



School Vocations Resources

Welcome to *OzVocations* – 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 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

Senior Primary 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 teaching and reinforcing the basic concepts of *Vocations Awareness Education*, which, at Senior Primary level are:

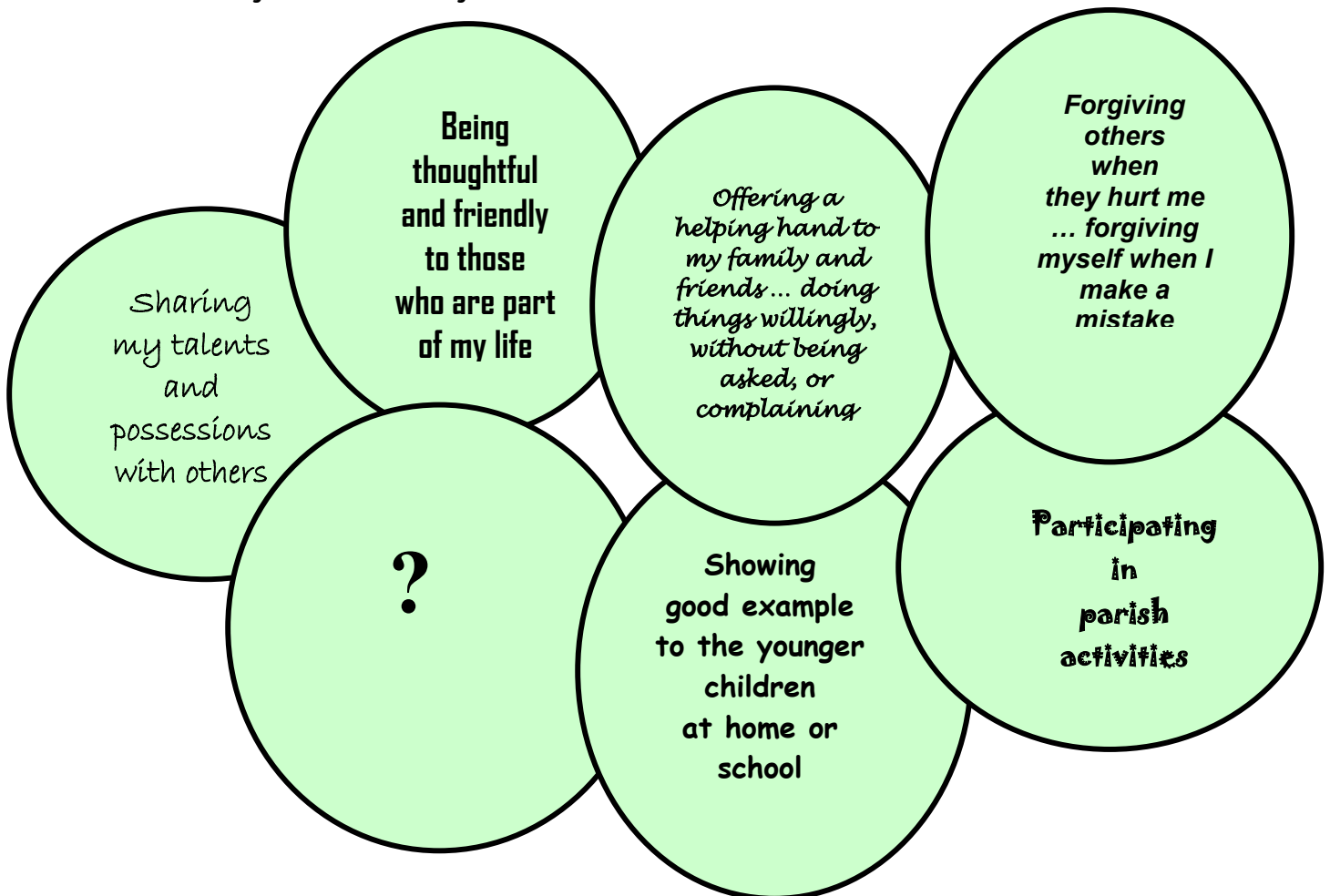
- Through , Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, we are called and initiated into the Body of Christ.
- We need to accept and celebrate that, individually, we are unique and gifted, and that it is important to identify and develop our gifts and talents.
- As members of the Body of Christ, we are challenged 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 and ordained life.
- As we grow older, hopefully, we will seriously consider each vocational choice, so that we will discover, and choose, the vocation that best suit their gifts and personalities – in order that we may experience and enjoy that 'fullness of life' promised by Jesus.

(Inspired by "Vocations ... Building up the Body of Christ: A Primary School RE Resource" - Diocese of Sandhurst, Victoria, 1997)

- * Visit the parish Church with the children – show them the Baptismal Font and the Holy Water font – discuss why we always bless ourselves with holy water upon entering and leaving the church. You might design a simple ritual whereby the children renew their Baptismal promises. It may be possible to arrange with the parish staff to show the class the parish's Baptismal Register, and you should be able to find the names of some of the children who were baptised in this parish.

