



## *School Vocations Resources*

Welcome to *OzVocations* – [www.catholicozvocations.org.au](http://www.catholicozvocations.org.au) - our national vocations website! We hope that these School Resource pages will provide much inspiration and practical assistance for primary and secondary teachers. We would always appreciate hearing from you, and would gratefully receive feedback, suggestions, ideas to be shared on-line with other teachers, and/or reports of activities, resources, programmes etc. that you have found helpful in your attempts to foster a 'culture of vocations' in your school or region.

Please email us on: [office@catholicozvocations.org.au](mailto:office@catholicozvocations.org.au)

### *Junior - Middle Secondary Lesson Ideas ...a 'Pot Pourri'*

The following ideas and activities are offered by CVMA in the hope that they will supplement existing RE programmes and resources, and assist with reinforcing and further developing these basic concepts of *Vocations Awareness Education*, which, hopefully, the students have imbibed throughout their years of primary education:

- Through , Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, we are called and initiated into the Body of Christ.
- We need to accept and celebrate that, individually, we are unique and gifted, and that it is important to identify and develop our gifts and talents.
- As members of the Body of Christ, we are challenged to share our lives and gifts with one another, as Jesus did – in our family and the wider community.
- God calls us to a life of service, and we can respond in many ways, in various ministries on behalf of our community.
- There are a number of different vocational paths through which we can fulfil our Christian vocation: marriage, single life, religious life (as sister or brother) and ordained life (priest or deacon).
- As we grow older, hopefully, we will seriously consider each vocational choice, so that we will discover, and choose, the vocation that best suit our gifts and personalities – in order that we may experience and enjoy - and share - that 'fullness of life' promised by Jesus.

## \* The gift, grace and mission of Baptism: Raising the student's consciousness

- Jesus is God's gift to us – to show us God's love, and how to live if we are to attain that fullness of life that God dreams of for each one of us.
- Read the story of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (Mark 1:7-11). Help the students see how much Jesus was filled with God's love, and affirmed in his *vocation*. Through a relationship with Jesus we will discover the gift of God's love for us, and share that love with others.
- Brainstorm with students around the ways we use water: drinking, cooking, cleaning, growing food, swimming, playing, healing etc. Discuss the importance of water in our lives. Our bodies are made of water: we can't live long without it!
- Significance of water in baptism: When we use it in this sacrament, it becomes a sign of God's life, in which we all share. Our human need for water was the reason Jesus chose to give water – as a symbol of our relationship to God and to one another. We can't live well, or long, without that cleansing, healing, life-giving relationship of grace either. It opens to us a place in God's family, the church, and invites us to participate in the mission of Jesus.
- Talk with the students about another sign of our baptism: the sign of the cross. They will probably be familiar with the film, *The Lion King*, in which the young hero, Simba is marked at birth with a sign of his kingship, and called to a special mission. If possible, show the class that portion of the video, and point out its parallel with our signing at baptism, which calls us to accept the mission of sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus. (You could show the entire video).
- Recall the words of the song:
  - "It is the circle of life and it moves us all.  
Through hope, faith and love until we find our place."*
  - Questions:** From his birth, what was Simba called to be and to do? ... As baptised people, christened and marked with the sign of the cross, who are we called to be, and what are we called to do?
  - "Simba, you have forgotten me as you have forgotten who you are.  
Look inside you, Simba. You are more than what you have become.  
You must take your place in the circle of life."*
  - Questions:** What happened to Simba and to everyone else when he failed to follow who he was called to be – for himself and for others?  
What happens in our Christian family when *we* fail to fulfil our responsibility to love?

Inspired by: *NVAWeek 2000 Planning Kit* – Intermediate Grade Vocation Activities.  
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## \* The Rite of Baptism:

### Preparation:

This lesson could either take a double RE period, or two sessions.

