



Catholic Education Vocation Talking Points

Introduction

As Catholic educators, we are entrusted with the sacred task of guiding young hearts toward a deep and meaningful relationship with God. One of the most vital ways we fulfill this mission is by encouraging students to discern God's call in their lives. Helping children and teenagers understand that God has a unique plan for each person instills a sense of purpose and joy that can shape their entire life.

Vocation promotion is not just for those who feel a strong call to priesthood or religious life; it is about helping every young person discover how God is calling them to live out their faith, whether as priests, consecrated religious, or married couples. By fostering vocational awareness in age-appropriate ways, we help students develop a habit of listening for God's voice, encouraging them to see their lives as a response to His love. This process begins as early as Pre-K, with the simplest expressions of faith, and continues through high school, as students prepare to make significant life choices.

The classroom is a powerful setting for planting seeds of discernment that can bear fruit for a lifetime. When students regularly encounter the idea of vocations, they come to understand that discerning God's will is a natural and joyful part of a vibrant Catholic life. It also helps them see that priests, sisters, and other religious are not distant figures, but real people who responded to God's call with courage and faith. By introducing vocational themes in developmentally appropriate ways, educators can create an environment where children and teens feel comfortable exploring what it means to say "yes" to God's plans for them.

Vocation Talking Points by Age

Pre-Kindergarten (Age 3-4)

Talking Points:

- God made each of us special and loves us very much.
- Jesus wants to be our friend and wants us to love others, too.
- We can talk to God through prayer, and He listens to us.

Scripture Passage: "Let the little children come to me." (Matthew 19:14)

Practical Steps:

- Teach simple prayers like the Sign of the Cross and "Jesus, I love You."
- Use stories about Jesus calling the little children to Him.
- Incorporate role-play or picture books about saints who loved God.

Kindergarten (Age 5-6)

Talking Points:

- God has a special plan for everyone, including you.
- Some people are called to do special work for Jesus, like being priests or nuns.
- We can ask Jesus to help us find out how we can make Him happy.

Scripture Passage: "You are precious in my eyes." (Isaiah 43:4)

Practical Steps:

- Lead simple prayers asking God to show them His plan for their lives.
- Introduce stories about saints who served God in special ways.
- Encourage talking to Jesus as a friend during prayer time.

1st Grade (Age 6-7)

Talking Points:

- God loves you and has made you for a special purpose.
- We can listen to God in our hearts to hear what He is asking us to do.
- Some people serve God as priests, sisters, or brothers.

Scripture Passage: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:9)

Practical Steps:

- Encourage short, quiet times of prayer, teaching them to listen for God's voice.
- Read stories of saints who responded to God's call when they were young.
- Pray for vocations together as a class.

2nd Grade (Age 7-8)

Talking Points:

- God has a plan for your life, just like He did for the saints.
- We can follow Jesus by listening to His voice and doing what is right.
- God might call some of us to serve Him in special ways, such as being a priest or sister.

Scripture Passage: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."
(Matthew 4:19)

Practical Steps:

- Include simple activities on the lives of saints and how they followed God.
- Prepare students for their First Communion as a time to ask Jesus to guide them.
- Discuss different ways to love and serve God.

3rd Grade (Age 8-9)

Talking Points:

- God invites us to listen to Him and follow His plan for our lives.
- There are many ways to serve God, including being a priest, religious brother, or sister.
- We should ask God what He wants for our lives and trust that He has a good plan.

Scripture Passage: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." (Jeremiah 1:5)

Practical Steps:

- Teach about different vocations (marriage, priesthood, & religious life).
- Introduce the concept of "discernment" as a way to find God's plan.
- Provide opportunities for quiet prayer in the classroom.

4th Grade (Age 9-10)

Talking Points:

- Each of us has a unique purpose, and God helps us find it when we pray and listen.
- Some people dedicate their whole lives to God in a special vocation (priesthood, consecrated life, and sacramental marriage).
- Discernment means asking and listening to what God wants us to do with our lives.

Scripture Passage: "You did not choose me, but I chose you." (John 15:16)

Practical Steps:

- Introduce short daily reflections on the lives of saints who followed a vocation.
- Discuss how making good choices now helps us listen to God's plan.
- Encourage altar serving or participating in parish life.

5th Grade (Age 10-11)

Talking Points:

- God has a special plan for you, and He wants you to be happy by following it.
- Discernment is about praying and asking God what He wants for our lives.
- We can start practicing listening to God's voice by making time for quiet prayer.

Scripture Passage: "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future."
(Jeremiah 29:11)

Practical Steps:

- Provide opportunities for the students to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Discuss how the sacraments help us hear God more clearly.
- Encourage journaling about their experiences of prayer.

