
 - I’m afraid I will fail: Ex. 14: 10-31; Lk. 15
 - I’ve made mistakes and I’m a sinner: Jn. 21:15-23; Mt. 9:9-13; Lk. 7:36-50
 - I’m too young: 1 Sam 3:1-18; 1 Sam 16:1-13; Jer 1:4-10; Lk 1:26-3
 - I’m not talented enough: 1 Sam 17:32-51; Lk 1: 26-38
 - I want to have a family: Gen. 12:1-3; Mt. 12:46-50; Mk. 10:28-30
 - I want “the good life”: Mk. 10:17-31; 1 Cor. 2:9; Mt 13:44-46; Jn. 10:10
 - I’m afraid of making a permanent commitment: Mt 28:16-20; 1 Cor 12:5-10
 - I’m afraid of public speaking: Ex 4:10-17; Jer 1:4-10; Jer 1: 9-10
 - I’m not smart enough: 2 Cor 4:7-18; Ex 4:10-17
 - I’m afraid of being alone: Ex 3:4-22; Lk 1:28-38; Mt 28:20
 - I want to be happy: Ps 37:4; Mt 5: 1-12; Jn 10:10; Mk 10:28-31; 1 Cor 2:9
 - I’m filled with fear: 1Jn 4:18 “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

Possible Catechism references to incorporate into talks:

- [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*](#) (especially #871-945 on vocations and religious life)
- Marriage: 1603
- Virginity for the sake of the Kingdom: 1618-1620
- Vocation to chastity: 2337-2350
- Ways of coming to know God: 30-35
- Holy Orders: 1581-1600
- God creating the world, purpose for us: 1-3
- True development concerns the whole man... 2461
- All called to holiness by Baptism, partakers in Paschal Mystery 1260
- Society supporting vocations, and inner conversion 1886-1889
- Man recognizing voice of God 1701-1707
- All called to God 1878
- We live Christ's life 521
- Called to proclaim Kingdom 543-546
- Vocation is love 1604, 2331
- Vocation of lay people 898-900

Additional books and resources:

- [*Vita Consecrata: On the Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and in the World*](#) by St. John Paul II
- [*Perfectae Caritatis - A Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*](#)
- [*Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life*](#) by The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
- [*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*](#) by St. John Paul II
- [*Discerning Religious Life*](#) by Sr. Clare Matthias, CFR

- [*And Mary's 'Yes' Continues*](#) by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist
- [*Discerning the Will of God*](#) by Fr. Timothy M Gallagher, O.M.V.
- [*What Does God Want*](#) by Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R.
- [*Discerning Your Vocation*](#) by the Community of the Beatitudes (preface by Fr. Jacques Philippe)
- [*Discernment Do's and Don'ts*](#) by Fr. George Elliott
- [*Discernment – Acquiring the Heart of God*](#) by Marko Ivan Rupnik, SJ
- [*Authenticity: A Biblical Theology of Discernment*](#) by Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M.
- [*Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*](#) by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa
- [*Pray, Decide and Don't Worry*](#) by Jackie and Bobby Angel with Fr. Mike Schmitz
- [*When God Asks for an Undivided Heart*](#) by Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR
- [*To Save a Thousand Souls: A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood*](#) by Fr. Brett A. Brannen
- [*The Priest is Not His Own*](#) by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen
- [*Many are Called: Rediscovering the Glory of the Priesthood*](#) by Scott Hahn
- [*Christus Vivit*](#): Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on youth. Chapters 8 and 9 speak of vocations and discernment
- [USCCB's Vocations page, including helpful tips for mentoring and building a vocation culture](#)

[“For Love Alone” movie about sisters](#) (link)

[“Light of Love” movie about sisters](#) (link)

[“Outcasts” movie about Franciscan Friars of the Renewal](#) (link)