- Have available the elements necessary for a Baptism: water, bowl, candle, oil, white cloth. If possible, conduct part of this session in the school chapel or the local church.
- Present each student with a copy of the *Rite of Baptism*. 'Walk' through the rite with them. Assign a section of the rite to groups of two or three, allow them time to discuss the significance of this part of the rite, and then present this to the class.
- Now transform the class into a liturgy planning team and allow them to plan a baptismal liturgy by selecting music, readings, and liturgical options. In the classroom or chapel, have the students act out the rite. You will need one student to be the priest, and four to be parents and godparents. The rest of the class will be the 'family' and members of the faith community. Once the students have spent time preparing and celebrating the rite of Baptism, they will be ready to discuss the sacrament on various levels.

- Read Mark 1:7-11. Discuss our Baptism in light of the baptism of Jesus. Possible discussion questions:
    - In Baptism, God does for us what he did for Jesus: He opens the heavens and pours out gifts of the Spirit. What are some of these gifts? (Wisdom, understanding, etc). What are the 'fruits' of the Spirit? (Love, joy, peace, etc. – refer Galatians 5:22) What is our response to these gifts? ... Are we aware of them? ... Where/how do we experience them on a daily basis?
    - What are some ways that we can live out our baptismal promises today?
    - Jesus' baptism compelled him to serve God. How did Jesus live out his baptismal commitment?
    - We can serve God as priests, sisters, brothers, or as single and married laity.
- Discuss:
- Q: How does Baptism influence each of these lifestyles (vocations)?
- Q: How are they similar? ... (*All are calls to fullness of life – John 10:10*)
- Q: How are they different? ... (*All are complementary*) ...
- Q: Is one vocation better than any of the others? (*Stress 'God has no favourites'!! – Acts:10:34*)

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### \* Looking deeper into our Baptismal promises: Our call to commitment:

- Ask the students to talk with their parents about their Baptism ... Why did their parents choose Baptism for them? ... How old were they? ... Who was there with them to celebrate? ... What are their favourite memories of this child's baptism day? ... Who are their 'God'-parents? ... What is their role/place in the person's life? ...
- Respecting the cultural and ethnic diversity among the students, invite them to share family customs and traditions surrounding the birth and baptism of a child. Ask them to bring to class pictures of family celebrations of births and baptisms (preferably their own), and display the pictures in the classroom.
- Help students look deeper into the baptismal promises so that they can grow in their understanding of belonging and being called by God, into relationship with God.
- Remind the students that every Easter we renew the promises made for us at baptism by our parents and God-parents (if they were baptised in early childhood). Now we have a chance to speak them for ourselves, and to remember the responsibility and mission we are called to carry.
- Revisit the Rite of Baptism, then, as a class, invite them to renew their baptismal promises (around the Baptismal font of the local church if possible). Have a candle alight (use the Easter candle if in the church)
- Remind students about what the commitment of baptism means, and the responsibility it calls forth from us.
- Next, explain that the promises made at baptism, and which they have just renewed, are the public expression/ritualisation of an inner commitment. When men and women feel called by God to deepen that commitment to Gospel living, they may do so by expressing public promises, or vows, of a different type.
  - when people get married, they make vows to one another.
  - when people decide to give their lives to God as priests, sisters or brothers, they make promises or vows too.
- When leaving the church, pause around the holy-water font. See if the students can now explain the tradition behind the Catholic practice of blessing ourselves with holy-water upon entering and leaving a church, and encourage them to do so now.

\* Living in Jesus' way ...

Jesus invited other people to follow him and help him to do God's work. This was their *vocation*. These people were called Jesus' *apostles* and *disciples*. Read, reflect on, discuss stories of key people in the New Testament who responded to God's call. How did their following of Jesus 'make a difference' in their part of the world at that time?

\* Followers of Jesus living out their vocations ...

Before Jesus left his disciples, he asked them to call and baptise more followers to do God's work. Have students, in teams, scan through the *Acts of the Apostles* – find and work with stories of some of the early disciples ... how the Gospel spread to new places. Prepare 'news reports' about these people and stories (these could be written as 'newspaper reports, complete with headlines, or radio or TV reports)

\* Read/research/reflect/discuss stories of famous Australians of the *past* who have responded to God's call (their vocation) in their own unique way, for example: Mary MacKillop, Weary Dunlop, Simpson ...

