



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 that you have found helpful in your attempts to foster a 'culture of vocations' in your school or region.

Please email us: office@catholicozvocations.org.au

Background reading for Teachers and School Staffs ...

A Vocation ...

- ◆ touches the whole person – is not something that can be put on or taken off
- ◆ is central to who I am ... a 'project of life' that involves values and convictions
- ◆ is responding to my conviction that I am being called by God to fullness of life
- ◆ engages my freedom – as a whole person
- ◆ has a 'demand' quality about it – the choice of any lifestyle brings consequences – i.e. opens up some options and closes off others
- ◆ is different from a career, a job, or a ministry
- ◆ liberates the human personality

Therefore ...

Vocations Ministry/Education is one of the greatest acts of service we as a Church can offer ... it must be central to the Church's evangelisation!

Theological Background:

Vocation - a call to fullness of life ... a response to Baptism!

The word 'vocation' is understood much more broadly today than in the recent past. The English word 'vocation' has its origin in the Latin '*vocare*'... *to call*. Vocation today is understood to be a call to holiness ('wholeness') for ALL Christians, as a consequence of their Baptism. Married, life, single life, religious life and ordained life are equally all vocations, and are all responses to this Baptismal call to bring Jesus' life and love to our little part of the world in particular ways

Every person, whether single, married, priest, sister, brother, is gifted by God with a range of talents and qualities: intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical. It is the responsibility of all communities, and the *vocation* of all Christians, whatever their chosen lifestyle, to recognise and acknowledge and use their gifts to build the Body of Christ - in the Church and the wider community. '*There is a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit ...*' (1 Cor. 12:4-7) Not all people are, or can be, involved in parish ministries. For Catholics/Christians, the kingdom/reign of God is promoted in people's homes, their places of work and study, their neighbourhoods, and in streets, sports venues and shopping centres. It is in these places that many people truly live their Christian vocation. It is by immersion in life - being involved in the joys, hopes, grief and anxieties of all people in today's world - that individuals and communities live out the call of Baptism, their vocation. In this ordinariness of life, we accept the challenge and responsibility of sharing in the Church's mission.

Vocations ministry/education is about upholding freedom: the freedom of young people to consider all the possible options of life-choices to be made. It is about creating a climate in schools, homes, parishes and dioceses, wherein young people will experience encouragement and support as they take the time and space they need to hear and consider all the options that will be enable them to make decisions about their future vocation. Ideally, these decisions will enable them to develop to their fullest potential. As a consequence of this, they should be fully able to contribute to the life of any family or parish or group or community in which they will be involved as adults. When all the vocational options - single, married, priestly and religious lifestyles - are valued and seriously considered, freedom is enhanced, because the searching young adult is empowered to make an informed and life-giving decision.

Preparations for vocational discernment as a young adult need to begin early in life. Sadly, *vocations* has often been a 'sleeper' among topics in Religious Education. While teaching about vocations has been implicitly present and presented in various ways, *vocations* has seldom been approached in a systematic and integrated way across all levels of primary and secondary education. Teachers are vital people in the big picture of fostering a *culture of vocations* across our country. Primary RE teachers are able to make a crucial contribution to this process. They lay the foundations upon which the Secondary RE teachers must build as they progressively explore with their students the meaning and implications of their Christian initiation, the uniqueness of their own gifts and talents, and the responsibility they have to use these gifts in order to build the Body of Christ *wherever they are*.

It is hoped that the resources provided by CVMA in this website will be of assistance to both primary and secondary RE teachers, and that they will supplement existing resources and programmes that address this very crucial, and often neglected topic of VOCATIONS!

We trust that you will find our *OzVocations* website's teacher resources section to be inspirational, user-friendly and practical. CVMA would welcome feedback from teachers, and we also invite you to send us any ideas, strategies or resources that have worked for you, and which you would be willing to share *on-line* with other teachers in other places. We would give you full credit for your contribution!

Shalom from the National Vocations Office!

Mary Ryan RST

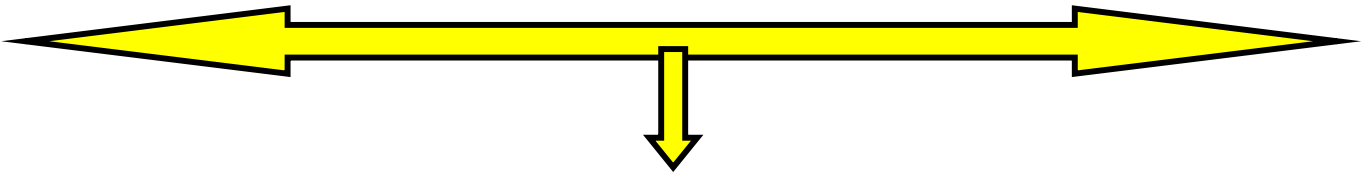
CVMA Executive Officer

What do we mean by 'Vocations Education'?

Over the years, the word 'vocation' has been subject to a broad range of interpretations, as shown below:

Pre Vatican II:
Vocation understood in a very narrow sense:
applied only to those called to ordained or consecrated life
as priest, sister, brother, nun.

In recent years,
the terms
'vocational training' or 'vocational counselling'
have equated the concept of 'vocation'
largely with
job, occupation, career, or means of livelihood.