6th Grade (Age 11-12)

Talking Points:

- God calls each person to a vocation, which is a special way to serve Him.
- Discernment is an active process of praying, listening, and seeking God's will.
- Following God's call brings deep joy and peace.

Scripture Passage: "Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will." (Psalm 40:8)

Practical Steps:

- Introduce "Come and See" events where students can learn about religious life.
- Encourage deeper involvement in church activities like youth ministry.
- Discuss how listening to God can be done through Scripture and quiet prayer.

7th Grade (Age 12-13)

Talking Points:

- Discernment is about asking God what He wants for your life and being open to His call.
- There are different ways to serve God, and each person's call is unique.
- God may be calling you to priesthood, religious life, or marriage.

Scripture Passage: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

Practical Steps:

- Organize retreats that include time for personal prayer and reflection.
- Have discussions about the joys and challenges of different vocations.
- Encourage one-on-one conversations with a priest, religious, or married couple about vocation.

8th Grade (Age 13-14)

Talking Points:

- God calls us to seek His will in every aspect of our lives, including our future vocation.
- Discernment means being open to God's plan and trusting Him, even if it feels uncertain.
- Saying "yes" to God brings fulfillment and joy, no matter what He asks.

Scripture Passage: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." (Isaiah 41:10)

Practical Steps:

- Discuss ways to make prayer a daily habit.
- Offer vocational discernment resources (books, videos, podcasts).
- Encourage participation in service projects as a way to listen to God's call.

9th Grade (Age 14-15)

Talking Points:

- Now is a good time to start seriously thinking about your future and how God fits into that.
- Discernment is about understanding God's plan and being courageous in following it.
- God might be calling you to a specific form of consecrated life, such as religious life or priesthood.

Scripture Passage: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

Practical Steps:

- Encourage regular Mass attendance, Eucharistic Adoration, and Confession.
- Introduce vocational discernment retreats and events.
- Foster a supportive environment for discussing vocational aspirations.

10th Grade (Age 15-16)

Talking Points:

- Vocational discernment is a lifelong journey, and it's never too early to start listening for God's call.
- Consecrated life is a beautiful response to God's love that can be fulfilling.
- Ask God each day to guide you and show you the way.

Scripture Passage: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." (Matthew 9:37)

Practical Steps:

- Suggest visiting religious communities or seminaries.
- Provide resources on different forms of consecrated life.
- Create opportunities for students to meet with vocation directors.

11th Grade (Age 16-17)

Talking Points:

- God may be calling you to a radical way of following Him, such as priesthood or religious life.
- Being open to God's will can transform your life in ways you may not expect.
- Don't be afraid to take steps toward exploring consecrated life if you feel drawn to it.

Scripture Passage: "Not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

Practical Steps:

- Offer guidance on applying to "Come and See" programs or discernment retreats.
- Encourage deeper sacramental life (frequent Confession, daily Mass).
- Have talks from individuals living different vocational paths.

12th Grade (Age 17-18)

Talking Points:

- As you prepare for life after high school, it is important to ask God what He wants for your future.
- Discernment may involve making difficult choices, but God will give you the grace to follow His will.
- Trust that God's plan for you is the one that will bring you the most peace and happiness.

Scripture Passage: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

Practical Steps:

- Suggest talking with a spiritual director for one-on-one guidance.
 - Provide resources for visiting seminaries or religious communities.
 - Encourage them to consider a gap year to become a missionary for an organization through the Church as they discern if they feel uncertain (NET, LifeTeen, Spiritus, etc.).
-

Conclusion

Promoting vocations within the Catholic classroom is a commitment to the future of the Church and the spiritual growth of each student. When educators consistently present the idea that God has a unique and loving plan for each person, students learn to trust that their lives have profound meaning and purpose. This journey of vocational discernment, when nurtured in small, everyday moments from Pre-K through 12th grade, can prepare young people to embrace God's call with openness and joy, whatever form it takes.

As educators, you play a crucial role in this process by helping students encounter Christ in the classroom and guiding them to see life as a beautiful response to His love. By integrating age-appropriate vocational discussions, prayers, and practices into your teaching, you help students cultivate hearts that are sensitive to God's voice and ready to follow wherever He leads. Whether a child eventually becomes a priest, a religious sister, or a married person, the lessons learned in your classroom about listening to God and seeking His will remain foundational.

Thank you for dedicating your time and effort to fostering a culture of discernment and openness to God's call. Together, let us continue to inspire young people to follow the path God has laid out for them, trusting that He will provide the grace they need to answer His call with courage and love.