

Vocation Lessons

A K-12 curriculum supplement

Outline for Talk

1. Describe the need for priestly and religious vocations
 - (a) Nationwide, for every 100 priest who die or retire, we are ordaining only 30 new men.
 - (b) Number of seminarians is basically flat for the last 20 years
 - (c) Religious sisters have dropped from 180,000 in 1965 to 50,000 today.
 - (d) Talk about stats in your diocese (if available)

2. Explain the importance of a proper understanding of vocation
 - (a) Your vocation is your primary mission in life. Even if you are a teacher, and that takes up a large portion of your energy, if you are married, your vocation to marriage is paramount.
 - (b) That is why it's critical that we teach students how to discern their vocations, their primary mission in life.
 - (c) After your decision to follow Jesus, your vocation is your most important decision in life.
 - (d) If a student graduates from a Catholic School without a proper understanding of discerning his or her vocation, that is a very serious shortcoming

3. Launching a systematic effort to teach vocations at every grade level
 - (a) The diocese is launching Vocation Lessons, a curriculum supplement not just for Catholic schools but for Religious Education and Youth Ministry as well.
 - (b) I want to invite you and encourage you to introduce this in your classroom this academic year.

4. About the curriculum
 - (a) This is a supplement for grades K-12
 - (b) The aim is to present the priesthood & religious life as compelling and rewarding vocations, and also offers in-depth wisdom on choosing a spouse and building a strong marriage.
 - (c) For every grade level there are six elements:
 - i. A lesson on Marriage
 - ii. A lesson on Priesthood
 - iii. A lesson on Religious life
 - iv. A lesson on Discernment (in younger grades this is referred to as God's Call)
 - v. Assessment (homework assignment or test)
 - vi. Family Feature – to spur conversation among parents and children about God's call.

5. How much time does it take?
 - (a) This is designed to take up about a week's worth of religion classes. However, the lessons are designed to stand alone, so they can be taught at different times throughout the year, when it makes sense. For example, when you are teaching about the Sacrament of Holy Orders, you could insert the lesson on priesthood.

6. The format of Vocation Lessons
 - (a) **IMPORTANT:** This curriculum is 100% online at www.vocationlessons.com. There are no text books.

- (b) HOWEVER, if you prefer to teach with paper-and-pencil, there are printable PDFs for both students and teachers.
- (c) Works on smart boards, tablets & phones

[Now move into live demonstration with the web site]

7. Login demonstration

- (a) Go to www.vocationlessons.com and enter your teacher code
- (b) The teacher code is the same for everyone in our diocese: **YourCodeHere**
- (c) The student code is also the same for every student: **YourCodeHere**
- (d) [Hand out teacher brochure with codes]

8. Lessons portal

- (a) Just click your grade to enter
- (b) Notice there is a web page with the lesson, as well as links to PDFs

9. Teacher view vs. Student View

- (a) Toggle between the two views to demonstrate

[Now move into examples of a few lessons]

- 10. 4th Grade – **God Calls**, <http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade4/godscall/>
 - (a) Move through the various sections, stopping to highlight the “meat” of the lesson
 - (b) Note that the lessons in younger grades are very straightforward, creative, and engaging
- 11. 6th Grade – **Priesthood**, <http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade6/priesthood/>
- 12. 8th grade – **Religious Life**,
<http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade8/religious/>
- 13. 12th grade – **Discernment**, <http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade12/>
 - (a) Note that the lessons in HS are very academically challenging. This example from 12th grade is one of the “easiest” lessons. Most lessons will take serious prep work on the part of the teacher, so she can lecture or lead discussion. Some of the reading selections and homework for students are quite challenging.
- 14. **Assessment**
 - (a) For grades K-8, there is an assessment (like a word puzzle or writing assignment) for each **unit**
 - (b) For HS, there is homework for each **lesson**
 - (c) Sample assessment in younger grades:
<http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade3/assessment/>
- 15. **Family Feature**
 - (a) For grades K-6, there is suggested activity for students to do with parents
 - (b) For grades 7-12, there is an article that teachers can email to parents
 - (c) Sample Family Feature in younger grades:
<http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade1/family/>
 - (d) Sample Family Feature in older grades:

<http://www.vocationlessons.com/lessons/school/grade10/family/>

Closing

I believe that this curriculum will be a “game changer” our diocese because it will introduce a very strong pro-vocations message into every level of our education system, including Religious Education and youth ministry. The content is creative and engaging, meant not just to convey information, but to inspire students to seriously consider each vocation. The company's motto as they created this curriculum was: “Moving from education to *formation*.”

By the 12th grade, students will have mastered an understanding of every vocation, and have a firm grasp of the principles of discernment. They will have written a dozen essays about discerning their vocations; they will have in-depth knowledge of great saints in every vocation; they will have reenacted the marriage rite, a priesthood ordination, and solemn profession of religious vows. They will have learned about the qualities to look for in a future spouse. They will have visited the Vocation Office's web site and several web sites of religious orders. They will have learned how to counsel younger students and peers about discerning their vocations. In short, they will have the tools they need to discover their own vocations in life.

I ask that you make every effort to introduce these lessons in your classroom.

Q&A