- ★ Ask children to talk with their parents about their Baptism ... *Why* did their parents choose Baptism for them? ... How old were they? ... Did they have a special candle? ... Who are their 'God'-parents? ... How do they see their role? ... Who was there with them to celebrate? ... Do they have any photos of this special event? ... What are their favourite memories of this child's Baptism day?
- ★ Like me, Jesus was also Baptised. Tell the story of Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17) ... draw the story ... dramatise it.
- ★ Jesus had a *vocation!* Jesus invited other people to follow him and help him to do God's work. This was their vocation. Read/reflect/discuss stories of key people - Jesus' apostles, and others - in the *Gospels* who responded to God's call. How did their following of Jesus 'make a difference' in their part of the world?
- ★ Before Jesus left his disciples, he asked them to call and baptise more followers to do God's work. 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/reflect/discuss stories of famous Australians of the *past* who have responded to God's call (the 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, people in the parish, family members, children and school staff members who are really making a difference in their small part of the world because they are loving, forgiving people, who share their talents generously. These people are also Jesus' apostles or disciples! Encourage children to write their own stories of 'good-news' people. Do you know any songs that tell 'good-news' stories?
- ★ Explain to the children that when we try to share the love that Jesus has given us, we are following our vocation. Adults follow a vocation too!
 - Many people follow their vocation by getting married and caring for a family. *Do you know any married people? Can you talk with them about their married vocation?*
 - Some grown-ups might 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 single people? Can you talk with them about their single vocation?*
 - Some people follow their vocation by becoming priests, or brothers, or sisters or deacons. *Do you know any priests, or (church) brothers, or sisters (nuns) or deacons? Can you talk with them about their religious vocation?*
- ★ 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?
- ★ 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 children before the event ... encourage them to ask their guest/s questions.)

- * Encourage the children 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, draw/paint the people they have interviewed – let the picture tell its own story! Make a class display out of these pictures.
- * *My Gifts* ... help the children find out more about the gifts God has given them. One way of understanding their gifts is by seeing the kinds of things they are good at, or that they like to do ... Perhaps there are some special gifts that are hidden inside them? ... How do/can they share their gifts with others? 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 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 understand 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.



★ Most people do not come to a sense of their vocation until they are older. But for the majority of people, trying to understand their *vocation* - where God is calling them to fullness of life – starts at a young age. Understanding what our vocation is directly connected with working out what our gifts and talents are, and how God wants us to use these gifts to make a difference in our small part of the world. Some people's vocation is to be a *priest*. Others have been called to *religious life* as a *sister* or *brother*. The joy and satisfaction they experience comes from knowing that this is where God had called them. It is their *vocation*, and it has helped them to become their *best self!*

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

- Where did you grow up?
- Do you have a family?
- How long have you been a sister/brother/priest?
- Do you live in a community of sisters/brothers/priests? ... What's that like?
- Where do you live? ... does your house have special name (e.g. presbytery, convent, monastery, friary)
- 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?
- How has your vocation made a difference in the lives of other people?
- Do you have fun?
- Do you have free time ... hobbies?
- Do you have holidays?
- Do you get spending money?
- Who are your friends?
- Who looks after you?
- 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 did your family and friends think about your choice to become a sister/brother/priest?
- Do you pray? ... Why?
- Do you like being a sister/brother/priest? ... Why? ... What makes it worthwhile?
- Would you like to share some special stories about your vocation?

After the visit/interview, discuss with the children what they have learnt about this person's vocation ... 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 children might experience another person's the perspective of their vocation. Or, alternatively, you might ask two people in the first place!

- * Design a poster/large frieze that illustrates and celebrates the many ministries within the local faith community. The following headings might be useful starting points. There would be a number of sub-headings within each of these categories: Liturgy, RSCI, Pastoral Care, Education, Social Services, Spirituality, Administration.
- * Take children 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?
- * Create a word chart of all the new words the children have encountered through your vocations unit e.g. vocation, call, baptised, baptism, baptismal font, baptismal register, holy water font, initiation, God-parents, follow, married, single, priest, sister, nun, brother, deacon, gifts, talents, ministry, apostles, disciples,!
- * 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 children. These samples, written by older children, might be helpful as a starter. They could be simplified:
 - ◇ *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*
- * National Vocations Awareness Week 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 or 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 week each year? How might your school really make NVAW a memorable week in the life of your school and parish community?
- * Look at the words in the title *National Vocations Awareness Week*: How many letters are there in these words? ... How many other words can we make from all of these letters? Perhaps have a competition in small groups – which group can find the most small words?
- * How might your school really embrace NVAW? Brainstorm with the children: what other 'vocations activities' could they suggest? What 'vocations activities' could they suggest that might enable the whole school to be really involved in NVAW?