Then bring the focus into the present: 'good-news' people currently in the news, family members, people in their local area, students and school staff members, who are really making a difference in their small part of the world, and inspire others because they are loving, forgiving people, who share their talents generously. These people are also Jesus' apostles or disciples! Encourage the students to write their own stories of 'good-news' people. Do you know any modern songs that tell 'good-news' stories?

\* Explain to the students that, when we try to share the love that Jesus has given us, we are following our vocation. When we become adults, we will need to make a big decision about our life-long vocation. We have a number of choices, and we are meant to choose the one that will help us become our best self.

- Many people choose the vocation of marriage, and this usually means caring for a family. *Do you know any married people?*
- Some grown-ups might choose not marry, or have children, but they still care for others. That's a vocation too – it's called a 'single' vocation. *Do you know any people who have made a deliberate choice to remain single?*
- Some people follow their vocation by choosing to become priests, or brothers, or sisters or deacons. *Do you know any priests, or (church) brothers, or sisters (nuns) or deacons?*

Encourage the students to consider: *Which of the vocations might be the most life-giving for YOU?*

\* Using pictures, stories, headlines, make a bulletin-board display or a collage depicting adults living out their vocations (not '*occupations*') ... Try to have all the Christian vocations represented, i.e. women/men who are: married, single, religious sisters/brothers, ordained. Encourage the children to write/talk about this display ... how do these people live their vocation ... share their gifts and talents?

\* Interviewing at school:

Invite a panel guest speakers (local adults) who have chosen different vocations: a married person/couple, a single person, a sister (nun) or (church) brother, a priest. Ask them: What is their vocation? ... How do they share their talents and their love with others? ... How does their vocation bring them happiness? ... How does it help them to be their 'best self'? (Prepare the students before the event ... encourage them to ask their guest/s questions.)

\* Interviewing at home:

Encourage the students to interview some significant adults in their lives: parents ... grandparents ... aunts ... uncles ... God-parents ... adult neighbours ... about their vocations. Perhaps ask them the same questions as they have prepared for their classroom guests. Report back to the class ... write a story, a news report, create a power-point presentation. Make a class display out of these summaries. Brainstorm on possible captions for the display.

- \* *My Gifts ...* help the students reflect about the gifts God has given them. What are they good at? ... What do they enjoy doing? ... What do other people say about their talents? ... Have other people helped them to discover some special gifts that were previously hidden inside them? ... How do/can they share their gifts with others? Which of the adult vocations might enable them to develop their gifts and talents more fully, i.e. to which vocation might God be calling them?