Vatican II placed the term 'vocation'
within the context of Baptism.
Each baptised person is called to fullness of life, and, as a disciple of Jesus,
called to share in the Church's mission.

How then, do Catholic Educators of this 3rd millennium tackle 'Vocations Education'? The following diagram is a useful way of looking at this whole question:



● 'GENERAL' VOCATIONS EDUCATION:

Theological basis:

Our God is a God who has called each of us through baptism to be disciples of Jesus.

Teaching goals:

- ◆ Recognition and affirmation of a student's gifts and talents
- ◆ Values clarification
- ◆ Relational/community building skills
- ◆ Basics in prayer
- ◆ Getting to know the person of Jesus and what discipleship is all about
- ◆ Fostering a sense of service, and providing good role models of Christian behaviour

● 'PARTICULAR' VOCATIONS EDUCATION:

Theological basis:

As Christians, we are called to live out our Baptismal call in a particular lifestyle. Different lifestyles have been described in terms of a 'vocation', or a call to a 'particular style of loving' – e.g. as a married person, single person, celibate person living in community etc.

Teaching goals:

This aspect of Vocations Education asks us to familiarise the students with the various lifestyles/vocations/styles of loving, and articulate the significance and value of each by providing the students with information, experience and role models. We also need to encourage the students to reflect on the various options, and assess them in terms of their own giftedness and future choices.

- **'SPECIFIC' VOCATIONS EDUCATION:**

This, in most cases, is not the responsibility of the Catholic School Teacher. This level of Vocations Education belongs to pre-marriage teams, the Vocations Director of a diocese or religious congregation, a mentor or friend of the young adult as he/she makes attempts to discern the specific lifestyle/vocation to which he/she is most suited, and therefore, being called.

As Catholic educators, I believe we do '*General*' Vocations Education consistently and effectively in our schools. The '*Specific*' Vocations area we can generally leave to others. But, in my experience, our efforts at '*Particular*' Vocation education are often only partly effective, largely due, I believe, to a lack of understanding of priesthood, religious life and single life as viable options in today's Church, as well as a severe under-resourcing of teachers in this area.

Perhaps this schema can help us focus on the issue of Vocations Education in our schools, and evaluate both its place in the curriculum, and the strategies required to teach it effectively.

What Do We Mean by Vocations Education?
was originally written by Sr Jane Bertelsen FMDM.
It has been adapted slightly by CVMA for the *OzVocations* website.

*Q: Who are the key-players
in fostering a 'culture of vocations'?*

Parents, the family (including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins), the parish community, priests and religious, the school community - just to mention some of them!

A 'culture' of vocations will exist in a school community if there is respect and understanding of the call of God to individuals. Teachers, priests, religious, parents and families are powerful witnesses to those they love and serve, of a service of God and neighbour. Where this is nurtured, appreciated and respected, it would be natural for a child to ask '*Could I follow their example?*'

Of all the ways that God uses to call people to serve build the Kingdom, none is more sure, more tried and tested than the example of people around us, and their willingness to encourage and share with us the reality - the joys and excitement, the fears and frustrations - of a life of service of others.

Creating a 'vocations culture' - or a 'vocationally aware' school community ...

The Catholic school is the perfect place for a nurturing a 'culture' of vocation - that acknowledges, affirms and invites staff and children to discover and offer their gifts in 'other-centred' ministry that makes their small part of the world a better place

Qualities of a 'vocationally aware' school ...

When considering the environment in which a 'culture of vocations' can be fostered and nurtured, certain basic elements within the school contribute to where vocations spring to life. Certain attributes of the school community will help prepare the way for children, no matter how young, to be open to considering all vocations, including those of ordained and consecrated life:

- ◆ School leadership that shows a respect for all and encourages the specific gifts of individuals, gives witness to vocation as a response to our God who calls all to share their gifts.
- ◆ A school community which recognises and celebrates that, by virtue of our baptism, we are all called by God to fullness of life: that each person has a specific vocation. The question is 'which one is it? A school that fosters this awareness of a common call, will have a clear focus of the need to encourage some to be open to the call of God to full service in the church.
- ◆ A school community that is receptive and welcoming, sees its mission beyond its own boundaries, and looks for opportunities to celebrate the diversity of its community and appreciate the catholicity of the entire church.
- ◆ A school that actively celebrates God's action in prayer, and the celebration of the sacraments, carefully planned and celebrated, with the involvement of the young people in the action of prayer and liturgy.
- ◆ A school which looks to involve young people in the life of the parish community.
- ◆ A school that finds ways for students to learn of different opportunities of serving God in all states of life, and extends specific invitations to students to consider full-time ministry within the Church as a viable and life-giving option for their future.
- ◆ A school that nurtures and supports the family, and is aware and supportive of those in difficult and broken relationships.
- ◆ A school that celebrates examples of commitment, will recognise examples of service and dedication by both staff and students, and will invite people from the wider community to visit the school to share their experience and to encourage the students to recognise their talents and use them for the good of others.
- ◆ A school that actively encourages its staff to willingly share their giftedness with their community: where teachers and all concerned with the school are encouraged to speak of their faith and relationship with God.