Diocese of Arlington
2010 Vocation Lesson Plan One

7-8

Vocation Lesson Objective:

Students will identify the vocations to married life, to consecrated single life, to religious life, and to the priesthood.
Students will recognize the uniqueness of each person's call to follow Christ and will understand the difference between their Vocation and a professional career.
Students will begin to understand the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.
Students will contrast the vows of a religious with the promises that a priest makes.

Materials:

Flash cards of names of various service professions
Flash cards of various men's and women's religious orders and of the diocesan priesthood.
Web links:
http://www.religiouslife.com/
http://www.cmswr.org/
Priests or religious who may visit class and discuss their vocations.
Writing and drawing supplies

Procedure:

1. Review with students that our Baptism is a call to the fullness of life. Our vocation is the special way which God wants to give us that fullness of life through love. Identify the vocations to married life, to consecrated single life, to religious life and to the priesthood.

2. Ask the students to name some service professions and how each can be particularly Christian. For example, nursing and all health care professions reflect the caring and healing Christ; teaching and learning reflect Jesus the teacher (Rabbi); construction workers reflect Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth. Use the flash cards to help prompt student responses.

3. Now focus on the vocations to priesthood and religious life and how these same "jobs" can be a way of serving Christ and others. Discuss the different apostolates of religious congregations and how the priesthood shares in the healing, teaching and guiding work of Christ.

4. Emphasize that a vocation to priesthood or religious life is a call to love Christ in a special way and that the work is really secondary. Have students research the following topics using texts or by interviewing people. They may work in groups and come up with a presentation on the following topics. Encourage them to generate a visual that helps illustrate their main points.

Religious sisters and brothers: respond to their call by choosing to live in a community with others who are called to serve people through religious life. They publicly solemnize their response to God by making three vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. Religious life is one special way of being Christian.

Poverty: Through this vow to God, religious men and women want to have Jesus' attitude toward material things. They try to live a life of sharing. The deepest reason for making a vow of poverty is love. When Gospel poverty is accepted as a way of life it means a person lives simply and willingly shares who he is and what he has.

Chastity: Through this vow to God, religious and priests promise not to marry and promise to love and help all people freely. They freely and joyfully give up the privilege of marrying and having children because they want to be free to love and help all who need them. The vow of chastity lets them be free to think and work only for the Kingdom of God. The vow of chastity also frees them to remind us that God and the Kingdom must always be first in the lives of all Christians.

Obedience: Religious by their vow of obedience to God promise to seek and do His will, working together with others in their community to try to understand what God is asking of them in their lives. They promise to listen to God with and in their communities. They promise to find out and follow the will of God together and to obey their superiors, especially in the decision of where they will serve the people of God.

Diocesan priests: Diocesan priests are called to serve God's people in celibate love through their ministry of the sacraments of the Church and by teaching and proclaiming the Gospel through their lives of generous service. Rather than serving the Church in distant lands, diocesan priests are generally called to live and work among the people of their home diocese.

5. After these presentations, invite students to share their thoughts and feelings about these vows. If a priest or religious is available, it would be an excellent follow-up for them to answer any questions.

6. Explain to the students the difference between the above vows and the promises of obedience and celibacy that diocesan priests make at ordination.

In closing, have students write one paragraph that completes the statement below.

"It is important that we have priests, brothers and sisters serving in the Church because…."