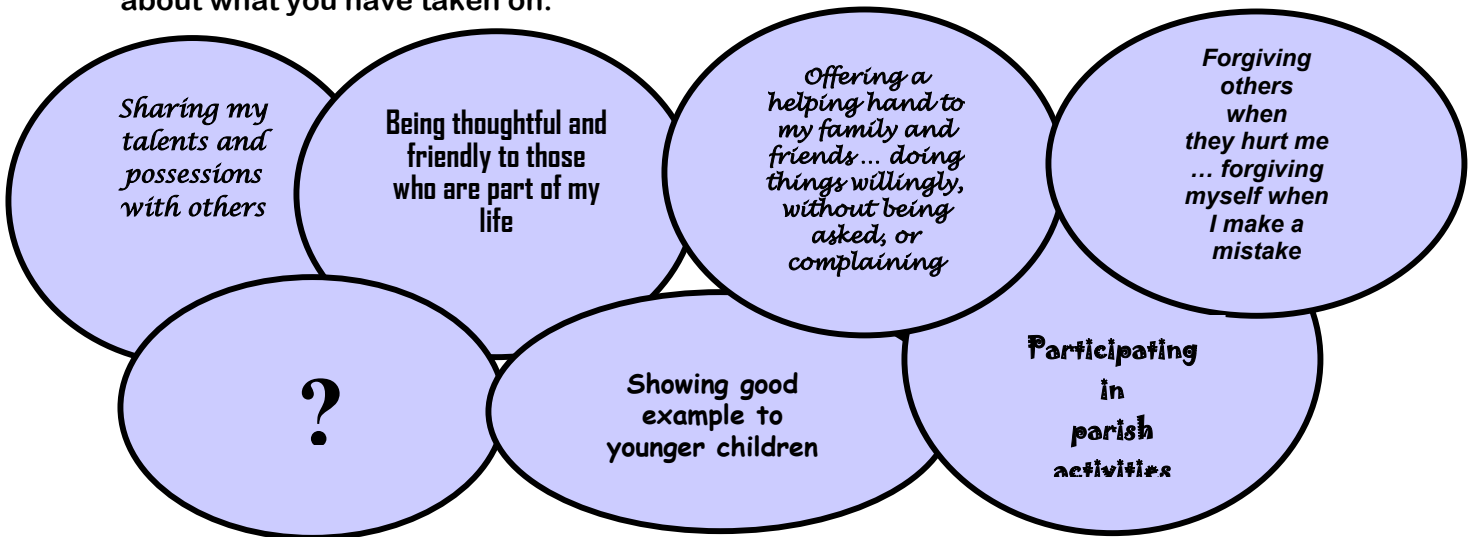
There is ample scope for oral and written language work, creative writing, poetry, art, movement, drama and music to develop this concept.

- \* **Jesus' vision ...**

Jesus had a vision (or 'dream') for this world. He called it the 'Kingdom of God'. He spent his ministry proclaiming the possibility of this new way of life. For the last 2000 years, Christians have shared Jesus' vision. They have understood that each person has special gifts and talents that can be used to build the Kingdom of God. How does your vision for the world compare with Jesus' vision? Have the students reflect on how they see themselves living the Christian vision ... present this in some creative form.

- \* **We too are called to Build the Kingdom of God!**

*Choose a way.* Look at the circles below. These circles show ways that we can extend the Kingdom of God in our own lives. What could you write in the blank one? Choose one circle for each day of the week ... make a poster for your bedroom wall that will remind you about what you have taken on.



- \* **Exploring religious vocations:**

- Most people have a dream for the future. They may imagine how their could make a difference to others.
- Young people often dream of making the world a better place. Many begin this quest by looking for ways to become involved with others by linking up with others, and perhaps joining a group or organisation.
- The vocations of priesthood or religious life are very real options for getting involved with life! Being a sister, brother or priest is an invitation to change the world through serving others, and responding to very real needs in our society.
- In order to make informed choices about a vocation, it is important to know something about each vocational option. Finding out more about life as a religious brother, sister or priest (diocesan or religious order) will help young people to explore these options, and, ultimately, make a more informed choice about their future vocational path.

**Task:** invite a priest, sister or brother to talk with the class about their vocation. Here are some sample questions the students might ask in order to develop a real sense of the person and his/her vocation. Perhaps you could compose some of your own questions, or encourage the class to do so.

- How long have you been a sister/brother/priest?
- Do you take vows as sister/brother/priest? ... What are they? ... What if you change your mind?
- Do you live in a community of sisters/brothers/priests? ... What's that like?
- Is there a typical structure to your day? ... What is it?
- What is your 'ministry'? ... What do you like about it?
- What are some of the good things about your vocation as a sister/brother/priest?
- Why did you become a sister/brother/priest?
- How did you know what you wanted to be and do with your life?
- How long does it take to become a sister/brother/priest? ... What's involved?
- What did your family and friends think about your choice to become a sister/brother/priest? ... What do they think now?
- Do you like being a sister/brother/priest? ... Why? ... What makes it worthwhile?
- How has your vocation made a difference in the lives of other people?
- Can you tell us about a time your vocation made a difference to someone else?
- Would you recommend your vocation to young people like us?

After the visit/interview, discuss with the students what they have learnt about this person's vocation ... Does this vocation appeal to them? ... Talk about whether some of them might have a vocation to become a sister/brother/priest.

Presuming this has been a positive experience, you might consider inviting another person with a religious vocation (e.g. opposite gender) so that the students might experience another person's the perspective of their vocation. Or, alternatively, you might invite two people in the first place!

### \* Projecting into the future:

Take students on an imaginary journey that projects twenty years into the future:

The year is 2024 ... Where might they be? ... What is their vocation (are they married, single, a brother, sister, priest?) ... What might be important to them? ...

What might they be doing? ... How are they using their talents to make their part of the world a better place? ... What makes them happy? sad? ...

Have them write about this experience ... share what they wrote ... note their vocational choices ... are they all the same – or is there variety in their responses which reflects a general awareness of vocational options?

### \* Prayer:

- Provide regular times for individual quiet prayer and reflection: e.g. reviewing how they personally, and others, are 'following Jesus' and responding to his call to discipleship.
- Compose a simple class 'vocations payer' – pray it regularly with the students. (These samples, written by senior primary children, might be helpful as a starters.

◆ *Dear God,*

*Guide us throughout our life.*

*Give us all the strength and courage we need to make the right decisions*

*as we follow the path that you call us to take.*

*Even though sometimes we make wrong choices,*

*please forgive us and give us the strength to carry on. Amen.*

◆ *Dear God,*

*Help us and guide us as we journey through life.*

*Help us to use the talents and gifts you have given us  
to make our world a better place.*

*As we grow older*

*help us to find the vocation that will make us happy and loving people  
who will help others to discover how much you love them. Amen*

\* **Dreaming God's big dreams ...**

Create a worksheet along the following lines that will help students get in touch with God's dream for them:

## Dreaming God's big dreams ...

God dreams big dreams for us. Dreams that will make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. But sometimes we neglect to follow the dream God dreams for us because of FEAR...

Fear of Failure

Fear of the Extraordinary (we don't want to be considered different)

Fear of Acting on our dream

Fear of Rejection (we are afraid of what others will say)

How do you know if your dream is from God?

If your dream needs power, prestige, or possessions in order to be realised, then it is probably not of God. If it requires paying a price (sacrifice) and prayer (listening to God), and if it brings you peace and deep-down joy, then it probably is from God.

What is God's dream for YOU?

What fears might discourage you from following that dream? Fear of failure? ... Fear of being different? ... Fear of taking the first step? ... Fear of rejection?

If you decide to act on this dream, what sacrifices might you have to make? How might it gift you?

Bring your fears to God in prayer. Listen. Consider keeping a record of your conversation with God about this dream in your journal.

Inspired by: *Out on a Limb: Vocation Resources for Teens, pages 15-16*  
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\* **Vocation Pamphlets:**

Have students work, either individually, or in small groups, to design a flyer/pamphlet that promotes one of the following vocations: marriage, single life, religious life, priesthood, deaconate. Make sure that all of the above are covered in your class group. Invite students to present their creation to the class.

\* **National Vocations Awareness Week:**

This is celebrated across Australia in early August of each year. It is geared to helping people, from the youngest child, to understand the nature of the Christian Vocation. Any of all of the above activities could be used during this week. Take and break open the meaning of the words *national ... vocations ... awareness ...*

Why do we have this for a whole week each year? How might your school really embrace NVAW?

Brainstorm with the students: what 'vocations activities' could they suggest that might enable the whole school to be really involved in NVAW?

\* **Fired up with this topic? ... Wanting more ideas?**

For additional ideas, on the *OzVocations website*, [www.catholicozvocations.org.au](http://www.catholicozvocations.org.au) - revisit the Teacher Resources section – click on the *Senior Primary* and *Internet Research Projects* pages. There are plenty more suggestions there on both!